

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

A STUDY OF CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL **PRINCIPALS** 2004



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**The Connecticut Association of High School Principals' (CAHSP)
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QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY
OF
CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

SPONSORED BY

The Connecticut Association of Schools

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INTRODUCTION

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) routinely surveys its membership relative to particular issues. Periodically it solicits more global opinions about the characteristics of principals and their roles, responsibilities, and challenges. The last such study conducted by CAS was in 1998 in conjunction with a State Board of Education initiative to revise the 092 Administrator Certificate. This monograph updates and expands upon the 1998 survey.

It also parallels a 2002 study conducted by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) on superintendents in Connecticut. *A Study of Connecticut's Public School Superintendents* aimed at providing information for policy makers as well as for superintendents about the demographics of the position as well as the issues and conditions related to practice. This study's purpose is to do the same for principals.

Finally, this monograph can be viewed as a companion piece to the position paper published this year by the Connecticut Principals' Center Critical Issues Committee, *The 21st Century Principal - A Call to Action*. The authors of that monograph unequivocally state that "today's principal's overarching role is to develop the capacity of the school to achieve high levels of achievement for all." This study of Connecticut high school principals will see to what extent this role is embraced by current practitioners as well as whether the context within which they operate is supportive of or hindering its fulfillment.

This paper presents an analysis of a questionnaire study conducted in the spring of 2004. The questions on the study were both close-ended and open-ended, adopted from the questionnaire utilized by CAPSS in 2002, and adapted by members of the CAHSP Professional Studies Committee for use with Connecticut high school principals. The survey was conducted on-line via the CAS web site (www.casciac.org).

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The questionnaire was completed by forty-four (44) of the one hundred seventy-eight (178) public and parochial high school principals in Connecticut, a return rate of twenty-five percent (25%). All but one (1) of the principals were from public schools. Principals responding were evenly distributed across Educational Reference Groups (ERGs) with the exception of ERG I which had no respondents. There was also a reasonable distribution by school size, with nineteen percent (19%) of the Class S (small)



high school principals responding, twenty-seven percent (27%) of the Class M (medium) school principals responding, and twenty-nine percent (29%) of the Class L (large) school principals responding.

ERG	N (# of Respondents)
A	5
B	5
C	6
D	10
E	4
F	4
G	3
H	7
I	0

School Size	N (% of Respondents)
Class S	19%
Class M	27%
Class L	29%

THE CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: DEMOGRAPHICS

Replacing current high school principals in America is becoming more difficult. Applicant pools continue to decrease; principal searches are often repeated due to lack of appropriate candidates; and, more school districts hire interim principals until searches are completed. In Connecticut, age ranges of principals show the greatest numbers in the 55-59 and 50-54 ranges, figures identical to the data for superintendents in their 2002 survey. The survey reveals that about forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents plan to retire within five years and eighty-eight percent (88%) will do so within ten years. Figures for superintendents were lower, with thirty-five percent (35%) due to retire within five years and seventy-four percent (74%) within ten years.

What is your current age?

During what academic year do you plan to retire?

Age	N
<40	1
40-44	4
45-49	7
50-54	12
55-59	14
>60	6

Academic Year	N
2004-2008 (5 years)	21
2009-2013 (10 years)	18
2014-2018 (15 years)	5

Of the forty-four (44) principals responding, thirty-four (34) were male and ten (10) female, figures corresponding almost exactly with the male/female proportion among superintendents. Although comparative survey data is not available, this seems to



represent a significant increase in the proportion of high school principals who are women. While gender equity is improving, diversity by race remains a significant problem, with ninety-six percent (96%) of the reporting principals Caucasian. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the principals held a sixth-year degree, eighteen percent (18%) a doctorate, and nine percent (9%) a masters plus degree.

More than half, or sixty percent (60%), of the principals responding reported that they were in their first principalship, with forty percent (40%) having held two or more. This would seem to reflect both the relatively large number of principals new to their positions (sixty-one percent have served fewer than ten years) and a relative lack of mobility for principals in Connecticut. The average age of assuming a first principalship was forty-two (42), with a range within the sample from thirty (one respondent) to sixty-one (also one). The average tenure for the principals in the sample was also under ten years.

Including the present year, how many years have you served as principal?

Years served as principal	# of respondents
<5	12
5-9	16
10-14	4
15-19	6
20-24	4
>24	2

WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL

The working conditions of the principal examined by the survey included (1) expectations and the ability to meet them; (2) working relationships with superintendents; and (3) job satisfaction.

Expectations: It is clear that more is being asked of principals and they are working longer and harder in order to try and meet these expectations. About half report working 60 to 70 hours or more per week with an average increase of better than fifteen percent (15%) in the last five (5) years.

About how many hours per week, averaged from September to June, do you spend in your present position?

Hours per week	N
45-49	3
55-59	2
60-64	9
65-69	9
70-74	2
>74	2



It is not just that the principal is facing increased time demands; it is also a matter of what the time is being devoted to and who decides that. Thirty of the forty-four (44) principals responding reported increases in time were related to managerial and not instructional responsibilities. These comments are typical:

- *My work time has increased 15% in the past couple of years. It's related to command performances at Board of Education subcommittee meetings, long range planning meetings, board of education meetings, and parent night meetings in addition to athletic and performing group presentations.*
- *The number of hours is all after school. The number of meetings I attend late in the afternoon or in the evening has increased dramatically in the last five years. Last year I spent 117 nights out.*

With over half reporting they control less than thirty-five percent (35%) of their work time each week, it is revealing to look at the dissonance between the actual and preferred percentage of time devoted to key functions of the principal. For example, two-thirds of the principals in the sample reported spending less than twenty percent (20%) of their work time per week on curriculum and instruction, yet their preferred amount was almost double. The other significant source of dissonance was with student activities. Again, two-thirds reported spending less than ten percent (10%) of their work time here, with the preferred amount doubled. When you consider that they felt they were devoting an appropriate amount of time to other functions (crises management, general management, parent and community relations, personnel matters, and student discipline), the implications are clear. Either some of these functions are going to have to be reallocated - or let go - if the principal's overarching role (high achievement for all) is to be realized. As stated in *The 21st Century Principal: A Call to Action*, "Even when principals are convinced about which roles are best suited to particular contexts and situations, often staff, supervisor, student and community member expectations differ, placing principals at odds with one or more stakeholder groups."

Supervisory and evaluative responsibilities for principals are substantial and rising. Our sample reported evaluation responsibility for an average of one to two (1-2) assistant principals, five (5) or more department heads, and twenty to twenty-four (20-24) teachers. The median number of observations required annually was thirty to thirty-nine (30-39); the number of summative evaluations required was twenty to twenty-four (20-24). As administrative positions are reduced in response to budget crises, the pressures in this area will continue to build.

Relationships with Superintendents Survey responses clearly indicated the paramount importance of the relationship between principal and superintendent. When asked what their superintendent's primary expectations of them were, principals answered: to efficiently manage the building; to increase student achievement (with frequent mention of standardized test scores); and to keep problems from reaching the superintendent. When asked what they wanted their superintendent's expectations of them to be, there was not significant, direct disagreement between comments for this question and for the previous one. However, the principals put much more emphasis on being the



instructional leader and visionary of the school and much less emphasis on filtering problems for the superintendent. The following responses were typical:

- *“I would like the superintendent to allow me to be the instructional and academic leader of the school even if it means not appealing certain board members or parents.”*
- *“Have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the building. Develop a vision that allows all students to discover their strengths and passion.”*
- *“My superintendent’s primary expectation of me is to promote and articulate the vision for the high school’s educational plan and to implement that plan effectively. She asks me to be a strong leader and a visionary and to have a future orientation.”*

When asked if they believed their superintendent was effective, thirty-eight (38) of forty-four (44) respondents answered “yes”. The most commonly referenced attributes contributing to this effectiveness were a clear vision and excellent communication skills. In particular, a number of principals praised their superintendents for having good communication with board of education members, community stakeholders and members of the public. It is interesting to note that communication with board of education members and members of the public was rated as being more important than communication with building level administrators. A number of principals did state that they appreciated the autonomy and support provided by their superintendents. Those answering “no” faulted their superintendents for having difficulties working with people, particularly with members of the community.

When asked what would most improve the effectiveness of their superintendents and their working relationships, the most common suggestions focused on (1) developing a better understanding of the high school community; and (2) increased involvement with students and the day-to-day life of the school. Coupled with this was the need to communicate a clear vision focused on teaching and learning. A number of respondents expanded on the theme of developing and communicating a clear vision and highlighted the need for the superintendent to focus on implementing a limited number of initiatives. Some of the principals expressed that while they appreciated having autonomy in their decision making, they would like their superintendent to be more supportive of them. Just under half of the respondents stated that they had a good to excellent relationship with their superintendent and that they would not change their current relationship. The two common themes that emerged from principals recommending changes were (1) the need to spend more time together to discuss school culture and develop shared visions; and (2) the importance of developing and maintaining good communications with their superintendent. A number of principals highlighted how important it was for their superintendent to work with the board of education in developing improvement plans.

With regard to evaluation, all but four (4) principals responded that their evaluation was based upon mutually agreed to goals and/or objectives and thirty-two (32) of the forty-four (44) principals reported that they received an annual evaluation in writing. Half of the respondents (22) indicated that they were not certain whether or not the evaluation helped or hindered them in their role as principal. Many of these principals indicated that



their annual goals were prescribed and/or did not reflect what they actually do. Slightly fewer principals (20 respondents) reported that the evaluation instrument helped their performance, many without comment as to how or why. Those that did comment frequently said that the superintendent’s feedback helped them know what s/he expected or that the feedback was supportive and helpful in the learning process for new principals. These comments are representative:

- *“The process helps. I choose my goals but the superintendent has made suggestions also. We have managed to find a compromise with which we have both been satisfied. I have found that reflecting on my results, as well as receiving written feedback from the superintendent, has given me more insight on my performance as principal.”*
- *“Not certain. The evaluation process works well for me and can provide important and meaningful feedback. At times, however, the substance of the evaluation reflects the superintendent’s goals and not mine.”*
- *“Not certain. In the [number of] years I have been here, the superintendent has never asked me to sit with him and set goals for the year. Likewise, I have never had a formal written or verbal evaluation.”*

Job Satisfaction Almost all of the principals surveyed reported liking their job and most stated they would choose to do it again.

To what degree do you like your job?

Very much	36
It is OK	8
Not at all	0

Would you elect to be a principal again?

Yes	34
Not sure	5
No	5

As revealing as the statistics are the principals’ comments:

- *Yes, I’d do it again in a heartbeat!*
- *It is the most challenging, influential, and exciting position in education.*
- *Despite the growing complexity of the position, I would not have spent the last 28 years doing anything else. My job has been challenging and exciting; every day is different. I am fortunate to work with high school kids and mostly excellent teachers who do great things routinely.*

Obviously, there are multiple sources of satisfaction connected to being a high school principal. In response to the question “*What satisfactions does the principal’s position provide you?*,” the overwhelming response by principals was being a part of their students’ growth and success. Principals clearly felt that their work was of value, that they influenced the climate and culture of their schools in positive ways, and that they made a difference in the lives of their students. They also were attracted by the variety, challenge, and often unpredictable nature of the work. Here are some typical responses:



- *I believe that I am making a difference in the lives of those with whom I work and serve.*
- *I enjoy working with kids and providing them with some positive direction and modeling.*
- *I feel I'm a change-maker. As an educational leader, I feel I've already brought my school to a higher standard of performance. I have a vision for school improvement which is working...academically, socially, and civically. Our performance outcomes are strong in some areas and we're working to improve them in others. Supporting kids' positive development is the biggest reward.*
- *Total satisfaction. Things aren't perfect, but they are invigorating and challenging. Despite the problems, everyday I am able to do something positive for a teacher or a student.*
- *I enjoy solving problems and doing things for others. I enjoy helping students and their parents. I enjoy the hustle and bustle of everyday life in high school. I take pride in having a large school that functions well, where students are safe and happy.*

Job satisfaction does not appear to be correlated with salary and benefits. While thirty-three (33) of forty-four (44) respondents expressed satisfaction with their compensation, not one listed it as a reason for being a principal - in other words, as a source of their satisfaction; nor did inadequate compensation appear in any of the narrative responses of principals expressing dissatisfaction and/or frustration with their position. The key issues repeated here were changing, occasionally conflicting, and increasingly overwhelming expectations and, sometimes, a debilitating lack of support and/or respect. Here are the responses of two principals who stated, given the chance, they would not elect to become principals again:

- *Probably not! The amount of time and lack of needed support has had me not take vacations and sacrifice quite a bit with my family. The job description and responsibilities have increased at such a rate that it is virtually impossible to satisfy everyone.*
- *No! We are unappreciated middle-men/women who work harder than any person in the district and are caught between superintendents, teachers, BOE members, and parents. In my district we are sadly understaffed administratively. The abuse we are forced to absorb considering our commitment to good work is unparalleled. With our accountability should come more empowerment, managerially and legally.*

All respondents could identify factors that inhibited their effectiveness and detracted from their level of job satisfaction. Their responses were stunningly consistent: principals need more time, additional financial resources, and the autonomy to make decisions for their school. It is clear that these principals care very much about their students, staff and communities but feel overburdened with expectations that they do not feel they can meet. While they are concerned about burdensome state and federal requirements, contract constraints, parents who have abdicated their responsibilities, and the burden of responding to an inordinate amount of email, they are particularly frustrated



with meetings and directives that are not focused on improving teaching and learning in their schools.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

This section will identify the issues responding principals considered the most important. It will also expand upon their opinions related to *NCLB* legislation, state testing (including CAPT), teacher contracts, and improving student achievement.

Please rank each of the following items (1 – very important, 2 – important, 3 – not important) in terms of issues facing your principalship.

Item	Very important	Important	Not Important
Accountability and credibility	31	13	0
Attracting quality teachers/administrators	42	2	0
Changing demographics	6	19	19
Contractual agreements w/employee groups	3	25	16
Graduation requirements	12	26	5
Inadequate facilities	16	14	14
Inadequate funding for schools	33	6	4
Issues pertaining to equity	9	22	13
Lack of parental involvement/apathy	11	18	15
Lack of community support	12	20	11
Lack of civility (public/students)	12	22	12
NEASC accreditation	18	22	4
<i>No Child Left Behind</i> legislation	16	18	10
Racial isolation	7	22	15
Raising student achievement	31	11	2
Reliance on local property taxes	33	9	2
Special education mandates	23	19	2
State and federal mandates	18	12	3
Student assessment and testing	26	18	0
Student behavior and discipline	11	25	8
Too much responsibility	20	18	6

For this sample of principals, the most important issues, in rank order, were:

- attracting quality teachers and administrators
- state and federal mandates
- accountability and credibility
- reliance on local property taxes
- inadequate funding for schools
- raising student achievement
- special education mandates



The least important issues, in rank order, were:

- changing demographics
- contractual agreements with employee groups
- racial isolation
- issues pertaining to equity
- lack of civility (public/students)
- lack of parent involvement (apathy)

NCLB

When asked “*What, in your view, are the major advantages you will experience in your school as a result of the NCLB legislation?*,” almost all of respondents felt that there were no major advantages. Several commented that the legislation does draw attention to student learning and the importance of helping all students to succeed. Several others accepted in principle the importance of using data to drive school improvement. However, the general sentiment was that the disadvantages clearly outweighed the advantages.

- *I value the fact that NCLB mandates that we look at and educate every child/sub-group. We can no longer be content with having the top 10-20% being successful.*
- *NCLB has focused me on seeking data which can stimulate strategies for school improvement. It has made me reflect on performance outcomes.*

Principals were extremely vocal on the projected negative impact of *NCLB* to their schools. Concerns focused on the over-emphasis of standardized testing; subgroups such as ESL and SPED and their abilities to pass; the diversion of resources from areas not perceived as contributing to score growth; the demoralization of students, parents, and schools; and the time and documentation needed in an environment already stretched to the limit.

- *You will never be good enough. The time demands for reports and testing will decrease learning opportunities for students and we will be restricted with more and more decisions by people who are not practitioners of our profession and for the most part are not familiar with public schools.*
- *It asks schools to be accountable for things beyond the schools’ control. How do we make up for the current conditions of poverty that influence the lives of so many urban students?*
- *The law is intrusive and unmanageable. It has unrealistic end results. It extracts the essence of what education is all about – humanity – and replaces it with sterile test data.*

When asked *What resources would allow you to meet the expectations of NCLB?*, principals mentioned: more funding for teachers to lower class sizes; software and technical support for data management; resources to support paraprofessionals and tutors for remedial help; legislative relief for the most challenged populations (ESL and special education students, students returning from outplacements or from dropping-out, etc.); adequate program materials to support the curriculum; and identification of proven



“closing the gap” programs and the resources to implement them. It is significant that seven (7) principals indicated it was not a matter of resources but rather a moral issue.

CMT/CAPT Testing When asked “*How confident are you that the CMT and CAPT are an accurate indicator of student academic progress and academic achievement?*,” almost all principals expressed confidence in the CMT and CAPT. They stated that they believed the tests . . .

- test important skills;
- are a sound indicator of a cohort of students;
- have enhanced the quality of teaching and learning;
- drive curriculum;
- provide a barometer for assessment practices;
- measure what students have learned (problem solving and critical thinking skills); and,
- are an accurate method of comparing schools to each other.

Concerns expressed by principals included:

- The tests become less of an accurate indicator of student academic progress and academic achievement when comparisons are made from one graduating class to another graduating class.
- The tests alone are not an accurate measure of a student’s capabilities because the skills tested are not comprehensive (students have abilities and skills not tested).
- The tests are not a good measure of the progress and achievement of students who do not test well.
- The results may be unreliable due to scoring errors, and the results are only valid if used appropriately.

The six (6) principals expressing reservations about the CAPT and CMT as accurate indicators of student academic progress and achievement were in agreement with the other respondents in two key areas: (1) the tests are limited and do not test the abilities of all students; and (2) they are only a snapshot look at the overall academic progress and achievement of a student. Principals, then, have a qualified confidence in the value of the CMT and CAPT as accurate indicators of student academic progress and academic achievement.

Only three (3) principals felt that passing the CAPT should be a prerequisite for earning a high school diploma in Connecticut (meaning serve as an exit exam). The forty-one (41) others who stated the CAPT should not be a prerequisite for earning a high school diploma argued, again, that CAPT has limits and is not an accurate measurement of all students’ abilities. They also stated that no single measure should hold such weight for graduation; that some students will never pass; and that the test does not measure growth over four years in high school. There was also concern that there was not a central definition or clear parameters of what passing CAPT means in Connecticut (P.A. 166 permits local boards to set their own standards for passing). Both these respondents and the three (3) who felt that passing the CAPT should be a prerequisite agree that an alternative should be available for those students who do not “pass” the CAPT.



Teacher Contracts Three-quarters of responding principals did not find their ability to enhance the instructional program for students limited by teacher contracts in their districts. However, one-fourth, or twelve (12), believed that their instructional program efforts were hampered in some manner by their district's bargaining unit agreements.

Most who saw contracts as an obstacle to program improvement cited time and/or compensation issues. Examples of comments in this response category include:

- *The teachers' contract limits the number of days that teachers are available to help students.*
- *The contract limits meeting time during the school year and summer - and teachers stick to the contract!*

Other principals who saw the teachers' contract as a hindrance reported that prescriptive contract language, combined with teachers' unwavering adherence to it, has the negative effect of "blocking and/or limiting some school improvement projects." One principal stated, "*I can't release teachers from class to do curriculum.*" While another reported, "*Professional training is not allowed during the school day and school year, which limits our ability to improve teaching skills and improve learning.*"

As stated above, the majority of the responding principals do not find teacher contracts to be a limiting factor in program enhancement. However, since a significant number of principals believe that their ability to improve instructional programs is limited by teacher contracts, further study may be warranted. For instance, it may be helpful to determine if the instructional climate in schools that are not restricted by teacher contracts is more positive than in schools that are restricted – or if there are schools with restrictive language that successfully avoids this problem.

Improving Student Achievement The question "*What would help the most in improving student academic achievement in your school?*," elicited a wide variety of responses. The most frequently cited responses by principals were: increased professional development for teachers (12); better teacher-to-student ratio (10); and greater funding for instructional programs and supplies (8). Those stating the need for increased professional development found that lack of time and lack of funds detracts from this potential improvement area. Those indicating that the most help would come from additional monies placed equal emphasis on supplies and programs. Programs may very well include funding issues that overlap with reducing class size and professional development, the two most frequent responses.

Varying the traditional structures of the school day and calendar as well as the routines of teachers and students was the next most frequent response to this question. Some examples include:

- *Redefining teaching to a 12-month job including R and D as part of the role would also help. Time for curriculum development, critical friends, modeling and study groups, all should be part of each teacher's role.*



- *Staffing to implement an academic lab program with certified content area teachers providing academic support throughout the day to both special and regular ed students. More time during the school day for teachers to meet individually with students.*
- *Smaller class sizes and smaller learning communities with academic advisers.*
- *A longer school day and a longer school year!*

Responding principals also revealed an array of other improvement factors including:

- improving teacher preparation programs;
- implementing a district-wide focus on reading and writing skills;
- repairs and replacement of facility infrastructure;
- creation of alternative school programs;
- a shared vision for school and student expectations;
- increased flexibility in scheduling;
- increased parent involvement;
- additional administrative curricular leaders; and
- more time for teacher collaboration/curriculum development.

Among the diverse responses to this question concerning improving student achievement, two were independent of the central theme of funding issues found throughout most responses: “teacher work ethic” and “staff sensitivity to cultural diversity.” It may be of interest to separately investigate student performance improvement issues that are linked to school budgets as well as those that are not.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on this sample of forty-four (44), the “average” Connecticut high school principal is a fifty-something-year-old first-time principal who has served 10 years in the role and has retirement on the horizon. This “average” principal is more likely to be male than female, though this is changing, and almost certain to be white. S/he is working longer (60 to 70 hours per week) and harder than ever to meet the demands of “multiple masters” and is frustrated by the constraints that limit the time available for the curriculum and instruction work necessary to raise student achievement. This principal is more likely than not to work with a superintendent who shares a common vision and is perceived to be effective but who could be a bit more supportive. This principal and his/her superintendent agree that the most important issues they face together are raising student achievement, attracting high quality administrators and teachers, managing state and federal mandates, and bolstering inadequate sources of funding. This principal, in the face of changing, occasionally conflicting, and increasingly overwhelming expectations likes being a principal and, given the chance, would choose to do so again. This principal draws satisfaction from doing work of value, from positively influencing the climate and culture of a school, and from making a difference in the lives of students.



Given this profile, what are the implications? There are several:

FIRST. Accept the present and projected shortages of principal candidates as real and aggressively recruit promising candidates, many of whom are already teaching in our schools. In doing so, it is imperative for present practitioners and others to do a better job of publicizing to these aspiring administrators the high degree of job satisfaction inherent in the high school principal's role. To quote one respondent, *it is the most challenging, influential, and exciting position in education!* This is the message that needs to predominate: "Sure it's tough, but most things of value are; and you're the right person to take on this challenge."

SECOND. Accept that the role of the principal as presently structured is flawed and support the changes that will allow the principal to focus primarily on being an instructional leader and still live a life apart from school. This recommendation parallels those included in the Hartley report ("The Future of School Leadership in Connecticut 2000") pertaining to role clarity (*the school principal should be given authority, flexibility, and support in leading his or her school*) and the separation of management functions and instructional leadership functions. There is an organizational consulting firm called TBC (The Breakthrough Coach, Inc.) that serves clients who are high performing school principals . . . "working 60 to 70 hours per week, unable to be in classrooms like they need to, unable to develop their staff like they want to, under pressure to raise test scores, and having very little time for themselves personally." Doesn't this sound like the "average" Connecticut high school principal? This is not to suggest that every principal needs a coach of his or her very own; but this is grist for a focused conversation for the leadership team of every district in the state. The discussion needs to be about which of the myriad of demands filling the principal's 60- to 70-hour work week are going to be handled by someone else - or are going away - in order to free the time necessary to be a successful instructional leader.

THIRD. Nurture the relationship between superintendent and principal to their mutual benefit. This study makes clear that this relationship is of paramount importance, at least to principals, and that it is a successful relationship only when both share the same vision and plan for the high school. Again, the Hartley report concurred that successful school leadership is built on shared authority and responsibility (*In the broad sense, this means investing in others and increasing opportunities for individual authority, responsibility, choice and influence*). Obviously, the "investing" process will take many forms. Some "relationships" need only an adjustment in the amount of contact time (in most instances, more; in some, less). Others require more intensive support to develop the requisite management skill set to raise student achievement. A few may even require some outside mediation. Regardless, the way the principal and superintendent work together and support one another is too important to ignore. It is every bit as integral to the school improvement process as the relationship between the classroom teacher and his or her supervisor; but it is rarely acknowledged or addressed.



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The High School Principalship in Connecticut 2004

Please complete the following survey by January 23, 2004. All individual response information will be kept confidential. The purpose of the study is to gather data and publish a monograph on the status of the high school principalship in Connecticut.

Please select the name of your school from the pulldown menu below. Your school name will not be saved with or linked to your responses in any way, we merely want to be sure we receive a response from every school.

PART I. Personal Data

1. What is your current age? (No cheating):

2. Sex?

3. Race or Ethnic Group?

4. Highest Degree Attained? (No cheating here either)

5. Indicate the education reference group (ERG) of your district.

6. Indicate size of your high school.

7. Is your school public or private?

8. Including your current position, how many principalships have you held?

9. Including the present year, how many years have you served as principal?

10. How old were you when you assumed your first principalship? (Stay honest)

11. To what degree do you like your job?

Please comment. Given the chance, would you elect to be a principal again?

12. List in chronological order your previous positions in public and/or private education.

PART II. Contract/Retirement/Compensation Issues

13. During what academic year do you plan to retire?

2003-04

14. What will your age be when you retire?

15. Are you satisfied with your salary and benefits?

Please comment.

16. How is your contract negotiated?

Are you satisfied with the process?

Please comment.

17. Do you have evaluation responsibilities for the following positions - if so, how many?

Assistant Principals

Department Heads

Teachers

How many observations and summative evaluations are you responsible for annually?

18. Does your superintendent evaluate you on a regular basis?

19. Do you receive an annual written evaluation?

20. Is your evaluation based upon mutually agreed upon goals and/or objectives?

21. Is your evaluation summative or formative?

22. Does the evaluation process your superintendent uses help or hinder you in your role as principal?

Please comment.

PART III. Working Conditions of the Principal

23. About how many hours per week, averaged over the period from September to June, do you spend in your present position?

24. Has the number of hours increased or decreased in the past five years? By what percentage?

If the number of hours has changed, are the changes related to instructional or managerial responsibilities? Please elaborate.

25. What percentage of your time do you devote to the following functions of the principalship? List a percentage for each. Are you satisfied with this allocation of your time? If not, select the percentage of time for each function that would satisfy you.

Activity	Actual Pct.	Preferred Pct.
a. Crises management	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

- b. Curriculum and instruction
- c. General Management
- d. Parent/community relations
- e. Personnel matters
- f. Student activities
- g. Student discipline
- h. Other

26. What percentage of your work time each week do you feel you control?

27. How many hours per week do you spend in direct communication with your superintendent?

28. What is your superintendent's primary expectation of you as principal? Please comment.

29. Is this expectation defined as a performance stipulation in your contract?

30. What do you want your superintendent's primary expectation of you to be? Please comment.

31. Do you believe that your superintendent is effective?

Please comment.

32. What in your opinion would most improve the effectiveness of your superintendent?

33. Do you believe it is important to have a close and respected working relationship with your superintendent?

34. What could be done to improve the working relationship between you and your superintendent?

35. What factors inhibit your effectiveness as principal?

36. What satisfactions does the principal's position provide you?

PART IV. Issues and Challenges

37. What, in your view, are the major advantages you will experience in your school as a result of the NCLB legislation?

38. What, in your view, are the major disadvantages you will experience in your school resulting from NCLB?

39. What resources would allow you to meet the expectations of NCLB?

40. How confident are you that the CMT and CAPT state tests are an accurate indicator of student academic progress and academic achievement?

Please comment.

41. Should passing CAPT be a prerequisite (meaning serve as an exit exam) for earning a high school diploma in CT?

Please comment.

42. Does the current teacher contract in your district limit your ability to enhance the instructional program for students?

If yes, what are the provisions that you find limiting?

43. What would help the most in improving student academic achievement in your school?

44. Please rank each of the following items (1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not important) in terms of issues facing your principalship.

- Accountability and credibility.
- Attracting quality teachers and administrators.
- Changing demographics.
- Contractual agreements with employee groups.
- Graduation requirements.
- Inadequate facilities
- Inadequate funding for schools.
- Issues pertaining to equity.
- Lack of parental involvement/apathy.
- Lack of community support.
- Lack of civility (public/students).
- NEASC accreditation.
- No Child Left Behind legislation.
- Racial isolation.
- Raising student achievement.
- Reliance on local property taxes.
- Special education mandates.
- State and federal mandates.
- Student assessment and testing.
- Student behavior/discipline.
- Too much responsibility.

45. What CAS services do you typically utilize on an annual basis? Please check where appropriate:

- Attendance at CAS conferences
- Attendance at CAS workshops
- Attendance at CAS recognition programs
- Consultation with CAS staff
- Membership on CAS board or committee
- Utilize CAS Bulletin and other publications
- Utilize CAS website

Submit Answers