Providing Early Childhood Education in Public Schools: Perceptions of Elementary Principals in Indiana

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By

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PROVIDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS IN INDIANA.

A DISSERTATION

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As President Obama works through his second term, he has recently called on the country to embrace, promote, and extend the early childhood services for the majority of this country’s four year old children. This call to action has captured the attention of government officials, school officials, policy developers, and the community alike. The complexities of early childhood education for all four year olds is a tremendous challenge for all of those who embrace it and wish to implement it. This study investigated and described the challenges of servicing large populations in early childhood, the varied approaches of the past 40 years, the research-based results of such programming, and how the public school environment is the most likely placement for such a massive four year-old educational program. The public school principal was the primary focus of this investigation and identified the principals’ of Indiana’s elementary public schools perspective in relation to early childhood curriculum, instructional practices, and program supervision capacity. This investigation provides formative statistical data that hypothesized the fact that a principal’s level of competency in early childhood is essential to achieving success when providing educational programming for four year-old children.
DEdication

Throughout my life I have been blessed with countless challenges that promoted my participation in continued education and learning. I have always found peace and motivation in the academic arena and value the exposure to those who instruct/motivate learners, young and old. I was blessed that my father and mother always told me that hard work, focus, and determination were the remedy to any challenge, big or small. My success in life, in all facets, has occurred because my mother and father simply believed in me and told me that anything was possible with hard work and determination. My dad, Larry Kaminski, had a motto that “Kaminski’s do, they ignore the can’t, and accomplish what they seek to accomplish.” My parents, throughout this doctoral process have been my greatest supporters, never allowing me to think of giving into the quit that often loomed. The completion of this dissertation and my doctoral program was based in the power of belief. Thank you Mom and Dad for believing in me and developing my self-confidence over the years.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. vii

CHAPTER

I. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... viii
   Area of Concern ................................................................................................................... 1
   Problem to be Studied ......................................................................................................... 2
   Research Question ............................................................................................................ 3
   Important Terms ................................................................................................................ 4
   Significance of the Problem and Justification ................................................................. 6
   Basic Assumptions ............................................................................................................ 8
   Basic Limitations ............................................................................................................... 8
   Summary ............................................................................................................................ 9

II. Review of Literature ........................................................................................................ 10
   Poverty and Historical Intervention .................................................................................. 10
   Benefits of Early Childhood Education .......................................................................... 11
   Exemplar Early Childhood State Programs ................................................................... 13
   Principal in Public Elementary Schools with Early Childhood Programs ................... 15
   Principal Education and Ability to Develop Early Childhood Staff .............................. 17
   Principal and Early Childhood Curriculum .................................................................... 18
   Universal Early Childhood Education Opposition ......................................................... 19
   Poverty Impact on Literacy ............................................................................................. 20
   Policy and Early Childhood Education ........................................................................... 22
   Socioeconomic Level and Literacy ................................................................................. 25
   Key Implications of Early Literacy Development and Developmentally Appropriate Practice ................................................................. 27
   Early Childhood and the Common Core ........................................................................... 29
   Summary ............................................................................................................................ 32

III. Research Methodology .................................................................................................. 34
   Research Design ............................................................................................................... 34
   Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 35
   Composite Score Questions (quantitative process): ....................................................... 36
   Null Hypotheses ............................................................................................................... 36
   Participant Selection – General Survey – Quantitative .................................................. 37
   Survey Design .................................................................................................................. 37
   Participant Selection – Interview – Qualitative ................................................................. 37

   Participant Protection ...................................................................................................... 40
   Procedures ........................................................................................................................ 40
   Data Collection Methods – Quantitative ......................................................................... 40
   Data Collection Methods – Qualitative .......................................................................... 40
   Convenience Sample ........................................................................................................ 41
References............................................................................................................................................... 84

Appendixes
A. INFORMED CONSENT INTERVIEW .................................................................................................. 95
B. SURVEY CONSENT ............................................................................................................................ 97
C. RESEARCH SURVEY – QUANTITATIVE ............................................................................................ 98
D. URBAN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT .................................................................................................. 111
E. SUBURBAN INTERVIEW ...................................................................................................................... 115
F. RURAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT .................................................................................................... 119
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Composite score content based on survey question themes for PLCCS, IECPCS, and UECRCS ................................................................. 38

Table 2. Participants Grade Level Specific Teaching Experience Prior to Principalship ........ 47

Table 3. Principals With an Existing Early Childhood Program vs. Without Mean and Standard Deviation.............................................................. 50

Table 4. Responses of Principals Who Serve in an Urban, Suburban, and Rural Community – Means and Standard Deviation ......................................................... 53
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Area of Concern

Comprehensive early childhood programs and high-quality preschool can help improve school readiness among low-income children, but nationally, fewer than half (46%) of 3 and 4 year olds attended preschool (Halpern, 2013). The nation’s growing gap in income and the increasing geographic segregation of rich and poor make it difficult to generate political support for “other people’s children” (Halpen, 2013, p.48). Without attention to these broader policy trends and political realities, the status and the wellbeing of children is unlikely to improve substantially, especially for the 20 million poor and near-poor living in the country’s most impoverished communities (De Vita & Mosher-Williams, 2001). Only a small percentage of poor children participated in programs of sufficient quality and intensity to overcome the developmental deficits associated with chronic economic hardship and low levels of parental education. Clearly, society is far from ensuring that all children have the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. For children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families, the compensatory role of preschool seeks to minimize later school failure. Thus, preschools must foster a foundation of learning skills that are built upon in elementary schools and beyond (Schuele & van Kleeck, 2010). Poverty limits the chances of educational attainment, yet at the same time, educational attainment is one of the prime mechanisms for escaping poverty. Improving school readiness and child development will reduce poverty-related disparities (Kohler et al., 2013). The essential question then becomes how can the nation close the knowledge gap among early learners; and what policy, practices, and standards will provide the means to finding early childhood program success? As the educational timeline continues into
the 21st century, early childhood advocates and educators must answer the following questions pertaining to universal four-year-old early childhood education: How can public school principals begin to appropriately build early learning services for four-year olds; and what role does the local public elementary principal play in ensuring that the early learning process is developmentally appropriate, theoretically sound, and accessible to ALL children at a high quality level?

**Problem to be Studied**

Research on early childhood leadership among public school elementary principals remains sparse and inadequately theorized, and the voice of the early childhood profession remains marginalized (Stamopoulos, 2012). Now is the time for further research on this topic to ensure that policymakers and governing bodies make the right decisions and succeed in providing the majority of the country’s four-year-olds early childhood education. Fiscella (2008) stated,

> Effective early childhood interventions exist throughout our country; we just need the national will to fund their full implementation. We acknowledge that universal preschool will be costly, but we believe that not providing high quality developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive preschool from high quality teachers will be even costlier. (p. 1)

This study sought to provide policy makers and educators alike the opportunity to identify areas of strength and weaknesses in the level of preparedness/readiness among elementary public school principals in their ability to serve early learners in the public school setting. The findings can provide the information necessary for policy makers when releasing early childhood policy to public school administrators. There have been no such studies completed in the state of Indiana, however a great deal has been learned in Boston, Massachusetts, where research has
occurred where a universal program has been implemented in the public school arena. Boston and other state programs were reviewed within the literature relative to this study.

**Research Question**

The aim of the present study was to examine the general capacity of Indiana’s public elementary principals to effectively implement early childhood education programming for 4-year old students in their community. The study analyzed the perceptions of public school principals regarding their ability to identify/implement appropriate early childhood programming. The study investigated the principals’ capacity to identify and implement appropriate curriculum, ability to evaluate teachers of early learners appropriately, ability to provide appropriate professional development to early childhood staff, and their general understanding of policy/procedures for the service of young children. Therefore, the overall research questions that guided this study are listed below:

1. Do public school principals believe that their educational background has an effect on the following variables?
   - Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   - Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
   - Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
   - Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
   - Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

2. Do public school principals believe that their specific teaching experience has an effect on the following variables?
   - Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   - Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
• Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
• Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
• Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

3. Do public school principals believe that they can successfully create the following early childhood program components?
• Appropriate early childhood program
• Early childhood curriculum
• Evaluate early childhood teachers
• Provide appropriate early childhood professional development
• Follow state regulations for early learners

4. Do public school principals believe that early childhood programming is unique and that servicing students in pre-kindergarten requires a knowledge base different than that of a kindergarten or elementary school service background?

Important Terms

The terms used within this study may have multiple meanings depending on the background of the reader. It is important to define and understand the following terms that were used for the purpose of this study.

*Achievement gap* is identified as the gap between learning outcomes among different minority groups compared to the middle or upper class peers. Extensive research shows that African Americans, those of low socioeconomic status (SES), and other disadvantaged groups continue to exhibit poorer school performance compared with middle and upper-class White students in the United States’ educational system (Miranda, Kim, Reiter, Overstreet, & Maxson, 2009).
Composite scores are calculated from data in multiple variables in order to form reliable and valid measures of latent, theoretical constructs. The variables that are combined to form a composite score should be related to one another. This can be tested through factor analysis and reliability analysis. Composite scores are calculated utilizing the sum of all related questions.

Early childhood or preschool program refers to a state preschool program having the following components: it is funded, controlled, and directed by the state; serves children of preschool age; has early childhood education as the primary focus; offers a group learning experience at least two days per week; is separate from subsidized child care; is not primarily designed to serve children with special needs although they may be included; and is separate from Head Start programming (National Institute for Early Education Research [NIEER], 2012).

Educational background describes the professional educational experiences that public school administrators have encountered, specifically what grade levels they were assigned to teach and for how many years. The term also describes the nature of the participant’s educational experience in the university or college where they have completed a degree (B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., etc.)

Poverty (absolute, relative, and subjective poverty) terms are used when defining what it means to be poor. Absolute poverty is defined by persistent poverty and deprivation of basic needs, and is the most common form of poverty measurement in the United States. Relative poverty is defined as the lack of financial means combined with other factors such as cost of and standard of living. One is living with subjective poverty when he or she perceives their income level as being insufficient (Kopczysza-Sikorska & Szyszko, 2001).

Poverty threshold(s) determines the number of individuals living in poverty across the United States. The federal poverty guidelines are utilized for the identification of potential
participants in federal programming such as Head Start, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicare (Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation [ASPE], 2014).

*Public elementary school* is accredited and authorized to serve all and any students in a designed community boundary under the rules and regulations of the Indiana Department of Education and local governing authority.

*Targeted preschool or early childhood* programs target a specific demographic for service. In this particular study the majority of the research provided is targeted in nature, focusing on specific research on programs for students of poverty and or more urban in nature.

*Theory-based or theoretical sampling* refers to the process of selecting incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

*Universal preschool or early childhood* describes an early childhood program that is open to all children in the community of a required age range. The term universal ensures that all children have the option for early childhood and or preschool education.

**Significance of the Problem and Justification**

President Obama inherited the challenge of overcoming the woes of the United States educational system, a system that has shown limited success for over 40 years. Research provides data over the past decades that students of color or students of poverty are simply not achieving at the same rate as students in the wealthier demographic. Educational writer Conzemius (2010) described the public education system as overloaded, confusion-filled, chaotic, and incoherent. Schools tend to operate in sporadic fashion and offer programming with a reach that is a mile wide and an inch deep (Conzemius, 2010). Although Obama has yet to initiate the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, he has given hints of
This is education’s Sputnik moment right now! The educational system is underleveraged on the idea side, but highly leveraged, theoretically, on the money side. We must do something fundamentally different in certain communities if we intend to make a difference. (Rivera & Crew, 2010, p. 1)

Although the reauthorization lingers, President Obama has made clear statements that he wants to ensure that there is a pipeline of workers skilled in STEM competencies (science, technology, engineering, and math). This is a workforce issue, an economic-development issue, and a business imperative. And the best way to ensure return on these investments is to start fostering these skills in young children (Chesloff, 2013). The President’s plan calls states to provide preschool for every four-year old from low- and moderate-income families and calls for an expansion of Early Head Start, the Federal program designed to prepare children from low-income families for school, to broaden quality childcare for infants and toddlers (Rich, 2013).

Chesloff (2013) stated that the Center for American Progress and the Center for the Next Generation study have noted that half of U.S. children get limited or no early childhood education, and there is no national strategy to increase enrollment, although China plans to enroll 40 million children in preschool, an increase of 50%, by 2020. There are a total of 24 million children from birth to age five in the United States. Clearly, President Obama’s call for universal four-year old education is justified and at the forefront of his leadership vision for the country. During President Obama’s first term, there was an increasing argument for public
support for early childhood education by military and business leaders, economists, and hosts of well-financed non-profit organizations (Mardell, Fiore, Boni, & Tonschell, 2010).

Basic Assumptions

It is essential that the researcher clearly define the assumptions of the study when conducting a research study. Assumptions inherent in this study include that participants be licensed and public elementary school principals. This study’s focus was on the role of the public elementary principal thus the focus on licensed and public elementary school principals. Although the participants of the study were licensed public elementary principals, it was in no means a guarantee that the population had a consistent or common understanding of early childhood research, programming, or curriculum. It was also assumed that participants would respond to the survey in an honest manner.

Basic Limitations

Limitations existed in this study due to a variety of factors. One limitation of this study was due to the fact that this survey was distributed to over 800 public elementary principals in the state of Indiana. It was unlikely that 100% of the population would participate and return survey data. I only interviewed three principals, one for each demographic region, thus the data gathered was limited and less than likely represented the grand population. This was a natural limitation that impacted the results based on the number of the respondents. Another limitation of this study was that Indiana is one of the few states who have yet to require full day kindergarten for all five-year old children. The majority of states in the United States have already implemented full day kindergarten and many others have implemented some form of universal or targeted preschool to four-year old students. The fact that Indiana has not legally mandated kindergarten nor any form of early childhood education at the state level may have
caused a decrease in participation as the general public principal population might not see early childhood education for four-year olds as a priority or a relative notion at this time. Participants also reported their information in private; it is possible that self-reporting may lend to over or under ratings of specific answers in regard to early childhood. It is also likely that respondents who took greater interest in the topic of study responded so the issue of response bias must be acknowledged.

Summary

Now is the time for further research on this topic to ensure that policymakers and governing bodies make the right decisions and succeed in providing the majority of the country’s four-year-olds early childhood education. Effective early childhood interventions exist throughout the United States; one just needs the national will to fund their full implementation (Fiscella, 2008).

Prior to discussing my methodology and thoroughly describing my findings for this study, Chapter 2 presents an examination of the research related to the topic of early childhood intervention: historical programs and studies, impact on students of poverty, principal administrator research, and notations of current/past public early childhood programs. Literature relevant to the research question is provided, exemplifying a gap in research, which merits attention and provides justification for the current study. Lastly, Chapter 2 provides a description of the ecological perspective that will serve as the foundation and theoretical framework for this study.
Poverty and Historical Intervention

As it is widely known and understood, students who live below the poverty line, often in non-traditional family settings, are entering schools without the basic required skills for kindergarten and first grade. In 2007, it was reported that over 7 million children did not have access to an appropriate early educational system and in most cases were spending early years in non-educational nor developmentally supportive environments (Zigler & Finn-Stevenson, 2007). The reality, statistically supported, is that most of poor minority children will not utilize early learning intervention or supports based on their inability to participate or access the services (Sylvia, 2010). For example during the 2010-2011 school year only 28\% of all four-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in state financed preschool programs (Rich, 2013). This year’s NIEER (2012) preschool yearbook report showed that as states emerge from the recession, pre-K continues to suffer, even as the number of students whose families lack the means to provide them with high-quality preschool education programs has increased to an all-time high (Mathis, 2012). Head Start program statistics provide insight into the lack of participation or access to early childhood programs for children of poverty. Despite the funding increases for Head Start over the past six years, federal programs now serve only 42\% of eligible children. There is less, only 4\%, of Early Head Start students accessing the programs available (Barnett, Carolan, Squires, & Clarke, 2013). As principals around the nation begin to address the potential for serving early populations in their public school facilities, it is essential that they understand the history of early childhood development and the success of past programs.
Historical longitudinal studies such as the Perry Preschool Project (1962-1967), the Abecedarian Project (1972-1974), the Chicago Child Parent Centers (1983-1986), and the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes study (1993) have consistently found that children who participate in quality pre-school programs do, in fact, perform better on a range of measures compared to their peers who did not (Ewen & Mathews, 2005). The Perry Project and Abecedarian Project specifically targeted high-poverty populations, and the study results indicated that early intervention does have a positive impact on the lives of impoverished children (Schweinhart, 1994). Due to the rich data of these particular programs and their statistical relevance, it is an appropriate time for modern day principals to acknowledge the findings of these studies and to begin spending their time, energy, and intellect locating successful early childhood programs that are universal in nature. Learning from the successes and failures of others, although paying close attention to the historical research, will ensure a proper and positive universal program birth.

Benefits of Early Childhood Education

Throughout the past 50 years, researchers throughout the world have studied the impact of early childhood and the overwhelmingly positive effect early intervention has on the lives of children. What are the positive benefits of such programming for students in the early years? Consider the effects of universal pre-Kindergarten on cognitive development. Do programs have an impact that is economically viable for any one population or for all of our students in this country? William Gormely of Georgetown University found that children who had been in pre-kindergarten for a year had a 52% increase in letter-word recognition and 27% edge in vocabulary over children the same age who were just entering without early intervention. In fact the benefit of pre-kindergarten instruction in elementary schools is often noted and appreciated
by the kindergarten instructors who teach the following year (McAllister, Wilson, Green, & Baldwin, 2005). Very few alternative investments can promise the kind of return (10% or higher) compared to early childhood education. Studies show that the rest of society enjoys the majority of the benefits, reflecting the many contributions that skills and productive workers make to the economy. High-quality early childhood education would make a huge difference in getting vulnerable young children ready to start kindergarten (O’Brien, 2012). Research has shown that high-quality early childhood education cuts in half the rate of children being held back a grade, decreases juvenile arrests by a third, and impacts college attendance by a whopping 80% and employment by 23% (Winsler, Tran, Hartman, Madigan, Manfra, & Bleiker, 2010). Providing specifically designed learning opportunities for young children to talk to each other has multiple benefits: it promotes the development of oral language as a tool for social interactions; it creates the conditions for the emergence of private or inner speech that will serve as a mechanism for self-regulation; it promotes social interaction and turn taking; and it provides for growth in knowledge of vocabulary and syntax that are foundation of early literacy development (Bodrova et al., 2011).

In 2008, researchers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services explored the Miami School Readiness Project in which highly impoverished students’ preschool and childcare sites were compared (Winsler et al, 2010). The researchers measured each for achievement in cognition as well as reading and fine-motor skills. They focused on three different forms of school service: center-based care, fee-supported public pre-K, and Title I public pre-K. Center-based care housed low-income children who received subsidies to attend the private center-based school. Title I public pre-K students were offered free preschool in an elementary school setting, and the fee-supported students had to pay their own tuition in the
same setting. The researchers found that each pre-K experience had a positive impact on children. The center-based and public pre-K program, however, were realizing their goal of increasing school readiness for impoverished students (impoverished students defined by qualifying for State free and reduced meal assistance). Unfortunately, only 14% of the population, within this study, was utilizing the available subsidies. A sizable number of children, many who were eligible, were not taking advantage of the programs (Winslder et al, 2010).

Early-learning environments provide children with a structure on which to build upon their natural inclination to explore, to build, and to question. Each of these skills is pre-requisite to meeting the expectations of the new 21st century learning initiative (Chesloff, 2013). They do not imply that early learning become a mirror of kindergarten and primary learning. Sustained empirical evidence reveals that young children learn through play, which is related to the developmental domains and to the subjects of all disciplines (Wood, 2007).

**Exemplar Early Childhood State Programs**

In the United States, only six states (Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma and West Virginia) have implemented highly structured universal early childhood programs. A study of two groups, kindergarten and those with pre-kindergarten across a diverse cultural group, provided results that showed that students in the program had extensive growth in performance on cognitive tests of pre-reading and reading skills, prewriting and spelling skills, and math reasoning and problem solving abilities (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2005). Although the study targeted students of poverty, the researchers pointed out that statistical evidence exists that specific SES factors impacted access to such universal programs. Essentially, even when a system is built for all students, many will not participate due to access issues. During the 2010-2011 school year, only 28% of all four-year-olds in the United States
were enrolled in state-financed preschool programs, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (Rich, 2013). Policy was written to deter poverty impact with great intention, but the reality of the plan/policy and the collision with the harsh world of poverty, simply led to the same proverbial dead-end of past programs (Ceglowski, 1998). In 2013, the general notion of education for all four-year-olds is considered a real and probable notion, and one that many states are beginning to take into great consideration. More districts across the United States are seeing the advantages of school readiness and preparing youngsters for their K-12 careers (Dessoff, 2010). Schools that are early childhood-ready are more prone to succeed if their intervention instructional strategies focused on three specific elements: first, specific tools acquired by children, such as external mediators and private speech; second, specifically designed process of adult-child interaction aimed at social mediation of learning; and third, children’s engagement in mature make-believe play (Bodrova et al, 2011).

In 2012, the top four most effective four-year old early childhood programs could be found in Florida (#1), Oklahoma (#2), Vermont (#3), and Wisconsin (#4). Although Oklahoma remains in second place, one can target the state as a good model for a potentially successful early childhood program. Oklahoma is the only state that has offered early childhood to a high number of students and has done so for the longest period of time in the country’s history. In 1980, Oklahoma established their Early Childhood Four-Year-Old pilot program that was designed and implemented with the goal to serve all four-year old students in the state. In 1998 the service target (total served) was actually accomplished. To put this statistic in perspective, one can compare the service-targeted achievements in early childhood programs in Oklahoma and Indiana. In 1998, Oklahoma made service achievements of 98%, whereas in 2012, Indiana made less than 4%. Any educator or advocate for early childhood education cannot ignore the
dark contrast in the percentage served, especially over such a course of time. Oklahoma’s early childhood progress is noteworthy, however, in that was a small drop in their student service in 2012. One must note that, though the program was available to 98% of the population, the total serviced was around 81% (Mathis, 2012).

The benefits of early educational intervention in the form of early childhood services has proven to have a positive effect on children, and even more so on those of poverty. Educators, researchers, psychologists, and theorists have also identified the weakness within the early childhood data set that poses very clear challenges for those considering universal implementation. First, Chesloff (2013) stated that the Center for American Progress and the Center for the Next Generation study have noted that half of U.S. children get limited or no early-childhood education, and we have no national strategy to increase enrollment. Providing access for all children, regardless of SES and demographic location, is high on the list of issues to resolve.

Principal in Public Elementary Schools with Early Childhood Programs

In cities such as Boston, Massachusetts, where universal pre-K was implemented, the public schools are being called upon to offer and house such programming. When public universal services, like pre-k, are placed into a K-5 setting, there is a very real and specific set of challenges that elementary principals face. The universal pre-school concept challenges a principal’s leadership capacity, curriculum decisions, staff development offerings, and professional evaluation. Boston, Massachusetts Public Schools, although not a leader in state universal early childhood offerings, do offer insight into the utilization of public schools to house such programs. In 2005, Thomas Menino, Mayor of Boston, initiated a universal public four-year old early childhood program. The program was housed into 66 elementary schools (75% of
all public schools in Boston) where the school system, principals, and teachers started with limited guidelines, curriculum, less than desirable leadership plan, and no evaluation plan. Researchers have begun to dig into the Boston public universal and have discovered and identified specific problems or weaknesses in regard to leadership, instruction, and implementation. Each of the focus areas stem from the assigned principal’s inability to recognize or understand early childhood services (Dessoff, 2010).

Many early childhood programs, throughout the U.S. have worked on pre-literacy skills, teaching letter and number recognition, as well as basic counting, but how much academics were taught and how it was taught, has continued to be a subject of considerable debate among early childhood educators and researchers. Public school teachers and administrators haven’t been in tune with proper instruction for this age group and have tried to adapt lessons they developed with K-5 students (Wilson & Lonigan, 2010). There was also a very quick and negative trend in principals throughout the district to place their weakest teachers in the early childhood setting. This ill-advised teacher placement trend, lack of curricular understanding on behalf of the principals, and diverse instructional capacity of principals has revealed a great need for intense professional development planning and implementation (Dessoff, 2010).

In states attempting to implement universal early childhood not only did principals struggle with general understanding of early learners, they also recognized the need for having strong teachers who understood high pedagogical levels. For example, in programs such as Tulsa’s universal pre-kinder program and Head Start facilities throughout the country, one element that researchers highlighted was the fact that pre-Kinder program teachers were not compensated at the same level as their public teacher counterparts. Program policy, access issues, and a lack of quality instructional capacity have plagued programs from their initial
development (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2005.) Principals in public early childhood settings must use their political leverage to ensure that early childhood teachers will be compensated at an equal level compared to their K-12 peers.

If policy makers truly intend to create a successful early childhood system that is effective, they must ensure the basics components of effective programming are understood by school principals across the public system nationwide. Variability and mutation of instructional practices will undoubtedly occur because teachers and principals build upon past practices. Without a framework to control the teacher’s innate creativity, the fundamental practices will fracture (Coburn, Cynthia, Pearson, David, & Woulfin, 2011).

Principal Education and Ability to Develop Early Childhood Staff

In North Carolina where 700 elementary schools housed early childhood classrooms, a group of researchers explored the perceptions of principals who served as leaders to the early learning programs in their public school. The principals noted that their primary concern was their lack of preparation for the preschoolers. Among the respondents, 26% of the principals stated that they were in dire need of further education in early childhood and lacked the understanding of developmental milestones for early learners. Professional development was a recurring weekly request during this research (Shore, Shue, & Lambert, 2010).

Although there is a limited research base on principal preparation or perceptions of early childhood education, it is safe to imply that a massive public early childhood program launch for four-year olds will be a monumental task for those involved. Based on the research completed in Nebraska’s public schools, elementary principals need more training to understand the standards for early learning, the state/federal guidelines to ensure their physical buildings are ready for young learners, and professional teaching standards (Marvin, 2003). They are also in need of
guidance in evaluation, for using the same evaluation system for elementary or upper schools is highly inappropriate. In Boston, the public principal leaders quickly became immersed in early childhood training and did so side-by-side with their teacher counterparts. Columbia University and other local higher education institutions provided intensive learning workshops in which principals learned what was appropriate and not appropriate for young learners. They also found that early learners require different needs for before and after care, and that creating a successful preschool program also requires changing the culture of the school from content/grade level to holistic in nature (Shore et al., 2010). Lasser and Fite (2011) reminded principals that the maximum benefit for early learners will arise when they carefully attend to the developmental characteristics of preschoolers, cultural, and linguistic diversity, ecosystemic context, and the mandates on teacher training.

Principal and Early Childhood Curriculum

One of the most challenging decisions for educators in a public institution is that of a decided and agreed upon curriculum. What the best practices are for instructing early childhood learners is a highly debated topic. In order for principals at the elementary level to successfully deliver early childhood instruction, it is essential that they understand the broad perspectives of curriculum and research of past and present. The fear that principals will assume initiatives that are similar or that mimic K-3 curriculum is real. All too often principals apply downward pressures from K-3 into early childhood, a misunderstanding that has grave impact on early learners (Halpern, 2013). In 2009, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed a position statement on early childhood curriculum. The NAEYC states that the implementation of curriculum must be thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive
and likely to promote positive outcomes for children (NAEYC, 2009). Needless to say, principals’ interpretation of such a statement was substantially varied.

In 2011, in response to the end of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) era, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) founded the Pre-K Coalition (PKC). The PKC placed their energy in supporting principals and educators who serve two-thirds of the children receiving early childhood services. Whether the principal serves as the direct administrator of a pre-K program, provides space for early learning, or partners with local preschool providers, it is essential that resources are available to ensure that appropriate decisions are made for early learners. The PKC call elementary principals to establish a culture of shared responsibility among all partners in the learning community, to encourage the connection to families, to ensure that appropriate early learning settings are present in the school building, and to support instruction that aligns with a continuum of learning from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 3 (Bryant, 2011). In 2005, the NAESP also released a position statement on “What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do,” a guide that outlined the six standards for what principals should know and be able to do as leaders of early childhood learning communities. The six standards are: embrace early childhood learning, engage families and communities, promote appropriate learning environments for young children, ensure quality teaching, use multiple assessments to strengthen learning, and advocate for high-quality universal early childhood education (NAESP, 2011).

Universal Early Childhood Education Opposition

Dr. James Heckman, a Nobel-Prize-winning economist, completed a tremendous amount of work in early intervention, and in 2005 was asked if universal pre-K was the answer. In his statement, he clearly suggested that the universal program could not outdo or substitute what the
middle and upper class already do for their children. Instead Heckman suggested that the limited funding be utilized to target intervention for students of poverty and those who are disadvantaged (Holland & Soifer, 2008). The same notion was pointed out after the release of the University of Georgia study on universal preschool. Although school readiness was clearly improved for those who participated, it was argued that formal schooling could be harmful to children of the middle and upper class. The cost vs. outcome was and is often the center of attention within the universal debate (Bunch, 2007).

Scholarly studies have cited programs that do in fact work. Often times attention is focused on truly superior early-intervention programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project and the Abecedarian Project, and noted they yielded dramatic long-term gains (Gormely, 2013). The Perry Project out of Ypsilanti, Michigan, encouraged the children to plan, initiate, and discuss their learning activities. The program was 2.5 hours per day and home visits from teachers were routine and intense. Holland and Soifer (2008) pointed out that although the Perry project often provides a prime basis for assertions of enormous social and economic benefits, the study only provided data for 58 children. The researchers questioned the concept of home visitation/family intervention as being the key cause of improvement for these students vs. the actual early learning experience itself. They also question whether replication of this program is a valid approach based on the limited sample.

**Poverty Impact on Literacy**

As prominent researchers argue to target limited funding toward early learners living in poverty, it is prudent to examine the literature base relevant to this population, and how such an investment might narrow the existing achievement gap between children living in poverty and their more advantaged Peers. Baydar, Brooks-Gunn, and Furstenberg (1993) reviewed 20 years
of longitudinal data from a sample of Black children of teenage mothers from the Baltimore metro area. The researchers noted significant literacy problems in the United States; and that in 1987, the number of adults who were not functionally literate was estimated at 54-64 million. It was also noted that one-fifth of the all young adults and about one-half to one-third of minority young adults in the United States read under the eighth-grade level. More recently, and most troubling, the child poverty rate increased to 23% in 2011, just two years after one of the greatest recessions in United States history had ended. Even more disturbing was the fact that the poverty rate for very young children, those under three years old, was 26% (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013).

Yet another area of study has focused on the types of literacy experiences children have at home. Schickedanz (1990) focused on oral language development in different home contexts to provide evidence about how cognitive and linguistic supports present in the early years affected their relationships to skills foundational to literacy and language development. This study and others like it have continued to loosen the grip of general explanations for the wide differences in literacy skill found among different groups of children. At the end of a continuum of advantage, a confluence of constitutional, social, economic, and cultural circumstances for poor advantage or enriched advantage can coalesce in what she called swamping conditions. That is, at the extremes of the swamping conditions, one can have the tremendous positive effect on those on the enriched end, and a conversely dense concentration of disadvantage for those on the opposite end (Horowitz, 2000).

Storch and Whitehurst (2002) analyzed the potential of code-related and oral language abilities acquired by the end of preschool to predict children’s reading achievement in elementary school. They utilized the Head Start (626 students) program as their research
population, and found that code-related skills (i.e., letter name knowledge, phonological awareness, and name writing) predicted decoding skills in beginning readers. These same skills were considered highly related in the preschool years at 48%. Within the oral language domain, approximately 90% of the variance in child’s oral language ability in Kindergarten was accounted for by preschool ability.

Research has demonstrated that children of low SES generally exhibit lower language skills than those expected of their more advantaged grade level peers. Thus children of low SES have been found to use fewer words in spontaneous speech, build their vocabularies at much slower rates, and score lower on standardized language assessment when compared to their middle class peers (Huttenlocher, Vasileyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2002).

Policy and Early Childhood Education

Based on the research presented it is important that modern early childhood service be rooted in the framework of literacy while embedded in the social and cultural perspectives and practices of communities. Early childhood leaders and teachers might consider children’s literacy development as a dynamic, developmental process involving language, thought, and social interaction. This idea presents the notion that early childhood education may not be as powerful of an intervention and impact less student’s academic outcomes if the focus is only on kindergarten readiness. Instead the literacy should be viewed as a series of dynamic teacher-child and child-child interactions and focuses on the formation of “literacy as community” that ensures collective literacy experience between teachers, students, and families (Britsch & Meier, 1999). Policy and implementation intend for such balance to occur, but often uninformed implementation can cause a negative and opposite effect.
McLaughlin (2006) described the interaction between policy design and agency characteristics that represent an important source of variation in policy implementation. She noted that Weatherley and Lipskey’s (1977) analysis of the pivotal role of implementers at the bottom of the system led to an appreciation that change is ultimately a problem of the smallest unit; the “street-level bureaucrats” roles as interpreters of responders to policy is as critical as that of policymakers at the top of the system who formulate the policy. Simply put, it is the street level bureaucrat that ultimately maintains the professional and personal motivation to comply with or carry out policy directives—or not. This ultimately reminds one that organizations do not act, but people do. A great example of such policy implementation variation lies in the initial implementation of Title I of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This ambitious federal effort to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged children operated significantly differently in states across the country. In New York the program had a highly professionalized, well-staffed, pro-active state department, but in other states the Title I program operated more or less as a pass-through program to local administrators (McLaughlin, 2006). Policy implementation and its success for modern day early childhood intervention remains in the hands of the administrator’s, principal’s, or director’s inherent ability to understand or comprehend the actual policy. The notion that the leader has the ability to ensure that teachers and staff are able to comprehend the policy confirms that the early childhood intervention is effective. This notion also deters the sometimes common teachers’ statement that they are already “doing it”, as policy is delivered to new structures in the organization (Coburn, 2004).

Learning to read is arguably the most important accomplishment of the early years of schooling. The ability to read fluently and with good comprehension opens doors to human
knowledge, which in turn, can lead to better jobs and a more productive, satisfying life. On the other hand, failure to acquire basic literacy skills in the early years of schooling too often leads to disappointment, disengagement from the educational process, and drastically lowers expectations for success beyond the traditional school experience (Fisher & Adler, 2001). Research has found that poverty has a pervasive negative impact on children’s functioning across developmental areas, an impact that increases over time as children struggle to be successful in school. There is an increasing gap in achievement related to literacy skills between preschool children in poverty and their middle and high-income peers (Lonigan, 2003).

Reading intervention in the form of policy distribution continues to be commonplace among the federal and state governments in our country. After the release of the Report of the National Reading Panel in 2000 and the initiation of NCLB, standards for learning became a high priority. Dickinson (2002) wrote, gone were the admonitions against direct teaching of content area academic skills, such as those related to alphabetical knowledge. Instead, it was noted that children needed to learn letter names and letter sound combinations. Standards for all learners were developed including those for early learners. Although this was one of the most successful policy implementations in recent times, the drastic differences in expectation and assessment for such standards for early learners was substantially different throughout the United States (Strickland et al., 2004).

Current federal policy in the post NCLB era focuses on five literacy domains as essential to successful reading development: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Often forgotten are motivation and engagement. Motivation and engagement certainly count as initial antisocial behavior, and subsequent classroom participation accounts for 60% of the indirect effects of achievement (Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999). Children learning to
read are, of course, expected to comprehend their texts. This is a relatively simple task in the initial phases of learning, with both vocabulary and syntax in beginning texts simplified for easy access. As texts become increasingly difficult, automatic word recognition allows the reader to focus attention on constructing meaning rather than on decoding words. However, skillful decoding alone is insufficient for successful comprehension. Hence the danger in early reading assessment practices trickling into the upper primary years where focusing solely on fluency rate is unlikely to identify true reading needs (Patatore, Cassano, & Schickedanz, 2011).

**Socioeconomic Level and Literacy**

Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, and Hemphil (1991) showed that children from homes where parents model the uses of literacy and engage children in activities that promote basic understandings about literacy and its uses are better prepared for school. Even before entering school, a child’s academic ability can be predicted based on characteristics of his or her parents, including their income, occupation, and level of education (Schiff & Lotem, 2010). It is highly recognized that features such as the quality of home literacy environment (availability of books and hours spent reading), degree of early exposure to print, academic expectations of parents, and quality of school instruction were found to play roles in determining and maintaining the gap in language and reading performance of children from different SES backgrounds (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). There are great disparities that exist among middle- and lower-income communities in resources available in homes or child-care sites. Feitelson and Goldstein (1986) found that 60% of the kindergarten age children in neighborhoods where children performed poorly did not own one single book. Given the estimate that a typical middle-class child enters first grade with approximately 1,000 hours of being read to while the corresponding child from a low-income family averages around 25 hours (Goldstein, 1986).
Bronfenbrenner (1979), an ecological researcher, noted that teacher-child interactions that have close physical access to books mattered. The physical proximity of books, especially attractive, high-quality books within young children’s sight lines, has a coercive effect. In such literacy-enriched environments, however, young children need to be engaged in discovering and using the physical environment as an important medium for their learning transactions.

The SES differences also exist in literacy experiences of young children. Middle-class homes are more likely than low-income homes to be full of literacy artifacts, such as books, newspapers, magazines, mail, pens, pencils, crayons, writing pads, paper, alphabet blocks, and characters from books. Middle-class children are thus more likely to observe and be engaged in literacy events. They see their parents reading and writing daily, and they are more likely to play with literacy artifacts and to read (Goldstein, 2011).

As early childhood providers attempt to close the long lasting knowledge gap between students of poverty and their middle and upper-class counter parts, it is essential to ensure that the content of the curriculum selected for instruction is grounded in evidence-based intervention practices. The attainment of phonological awareness, print concepts, alphabet knowledge, and literate language are pivotal precursors to success in reading. Embedded or explicit models for emergent literacy intervention have evolved, with each structuring activities and experience in a unique way to enhance children’s emergent literacy skills (Justice & Kaderavek 2004). This embedded approach is based on the premise that children learn through self-initiated, contextualized interactions with literacy activities integrated throughout the day within the routines and social context. The adult’s role in this model is as facilitator within the context of developmentally appropriate practices that are accomplished in an enriched play setting, that is print rich, where adult and children share in story book reading (Jackson et al., 2006).
Key Implications of Early Literacy Development and Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Particular skills and abilities acquired in the early childhood years influence competency at different points in the literacy-learning trajectory for all children. Curricula intended to guide both parents and teachers in their interactions with young children must be as relentlessly focused on developing vocabulary and language knowledge as they are on developing code knowledge (Ladd et al., 1999).

The ways parents and teachers engage children in language matters. Talk is important, but density matters most when talk is rich with rare or sophisticated words and focused on topics that build children’s conceptual knowledge. Utterances are most helpful when they support elaboration, clarification, and reasoning. Because parents and teachers do not always use learning language that develops elaboration, clarification, and reasoning, it is essential that deliberate and sustained learning occur to develop such types of linguistic interventions in the home and school (Biemiller, 2006).

The types of books parents and teachers share with children are essential to the learning process. Texts that introduce children to unfamiliar topics, interesting and complex syntax, and rare or sophisticated words are likely to contribute more to vocabulary and language learning than books low on these characteristics. Having access to literature through books matters in early learning. A study involving high poverty students and increased book collections provided measures that with greater access, children scored statistically significantly higher than the control peer group who had limited book access. Findings provide powerful support for the physical proximity of books and the psychological support to childcare staff on children’s early literacy development (Neuman, 1999).
Sharing books in the home and at school is extremely important during the learning day. Book discussions, incorporating elaboration of the vocabulary, plot, language, and interesting important words contribute to a child’s success in reading. Read-alouds are a context for expressive language developed through interactions between the teacher and the child. In early childhood, language comprehension and expression are developmental milestones, and by three to five years old, children begin to turn the conversation over to one another (Berk, 2006). Opportunities to develop phonological awareness must not be overlooked. Interesting and playful opportunities to solve alphabet, letter, and word puzzles, to use or manipulate letters, and to read and respond to alphabet books helps children learn letter names and increases their knowledge of letter names as they correlate to phonemic awareness. Using print across the context of all environments is essential. Opportunities for young children to engage in naturalistic and meaningful interactions with interesting and appealing literacy-related activities and materials promote development and learning. Children put forth higher levels of attention and effort in activities in which they are interested. This interest results in higher outputs of energy, focus, and attention that ultimately increases learning (Baroody & Diamond, 2012).

Nurturing writers and writing must occur in the learning day for young children. Ray and Glover (2008) reminded us that there are key essentials for understanding young writers; young children are like any other writers, just with less experience. Functional writing and compositional writing require different stances, and people with strong writing identities are comfortable with both. Children who make picture books are engaging in complex thinking about writing as a process. Using writing to compose involves much more than transcription. Composition development is multidimensional and supporting a child’s image of self as a writer is critical to his or her overall development. Providing writing time, in a variety of contexts,
inspired by play and discover, and well connected to literacy is key for young writers (Paratore et al, 2011).

Helping make academic content meaningful to children, building on what children know and then providing additional knowledge is crucial to developing competent readers. Reading is complex, and we need a variety of instructional approaches to ensure that children engage with the teacher, with other children, and in individual practice (Strickland et al., 2004). It is clear that the extent and nature of early literacy experiences is of great importance for children’s later academic achievement. Learning to read and write is an interactive, complex and multifaceted process that requires a variety of instructional strategies and approaches (Jackson et al., 2008). The challenge is to identify effective teaching strategies that can maximize young children’s learning while having a tremendous impact on altering the negative literacy behaviors of families of poverty. Teachers must also have the skills and knowledge to structure instructional activities that can optimize young children’s literacy achievements (Justice & Pullen, 2003). It is known with certainty what works for developing strong early literacy skills for children in the early learning setting. With such robust information at hand is it potentially time to find a way for ALL of the Nation’s children to access effective early learning experiences and to enable their parents to build a stronger literacy environment? Better yet do the nation’s public school administrators have the educational capacity or ability to ensure that these key elements of literacy instruction are in place and held to an appropriate level of fidelity to implement such programming effectively?

**Early Childhood and the Common Core**

Halpern (2013) offered the elementary principal who leads and services pre-kindergarten learners a very fair warning. Primary education goals, tactics, and standards were never
designed or intended to fit the early learning environment. Elementary principals leading early childhood services must begin to build an appropriate transition from early childhood that fits the new common core standard era. Although the research within early childhood learning is very clear, the harms and hazards of implementing a common core type of curriculum in the early years are less known. The principal must keep his or her mind on the research of early learners and begin to develop a process that better bridges the service of the early learner to the common core (Mead, 2011). In today’s world, one finds anxious parents who instruct their children more and more, at younger and younger ages, until they are reading books to babies in the womb. These same parents pressure kindergarten and pre-schools to become more like elementary schools (Gopnik, 2011). It is essential that the principal of tomorrow’s public early-learners fight these mounting pressures by marketing the truth about early-learning theory and help the community understand what is best for their children.

Avoiding pushing elementary school practices into early childhood is essential, however, principals must also attend to the concept of curriculum in a manner that is appropriate to early childhood. Oftentimes educators think of the curriculum as something that is purchased and then implemented, but in the early childhood arena we must think of curriculum as an outcome of constructivist theory. Constructivism is a theory about learning, not a description of teaching. No master recipe or pat set of instructional techniques can be abstracted from the theory and proposed as a constructivist approach to teaching. Learning is not the result of development; learning is development. It requires invention and self-organization on the part of the learner. The teacher needs to allow learners to raise questions, facilitate dialogue to further thinking, promote discovery and reflection (Fosnot & Perry, 1996). Constructing an understanding requires that the students have opportunities to articulate their ideas, to test those ideas through
experimentation and conversation, and to consider connections between the phenomena that they are examining and other aspects of their lives (Cobb, 1996). According to Devries and Zan (1994), the best ways to promote children’s construction of knowledge are to engage their interest, inspire active experimentation with all its necessary groping and error, and foster cooperation between adults, children, and among the children themselves. Constructivism empowers interest, experimentation, and cooperation and should be embedded in all instructional offerings with early learners. The heart of constructivist teaching is his quest to inspire the child’s own purpose for engaging in the learning activity (Devries, 2002).

The schools (as a whole) have a history of failing to respect the integrity of other institutions that join them in efforts to better meet children’s needs, in this case adding early childhood programming to a public primary institution. Thus far, all that has been accomplished by tying early childhood more closely to elementary schools is making early childhood less early-childhood-like. The needs of schools are just too powerful and end up overwhelming the identity of institutional partners. The first can best be described as losing the present to the future. The second problem is a misunderstanding of the processes at the heart of child development (Halpern, 2013).

Although these guidelines are helpful to principals, they do not dictate or direct any one form of curriculum and or assessment. This is recipe for variability that will certainly impact universal early childhood programming for principals throughout the country. Appropriate curriculum and stronger guidelines may be required prior to implementation of universal early childhood.
Summary

In reflection on the pros and challenges of early childhood at the universal level, this researcher can secure three basic questions, based on the understanding of knowledge based on the theory of Vygotsky. These questions help design core recommendations for ensuring that universal pre-k has a positive outcome on the lives of children. First, what is the relationship between development and education, or rather, what is the theoretical background for understanding the role each assigns to knowledge in the development of the child? Second, what is knowledge to teach? Last, what knowledge is required for teaching (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2009)? Vygotsky’s work is a good reminder for principals new to early childhood to focus on the following key components while providing large scale early learning opportunities for 4 year-olds:

- Understand the child and his condition as he enters school. Connect with the child, understand his or her physical, social, emotional, and cognitive level.
- Hire teachers with appropriate training/licensure to ensure the knowledge of teaching is apparent.
- Ensure that principals of early childhood have the appropriate knowledge and background for early childhood to ensure appropriate instructional practices, appropriate curriculum, and understanding of assessment in the early years.
- Honor the research of play, provide research-based appropriate play and implement play assessment.
- Adhere to Bronfenbrenner theory: create a web of community support that enhances the early childhood learning experience at the micro, meso, and exo systematic levels.
• Develop and systematically deliver a researched-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

These six points of reference for success in the development of an early childhood education program connect directly with the study’s research questions and are noted in the next chapter labeled methodology.
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This mixed-methods research study was designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative information about elementary principals’ perspectives on providing early childhood education for four-year old students in their public elementary school buildings. This study has two components. First a general survey (quantitative) was sent to all public elementary school principals in the state of Indiana, regardless of their urban, suburban, or rural environment. The survey portion of this study was designed to generate quantitative data and will assist in generalizing the perspectives of active elementary principals and their readiness to implement, supervise, and evaluate an early childhood program for four-year old students in their school buildings. The second portion of this study includes a purposive, criterion, and convenience sampling procedure (qualitative). I identified and selected one principal from each demographic region (urban, suburban, and rural) to interview to identify specific trends of perception within the demographic regions. Participants were selected using points of contact from past professional interactions that were easily accessible to me. The survey and interview research were selected for this study to obtain data from all public school elementary schools as to define the principals’ perspectives on their capacity to implement an early childhood program for four-year old students in the public school setting, their ability to select and implement an appropriate early childhood curriculum, their ability to evaluate early childhood teachers, their ability to develop and offer appropriate professional development to staff, and their ability to understand and comply with state early childhood regulations. This study produced and will provide
baseline data of the perspectives of principals in the state of Indiana in regard to their ability to implement early childhood programming for young learners.

Research Questions

1. Do public school principals believe that their educational background has an effect on the following variables?
   a. Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   b. Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
   c. Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
   d. Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
   e. Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

2. Do public school principals believe that their specific teaching experience has an effect on the following variables?
   a. Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   b. Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
   c. Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
   d. Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
   e. Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

3. Do public school principals believe that they can successfully create the following early childhood program components?
   a. Appropriate early childhood program
   b. Early childhood curriculum
   c. Evaluate early childhood teachers
   d. Provide appropriate early childhood professional development
e. Follow state regulations for early learners

4 Do public school principals believe that early childhood programming is unique and that servicing students in pre-kindergarten requires a knowledge base different than that of a kindergarten or elementary school service background?

Composite Score Questions (quantitative process)

1. Does degree type, years of teaching experience, school enrollment (size of population), and years as principal serve as significant predictors of the principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score?

2. Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal's demographic region?

3. Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school has a current existing early childhood program?

4. Is there a significant difference on the universal pre-k program readiness composite score based on the principal's demographic region?

Null Hypotheses

1. A principal’s educational background does not affect his or her ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms.

2. A principal’s specific teacher experience does not affect his or her ability to understand early childhood state regulations.

3. Principals in the public setting do not feel that they can implement the following early childhood components.

   a. Appropriate early childhood program

   b. Early childhood curriculum
c. Evaluate early childhood teachers

d. Provide appropriate early childhood professional development

e. Follow state regulations for early learners

4. Public school principals do not believe that early childhood programming is unique and servicing students in pre-kindergarten does not require a knowledge base that is different than that of a kindergarten or elementary school service programming.

**Participant selection and quantitative survey.** All public elementary school principals leading a public school with primary grade students at the time of the study were invited to participate in an educational research survey. There were an estimated 800 potential participants available to take this survey in the state of Indiana. Participants were classified by data sample into the following categories: gender, level of academic attainment, degree focus, years’ experience as an administrator, years of experience as a teacher, grades taught, demographic region of the school, school size, and those with or without early childhood programming in their current school setting. Participants were notified of any potential harm or risk and were protected from any potential negative effects of the study.

The survey used was designed and developed based on the discovery of prior research noted in the literature review. To provide validity to the survey there was a sample data set that was reviewed by experts in the field and based on their feedback adjustments were made to the survey prior to its finalization. In order to ensure reliability a Cronbach’s alpha was used to ensure internal consistency among the survey questions that make up the inferential section. The survey was administered with a Cronbach’s alpha score of .81 that was higher than the required level of .70. With this score, it was determined that the results of the survey were reliable. To define the data set, the principle researcher designed three specific composite scores for three
defined elements that were highlighted by the content of the survey questions. These composite scores were complimentary to the research questions by defining the common elements of principal readiness across all research subcategories. The composite scores and relationship to specific survey questions are: Survey questions (Appendix C) that link to the principal leadership capacity composite scores are questions 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22; survey questions that link to the impact of early childhood program composite scores are questions 11, 14, 15, and 28; survey questions that link to universal early childhood (pre-k) readiness composite scores are questions 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. The composite scores described earlier provided me the opportunity to collect the total sum of the questions measured in each of the three composite scores as a quantified statistic. Table 1 below provides survey question content themes in correlation with the composite score section it was identified with.

Table 1

*Composite score content based on survey question themes for PLCCS, IECPCS, and UECRCS.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLCCS</th>
<th>IECPCS</th>
<th>UECRCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Impact on Students (All)</td>
<td>Understanding of Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Impact on Students (Poverty)</td>
<td>Support for Government and Policy (Gov. Pence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Impact on Students (middle class/ affluent)</td>
<td>Workload Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcoming and Integrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Early Childhood Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant selection and qualitative interview. For participant selection the principle researcher used a purposive, criterion, and convenience sampling procedure that ensured that the depth of the reasoning was understood in relation to the general survey data collected. This qualitative data sample, although small, ensured that the outcomes of the study are meaningful and related to the reasoning of the general data sample. To gain access to participants for the study, a formal email was sent to a principal in each region following the distribution of the survey to all elementary principals on June 9, 2014 and June 16, 2014. In the email, I offered their background information, the purpose of the study, and the agreement for participation form. A formal request was offered to complete the interview in their own school or town setting, unless they decided otherwise. After receiving permission from each principal, I scheduled and completed the interviews. The questions posed to qualified respondents were general in nature, essentially pushing respondents to describe their rationale in depth for each question within the survey. The interview consisted of a variety of open-ended questions relative to the answers they provided on the qualitative survey: “Tell me more about why you feel that way.” “What do you mean by that answer?” “What experiences in your professional career have impacted your feeling about this particular answer?” The participants all met one specific criterion; they were required to be a licensed elementary principal currently assigned to a public school. Exclusion criteria also existed. Any principal who did not meet the criterion or were not a licensed principal and or did not currently act as a principal in a public school setting were excluded.

Participant Protection. Names of participants were not requested or required. School names were an obvious link to the participant’s identity so the schools were coded by region: urban, suburban, and rural depending on community size, and easily selected during the survey. No participant, school, district, or community was identified within this survey or interview
process. If a participant was interested in the results they were offered the opportunity to leave contact information in the form of an email and they could receive the final results.

Prior to the participants engagement with the survey they received an email with the informed consent process fully displayed (Appendix A). Participants who engaged in the survey agreed to the terms of the consent and understood that they could opt out at any time by not submitting the online survey or by opting out of the interview.

Procedures

**Quantitative Data Collection Methods.** The data were collected through the distribution of an online survey sent through Qualtrics (online survey software and insight platform) using an email list-serve captured via the Indiana Department of Education on June 9, 2014. A follow up email was sent on June 16, 2014 to non-responders. The survey data were collected and returned through Qualtrics by email submitted by the participant. The data were collected and organized into categories related to the research questions and the specific answers of the public elementary principals’ perspective. Disaggregated data were compiled and analyzed based on the specific principal perspective feedback that was relative to early childhood educational capacity to implement an early childhood program for four-year old students in the public school setting, define their ability to select and implement an appropriate early childhood curriculum, assess their ability to evaluate early childhood teachers, define their ability to develop and offer appropriate professional development to staff, and rate understand and comply with state early childhood regulations.

**Data Collection Methods.** Three public elementary principals were interviewed, one per region (urban, suburban, and rural) and a constant comparison was utilized to code the data.
received in the open-ended questioning format. Selective coding ensured that themes, relationships, and validations of relationships were identified within the survey data.

**Convenience Sample.** The survey was sent to 800 public school principals who service elementary students in the state of Indiana. The electronic invitation was delivered by email initially on June 9, 2014, and a follow up on June 16, 2014, that provided the intent of the study, the anonymity of the results, and required consent forms. The population targeted in this study was limited to licensed Indiana public elementary school principals. The study included all public elementary schools regardless of region and provided access to urban, suburban, and rural principal perspectives. Interview candidates were selected from among the groups of urban, suburban, and rural principals who participated in the survey and who I had contacted directly or through another personal source within his or her professional network.

**Method of Analysis.** The data were compiled to determine a range of perception of Indiana principals in the elementary setting specific to the following focus areas: determined by providing four-year old early childhood education in the public school setting.

1. Principal early childhood education/background experience.
2. Ability to select and implement an appropriate early childhood curriculum.
3. Ability to evaluate early childhood teachers.
4. Ability to develop and deliver appropriate staff development for early childhood teachers.
5. Capacity to implement a program – policy and regulation understanding.

**Quantitative Null Analyses**

**Composite null #1.** The educational level, degree type, years of teaching experience, previous teaching assignment, and years as principal do not serve as significant predictors of the
principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score. A stepwise multiple regression was utilized due to the multiple predictor variables attempting to explain a significant amount of variance in the criterion variable. This procedure addressed the first composite score in regard to leadership capacity.

If the null was rejected, the researcher examined the unstandardized partial regression coefficients per all significant predictors to determine the predicted change in the orientation variable for one unit increase in a significant predictor while holding all other variables constant. Also if there was more than one significant predictor the standardized partial regression coefficients were examined in order to rank the significant predictors. This particular output was placed into z-scores, allowing the comparison to occur on a variable that previously had effect matrix.

**Composite null #2.** There was no significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal’s demographic region.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized as the research was seeking data that showed a significant difference of one dependent variable with one independent variable that has at least three levels. This procedure addressed the composite score based on the principal demographic region.

If the null was rejected, the researcher ran a post hoc test to determine where the differences lie. If the assumption of homogeneity variance was met then a Tukey HSD test was utilized. If the assumption of homogeneity variance was violated the Games-Howell post hoc test was utilized because this test did not assume equal variances on the dependent variable among the levels on the independent variable.
Composite null #3. There was no significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school had a current existing early childhood program. An independent sample \( t \) test was utilized during the research process and was very similar to the one way ANOVA except it defined only two levels and explained both the composite score of principal’s with an existing early childhood program and define overall readiness of the principal for running a the universal pre-K program (Universal Readiness Score).

Composite null #4. There was no significant difference on the universal pre-K program readiness composite score based on the principal's demographic region.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized as the research was seeking data that showed a significant difference of one dependent variable with one independent variable that has at least three levels. This procedure addressed the composite score based on the principal demographic region.

If the null was rejected, I ran a post hoc test to determine where the differences lie. If the assumption of homogeneity variance was met then a Tukey HSD test was utilized. If the assumption of homogeneity variance was violated the Games-Howell post hoc test was utilized because this test did not assume equal variances on the dependent variable among the levels on the independent variable.

Summary

I gained permission from the Ball State University Institutional Review Board to conduct research examining Indiana elementary principals’ perspectives on early childhood programming.

I also gained expert feedback on survey validity from professionals in the field of elementary education. I sent an email with research descriptors, potential risks, and following up information to all listed Indiana public elementary school principals on June 9, 2014. A follow
up email was sent on June 16, 2014, after the original email invite. Results were released to the
participants who requested the research outcomes and results. During the survey distribution
period, I sent a formal email to three principals (one per region) requesting permission for a face-
to-face interview. After consent was granted, the interviews took place. The quantitative survey
data were paired with the qualitative interview data and reported appropriately in Chapter 4 in
distinct sections (quantitative and qualitative).
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter restates the study’s research questions and hypotheses, presents the results of the data analyses used to answer each of the questions, and provides a discussion of the findings for both the quantitative and qualitative research completed. The quantitative data are defined first, beginning with descriptive analyses and followed by the inferential findings. The second half of the results chapter defines the qualitative composite data, descriptions, and relationships.

Quantitative Results

Descriptive Results

Participants. A total of 165 participants, who were Indiana public elementary principals, responded to the survey out of the 800 potential responders for a rate of 20%. Of the 20% there were 53 men (32.1%), 111 women (67.3%), and one unidentified participant (.6%). A total of 162 (98.2%) of the participants surveyed had valid principal licenses and three (1.8%) stated they were not currently licensed and should not have participated in the survey. Thirty-four (20.6%) of the participants had master’s degrees, 110 (66.7%) had obtained master’s degrees and had one or more additional hours of college or university credit, of 10 (6.1%) had doctoral degrees in education, and 10 (6.1%) principals had Ph.D. doctorate degrees.

A total of 99.4% of the participants had earned a degree beyond their bachelor’s degrees; however, one participant did not report (.6%) a degree type. When asked what degree type each participant had received, 14 (8.5%) stated they had focused on curriculum and instruction, 139 (84.2) stated a general administration focus, three (1.8%) stated early childhood, and eight (4.8%) stated “other.” A total of 16 (9.7%) participants had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 58 (35.2) had 5-10 years of prior teaching experience, 44 (26.7%) had 10-15 years of prior teaching
experience, and 46 (27.9%) had taught 15 or more years. When describing the tenure as a principal, 21 (12.7%) had 1-3 years of experience as the lead principal, 28 (17%) had 3-5 years of experience, 49 (29.7%) had 5-10 years of experience, 35 (21.2%) had 10-15 years of experience, 15 (9.1%) had 15-20 years of experience, and 17 (10.3%) had 20 or more years of experience as a principal.

A total of 53 (32.1%) participants represented schools that were located in urban settings, 58 (35.2%) represented schools located in the suburban region, and 52 (31.5%) represented schools located in the rural region. A total of 19 (11.5%) supervised schools with 250 or fewer children enrolled, 67 (40.6%) supervised school with 250-500 students enrolled, 69 (41.8%) supervised 500-800 students, and 10 (6.1%) supervised 800 or more students. When asked if their current school had a pre-school or early childhood program, 67 (40.6%) of the participants stated yes, and 98 (59.4%) of the participants stated they did not.

Table 2 describes the grade level that the participants taught prior to or during their principal leadership in their career. It is important to remember that participants may have taught at multiple levels and at different points in their career, both prior to or during their principal leadership tenure. One should also note that the majority of the participants had more experience in Grades 1 through 5 than in pre-K or Grade 6 and beyond.
Table 2

*Participants Grade Level Specific Teaching Experience Prior to Principalship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Kindergarten (early childhood)</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University/College</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative survey data. The overview or total sample in relation to the survey questions provided specific mean and standard deviation. An $M$ of 9.28 and $SD$ of 1.277 was defined when asking respondents to report their level of belief in relationship to early childhood has a positive impact on the achievement in elementary school. When respondents were asked
about their level of belief specific to helping students of poverty, they reported $M = 9.65$, $SD = .963$ and when describing the impact of middle or upper class, $M = 8.19$, $SD = 1.644$.

Respondent’s level of support required to select an appropriate curriculum was $M = 5.89$, $SD = 2.839$. When describing how the principal’s educational background focus compared to ability to evaluate early childhood teachers, $M = 6.80$, $SD = 2.666$. $M = 5.99$ and $SD = 2.469$ defined no additional evaluation training was necessary, and $M = 6.96$ and $SD = 2.286$ was assigned to the principal’s ability to provide appropriate staff development for early childhood teachers. The confidence level in providing appropriate professional development had $M = 6.30$ and $SD = 2.415$.

Mean (6.04) and standard deviation (2.729) described the level of state regulation understanding and ability to comprehend such; $M = 6.74$ and $SD = 2.584$ described the level of Governor Pence’s sincerity of implementation of early childhood. When describing the population’s level of excitement for a bigger push for early childhood education, $M = 8.18$ and $SD = 2.459$ was identified. Level of confidence that the principal could handle the extra workload was defined with $M = 5.68$ and $SD = 2.956$. The level of welcome from a current staff to a new early childhood teacher or program was defined, $M = 8.65$ and $SD = 1.698$. Finally, $M = 7.22$ and $SD = 2.261$ described the overall belief that early childhood programming was, in fact, unique and different than elementary education programming.

**Composite scores.** I also defined three composite scores within the data; the first one, principal leadership capacity composite score (PLCCS), was $M = 45.187$, $SD = 10.915$. The impact of early childhood program composite score (IEPCPCS) was $M = 34.290$, $SD = 4.520$. The last was universal pre-K program readiness composite score (UECRCS), $M = 36.836$, $SD = 8.038$. 
Descriptive Results - Principals With vs. Without an Early Childhood Program

Participants. Of the 67 respondents who had programs, 18 (26.9%) were men, and 49 (73.1%) were women. Of the total, 64 (95.5%) were licensed, and three (4.5%) stated they were not licensed. Nine (13.4%) held master’s degrees, 47 (70.1%) had a master’s plus one or more hours, three (4.5%) had Ed.D. or D.Ed. degrees, and seven (10.4%) earned Ph.D. degrees. Only seven (10.4%) of the principals with a program had backgrounds in curriculum and instruction, 52 (77.6%) had backgrounds in general administration, three (4.5%) had backgrounds in early childhood, and four (6.0%) in “other” degrees. A total of six (9%) had taught for 1-5 years, 27 (40.3%) had taught for 5-10 years, 14 (20.9%) had taught for 10-15 years, and 20 (29.9%) had taught for 15 or more years. Twenty three (34.3%) of the principals represented urban schools, 20 (29.9%) represented suburban schools, and 24 (35.8%) represented rural schools. Eleven (16.4%) had schools with fewer than 250 students, 25 (37.3%) had schools with 250-500 students, 27 (40.3 %) had schools with 500-800 students, and four (6%) had schools with 800 or more students.

Table 3 represents the descriptive data analyses for the survey responses of principals who currently had early childhood programs compared to those without early childhood programs. When reviewing principal respondents mean data with early childhood programs, there were three distinct increases in relationship to the whole group mean. The largest increase was the principals’ work schedule and providing enough time for early childhood work at +64 change in mean ($M = 6.32, SD = 2.73$). The second largest mean increase was the principals’ perceptions in regard to their ability to provide professional development for early childhood staff with a mean increase of +46 ($M = 6.75, SD = 2.23$). The final largest increase was the welcoming of early childhood staff at +33 ($M = 8.98, SD = 1.38$).
Table 3

*Principals With an Existing Early Childhood Program vs. Without Mean and Standard Deviation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question Summary</th>
<th>With an Existing Program</th>
<th>Without an Existing Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + All Children</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>1.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + Poverty</td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + Mid/Up Class</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>1.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed Background Curricula</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>2.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Need Support Curricula</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>3.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed Background Eval EC</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>2.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation System for EC</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>2.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Dev. For EC</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>2.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current PD is ok for EC</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>2.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed Background Regs</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>2.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ability to Adhere to Reg</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>1.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Pence EC Plan</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>2.419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question Summary</th>
<th>With an Existing Program</th>
<th>Without an Existing Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Supports Pence EC</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>2.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Work Schedule + EC</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>2.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Welcome EC</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>1.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Agree that EC unique</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>2.328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest decrease in mean relationship was -58 ($M = 5.31$) with regard to the principal’s need for help with professional support in curriculum selection. A reduction of mean by -33 identified the principals’ educational background and ability to select curriculum, and both evaluation and professional development were down -21.

**Descriptive Results**

**Participants.** Of the 98 total responders (see Table 3) who did not have an early childhood program, 35.7% were men and 63.3% were women. All participants were licensed public elementary principals, and the majority (64.3%) had earned master’s degrees plus hours. Only 25.5% had master’s degrees, and 7.1% had earned Ed.D. or D.Ed. degrees. A very small percentage (3.1%) of the responders had earned doctorate or Ph.D. degrees. Principals mainly studied administration as 88.8% responded accordingly, and only 7.1% had a curriculum and instruction background. Four other participants selected “other” and did not identify specifically with any one selected area. A total of 10.2% of the participants had 1-5 years as administrators,
31.6% had 5-10 years of experience as administrators, 30.6% had 10-15 years of experience as administrators, and 26.5% had over 15 years of administrative experience.

This particular group had a very even grouping of demographic assignments with 30.6% urban, 38.8% suburban, and 28.6% rural. A small percentage (8.2%) of the respondents stated they served in schools with fewer than 250 students, and 42.9% of the group stated they worked in schools that served 250-500 and 500-800 students. Only 6.1% of responders stated they worked in a school that served over 800 students.

**Quantitative survey data.** Of the 98 respondents in the rural group, the PLCCS mean was 45.979 and the standard deviation listed was 10.225. The impact of IECPCS mean was 34.020 and had a standard deviation of 4.976. The UECRCS had a mean of 36.38 and a standard deviation of 7.761.

Table 3 also represents the responses of principals without an early childhood program in their school environment. A comparison of means of this group with the whole sample showed the following data were unique and interesting to the study. The greatest mean increase was the principals’ need for curriculum assistants with an increase of 39 ($M = 6.38, SD = 2.63$). The second largest was the principals’ background in relationship to curriculum with an increase of 22 ($M = 7.62, SD = 1.96$). Finally, both evaluation systems and ability to provide professional development increased +14.

The three largest decreases in mean relationship were the principal’s work schedule providing time for early childhood with -43 ($M = 5.25$), a -30 change in mean occurred with the current professional development suits early childhood question ($M = 6.00$), and the staff welcoming a program was -23 ($M = 8.42$). Table 4 discusses the comparison of means and standard deviation between the urban, suburban, rural groups.
### Descriptive Results – Principals in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Schools (Table 4)

**Table 4**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question Summary</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + All Children</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>9.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + Poverty</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>.669</td>
<td>9.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC Impact + Mid/Up Class</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>1.381</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed Background Curricula</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>1.986</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Need Support Curricula</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>3.056</td>
<td>5.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed Background Eval EC</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>2.399</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation System for EC</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>2.368</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Dev. For EC</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>2.065</td>
<td>7.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current PD is ok for EC</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>2.308</td>
<td>6.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ed</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>2.522</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question Summary</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Ability to Adhere to Reg</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Pence EC Plan</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>2.526</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Supports Pence EC</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>2.375</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Work Schedule + EC</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>2.885</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Welcome EC</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>1.904</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Agree that EC unique</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>2.115</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants. Of the 53 principals who represented the urban sector, 12 (22.6%) were men, and 40 (75.5%) were women. A total of 51 (96.2%) were considered to be licensed principals of which eight (15.1%) had earned master’s degrees, 37 (69.8%) had master’s degrees plus hours, two (3.8%) reported Ed.D. or D.Ed. degrees, and five (9.4%) had doctorate or Ph.D. degrees. Only four (7.5%) received a degrees in curriculum and instruction, 44 (83%) received degrees in administration, two (3.8%) received degrees in early childhood, and two (3.8%) claimed “other.” Prior teaching experience was recorded as four (7.5%) with 1-5 years, 18 (34%) had 5-10 years, 18 (34%) with 10-15 years, and 13 (24.5%) had 15 or more years of experience. Four (7.5%) had schools with fewer than 250 students, 19 (35.8%) had schools with
250-500 students, 26 (49.1%) had schools with 500-800 students, and four (7.5%) had schools with 800 students or more.

**Quantitative Survey Data.** Of the 53 respondents in the urban group, the PLCCS mean was 46.924 and the standard deviation listed was 9.875. The impact of IECPCS mean was 35.264 and had a standard deviation of 3.126. The UECRCS with a mean of 37.603 and a standard deviation of 7.669.

When reviewing the total respondents of urban demographic, there are three very large increases in mean relationship to the whole. First, at +58 ($M = 6.62$, $SD = 2.52$) was the principal’s educational background and ability to understand state regulations for early childhood. Next with an increase of +36 was early childhood impact on middle- and upper-class students ($M = 8.55$, $SD = 1.38$). Finally the principal’s ability to evaluate early childhood teachers increased a total of 33 points ($M = 6.32$, $SD = 2.36$). Interestingly this data set had only one decrease (-9) in the relationship of means when rating the level of staff acceptance of an early childhood program.

**Suburban Respondents.** Of the 58 respondents in the suburban sector 16 (27.6%) were men, and 42 (72.4%) were women. All but one (1.7%) noted they did not have a principal license. Thirteen (22.4%) had master’s degrees, 34 (58.6) had master’s degrees plus hours, eight (13.8%) had Ed.D/D.Ed degrees, and three (5.2%) had doctorate or Ph.D degrees. Eight (13.8%) had curriculum instruction degrees, 45 (77.6%) had administration degrees only, five (8.6%) claimed to have an “other” degrees. A total of six (10.3%) had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 23 (39.7%) had 5-10 years of teaching experience, 12 (20.7%) had 10-15 years of teaching experience, and 16 (27.6%) had 15 or more years of teaching experience. Four (6.9%) had
schools with fewer than 250 students, 23 (39.7%) had student bodies of 250-500, 27 (46.6%) had student bodies of 500-800 students, and four (6.9%) had over 800 students in the student body.

**Composite Score Summary of Suburban Responders.** Of the respondents in the suburban group, the PLCCS mean was 43.1154 and the standard deviation listed as 10.376. The IECPCS mean was 32.730 and had a standard deviation of 6.129. The UECRCS with a mean of 36.384 and a standard deviation of 7.761.

When comparing the mean of suburban respondents to the means of the whole population there were three distinct increases that stood out. First, with an increase of +19 (M = 8.38, SD = .895) was the principals’ belief that there was a positive impact for students of middle/upper class. Second, with an increase of +18 (M = 6.17, SD = 1.33) was the belief that the evaluation system was appropriate for early childhood. Finally, with an increase of +17 (M = 6.47, SD = 2.34) was the belief that current professional development matched the needs of early childhood.

The three largest decreases occurred in the notion that the work schedule allowed the principals to work with early childhood with a decrease of -30 (M = 5.38), the principals’ background and ability to evaluate with a decrease in -29 (M = 6.51), and a decrease of -23 in regard to the principals’ ability to understand state regulations (M = 7.70).

**Rural Respondents.** Of the 52 rural respondents 24 (42%) were men, and 28 (53.8%) were women. Fifty-two (100%) were considered to be licensed principals of which 12 (23.1%) had earned master’s degrees, 38 (73.1%) had earned master’s degrees plus hours, no one (0%) reported Ed.D or D.Ed degrees, and two (3.8%) had a doctorate or Ph.D. degrees. Two (3.8%) completed their degrees in curriculum and instruction, 48 (92.3%) completed their degrees in administration, one (1.9%) completed a degree in early childhood, and one (1.9%) chose “other” as a degree. A total of six (11.5%) had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 16 (30.8%) had 5-10
years of teaching experience, 14 (26.9%) had 10-15 years of teaching experience, and 16 (30.8%) had 15 or more years of teaching experience. Eleven (21.2%) had schools with fewer than 250 students, 25 (48.1%) had schools with 250-500 students, 14 (26.9%) had schools with 500-800 students, and two (3.8%) had schools with 800 or more students.

**Composite Score Summary of Rural Respondents.** Of the 52 respondents in the rural group the PLCCS mean was 43.1154 and the standard deviation listed as 10.376. The IECPCS mean was 32.730 and had a standard deviation of 6.129. The UECRCS with a mean of 36.384 and a standard deviation of 7.761.

A comparison of rural means to that of the whole sample showed a tremendous amount of negative or decreases in means. The largest decrease was at -61 (M = 7.58) in regard to early childhood impact on middle/upper class children. The second largest decrease was -51 (M = 5.48) in regard to the evaluation of early childhood children. Last, a -41 (M = 7.77) was recorded for the support of Governor Pence and his early childhood initiative for students of poverty. There were only three gains in means relationship. First, a gain of +17 (M = 8.10, SD = 1.58) was shown for the principals’ ability to adhere to state regulations. A +8 (M = 5.76, SD = 3.00) was recorded for the principals’ work schedule allowing the early childhood program work, and finally, a small +2 gain (M = 8.67, SD = 1.59) was stated in regard to welcoming the new staff of early childhood teachers.

**Inferential Results**

The first research question asked whether the principals’ degree types, years of teaching experience, school enrollments, and years as principals served as significant predictors of the principal early childhood leadership capacity score. Multiple regression was used as it allows for two or more predictors to be compared at the same time as it assesses the direct and combined
relationships between variations in a single criterion variable’s value and variation in considered independent variables (Keller, 2006).

To ensure the validity of the multiple regression, a variety of assumptions were tested. First, the independence of residuals was checked to ensure that there were no correlations between the residuals within the model. In this situation, the Durbin Watson test was utilized and produced a score around two providing evidence that there was little likelihood of a correlation between the residuals; thus, the assumption was met. Next, linearity was investigated to ensure that each of the predictor variables within the model was in fact related (linearly) to the criterion variable. This was accomplished by plotting the standardized residuals vs. the unstandardized predicted values within the study. In this case, I was able to identify the residuals in a horizontal band located within the plot, thus, ensuring that the assumption was met. Homoscedasticity was used to identify if the residuals were equal for all predictors and ensured that the residuals were equal for all predicted values of the criterion variable. In this study, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met as no residual spread occurred.

The test of multicollinearity ensured that the predictor variables were not too heavily correlated and allowed the end result to determine what exact predictor variable explained the variance with the criterion variable. I checked the tolerance levels and the assumption was met as the tolerance levels of the predictor variables for each of the predictor variables were above the recommended .2 level.

Detecting outliers is essential during such a study and ensures there are no data points that fall outside of the typical range of the pattern. By examining the standardized residuals I was able to confirm that no standardized residuals were outside of the standard deviation range of 1.5 from the edge of the box plot. Normality was also checked and a normal p-p plot of
regression standardized residual was used to identify if the residuals were aligned with the diagonal line on the normal p-p. In this case, they did so and the assumption was met.

**Research Question #1.** Does degree type, years of teaching experience, school enrollment (size of population), and years as principal serve as significant predictors of the principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score?

In Research Question 1, the multiple correlation coefficient described the strength of the relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable where .10 was considered a small relationship, .30 was medium, and .50 was large. In this study, the relationship was considered small at .179. The multiple coefficient of determination told the amount of variance in the criterion variable that was explained by the predictor variables. In this null, the amount of explained variance in the criterion variable score was 3.2%. The adjusted $R^2$ (.008) identified the amount of explained variance after adjustment for the sample size and number of predictors. Shrinkage was the amount of variance lost between the $R^2$ and adjusted $R^2$ (.032-.008). Standard error of the estimate was the average residual distance of each data point from the prediction line.

In summary, the predictor variable tested within the null hypothesis did not explain a significant amount of variance in the criterion variable. Principal educational level, years of teaching experience, years as a principal, and school total enrollment do not serve as predictors of the PLCCS with $F(4,158) = 1.308, p = .269$.

**Research Question #2.** Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal's demographic region?

In Research Question 2, the researcher checked to see if there was significant difference on the IECPCS based on the principal's demographic region. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized because there was only one dependent variable being examined for
differences on one independent variable with at least three different levels. The researcher began by ensuring that there were no outliers within the dependent variable for any group and examined the box plot. The assumption of detecting outliers was met as no data point was more than 1.5 standard deviation from the edge of the box. Normality was checked to ensure that the scores on the dependent variable were normally distributed for both groups. In this case, a Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized and assumption were met due to the significance value being greater than .05 alpha. Next, the Levene’s test of equality of variances was utilized to test the assumption of homogeneity. The assumption of homogeneity of variance had been violated with a significant Levene’s test, $F = 4.631, p = .011$. Due to this violation of the assumption of homogeneity, the Games Howell post hoc test was used due to the significant differences found within the model.

Significant difference was found within the one-way ANOVA, $F(2,160) = 4.714, p = .010$. The results of the ANOVA recorded an $F$ of 4.714, $p = .010$. Due to this significant difference a Games Howell post-hoc test was utilized and did not require equal variances for the dependent variable among the different levels of the independent variable. In this case, the urban scores ($M = 35.26, SD = 3.13$) were significantly higher than the rural scores ($M = 32.73, SD = 6.13$), $p = .026$. The difference in urban and rural was the only significant comparison within the variable relationships identified in the multiple comparisons of demographics and the IECPCS.

**Research Question #3.** Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school has a current existing early childhood program?

Research Question 3 sought to identify if there was a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school principal had a current existing early childhood program in their school. I selected an independent $t$ test to best identify the
difference in one measure between two groups. This required detecting outliers and ensured that there were no outliers within the dependent variable scores for both groups. Normality also ensured that the scores on the dependent variable were normally distributed for both groups and a Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized to show that the assumption was met due to the \( p \) value of .262. The homogeneity of variance was checked to ensure that the variances within both groups on the dependent variable were equal to each other. There was no violation for assumptions of homogeneity of variance with a non-significant Levene’s \( F = 1.265, p = .262 \).

There was no significant difference found between schools with an early childhood program \((M = 34.66, SD = 3.75)\) and those without \((M = 34.02, SD = 4.97)\). The lack of significance difference was due to a non-significant independent samples \( t \) test, \( t(163) = .929, p = .354 \), two-tailed. The research clearly stated that when a school has an existing early childhood education program it does not affect the principal’s IECPCS. It was also noted that this may not have been the case if the sample were collected from a larger population across a variety of states.

**Research Question #4.** Is there a significant difference on the universal pre-k program readiness composite score based on the principal’s demographic region?

The final research question investigated if there was a significant difference on the UECRCS based on the principal’s demographic region. Like Research Question 2, this investigation utilized a one-way ANOVA. A one-way ANOVA was used due to the fact that the research question involved one dependent variable with one independent variable with at least three levels. I began by ensuring that there were no outliers within the dependent variable for any group and examined the box plot and the assumption of detecting outliers were met as no data point was more than 1.5 standard deviation from the edge of the box. Normality was also checked to ensure that the scores on the dependent variable were normally distributed for both
groups. In this case, I used a Shapiro-Wilk test and assumption was met due to the p value (.67). Next, the Levene’s test of equality of variances was utilized to test the assumption of homogeneity. The test of homogeneity of variances was not significant (.670) and, therefore, was not violated.

The UECRCS was not significantly different among urban ($M = 37.60, SD = 7.67$), suburban ($M = 36.41, SD = 8.75$), and rural ($M = 36.38, SD = 7.76$). This was evident as the result of the one-way ANOVA was non-significant, $F(2,160) = .395, p = .674$. There were no significant differences on the UECRCS based on demographic location so the null is retained.

**Quantitative Summary**

In this study, four core questions were posed and investigated. The researcher utilized multiple regression to investigate the impact of educational levels, degree types, years of teaching experience, and years as principal on the principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score. This particular investigation found no significance in the relationship. Research Question 2 checked to see if there was a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal’s demographic region and a significant difference was noted after utilizing a one-way ANOVA. In Research Question 3, an investigation of the impact of having an early childhood program within the principal’s school, no significance was found after reviewing an independent $t$ test. Research Question 4 checked to see if there was a significant difference on the universal early childhood program readiness composite score based on the principal’s demographic region and after running a one-way ANOVA, no significance was identified.
Qualitative Results

Participants and survey. Following the survey distribution and completion in June 2014, I interviewed three public school elementary principals. Each principal represented a demographic region (urban, suburban, and rural) and were interviewed after signed consent was completed. Each interview consisted of a review of the participant’s survey answers with a focus on delving deeper into each of the principal’s reasoning of perception in relationship to their initial answers to the survey question. Survey questions were reviewed in the same order as they were assigned during the initial survey and the interviews were completed no more than two to three weeks following the initial survey completion to ensure a stronger connection to the research survey and questions. Participants could opt out or skip any questions that they did not see as reasonable to answer; however, all participants explained in depth some form of reasoning for their perceptual rankings from the original survey.

Coding

Each interview was transcribed and reviewed by the researcher multiple times. The first review of the transcriptions was general in nature and informed and reminded me of each interview responses relative to its specific demographic. Following a general review, coding was produced in direct relationship with the composite score questions highlighted in Chapters 1 and 3. Coding was initiated and completed based on the answers to questions from the survey questions that related to their specific composite core categories. These were identified in the quantitative review of data and were present in each of the null hypothesis (Hypotheses 1 to 4 are found in the procedures section of Chapter 3).

My decision to create the four composite score concept was to ensure that the survey data produced the highest level of quantitative statistical analysis of the data set based on the four null
hypothesis. The general survey questions were nominal in nature and the development of the composite score hypothesis answered both the general questions of the study and assisted in developing a more complex review of the survey and much more robust data in return.

**Composite score coding themes**

**Principal leadership capacity composite score (PLCCS).** The following survey questions were linked to the PLCCS: Questions 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. The general concepts or themes established in this question composite set focused on the principal’s ability to select appropriate early childhood curriculum, evaluate teachers of early childhood, and provide early childhood staff with appropriate professional development.

**Impact of early childhood program composite score (IECPCS).** The following survey questions where linked to the IECPCS: Questions 11, 14, 15, and 28. The general concepts or themes established in this question composite set focused on the principal’s belief in impact of early childhood programming for students in general, of poverty, and of middle/upper class.

**Universal early childhood (pre-k) readiness composite score (UECRCs).** The following survey questions were linked to the UECRCS: Questions 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. The general concepts or themes established in this question composite set focused on the principal’s ability to understand early childhood state regulations, level of support for Governor Pence’s early childhood policy, ability to handle the workload of an early childhood program, and the level of welcome from the K-4 teaching staff to a new early childhood staff.

**Assertions**

**Principal leadership capacity composite score (PLCCS).** The ranges of interview responses in the principal leadership capacity section were very common in nature between the three demographic region interview participants. In regard to curriculum selection for early
childhood programming, the three principals all had what I call a “can do” attitude. They were all confident that if given the challenge, they would provide an appropriate curriculum selection. When I asked how they would “know” if they were making a good selection, they all mentioned some form of resource, reach out to a colleague, director, and for the case of urban principal he stated,

We have a director of curriculum and instruction. We also have a person who designs our staff development, but I would be more comfortable going to my kindergarten team and professors of Universities that are masters in their field. I would also be inclined to visit programs that are successful to learn more about what is best for early learners. I would want to consult with people like this prior to moving forward with such curricular decisions.

The suburban principal focused on what appeared the journey of motherhood rating herself a five or six in readiness level and stated,

I know where to look and know where resources are to start. I would definitely need to get more information on what is best in curriculum for early learners. I think having my own young children helps me as I am more aware now, but I would also use the resources in the district and my kindergarten teachers to guide my thinking on where to go.

The rural principal had more of a general “can do” and “know how” due to his 30+ years as a teacher administrator in the community and stated this about early childhood curriculum,

Oh absolutely there's a big difference complete difference in curriculum for the early childhood years versus the primary years. A big part of that preschool service years is the social interaction and have to start with the basics like you do with your own kids at home, unfortunately more and more parents are not taking care of things at home, some
do but some don’t.

Pertaining to evaluation, all three demographic principals assured me that their current evaluation system was appropriate for all teachers and that it would be a positive experience for any new early childhood teachers. They mentioned they used RISE in each of the three districts as their tool for evaluation. The main theme around this question was that best practice is best practice and that all teachers used that as their foundation for teaching. The urban principal went deeper into his reasoning and mentioned that he would have to modify his thinking for the actual observation as the teaching and learning of students at age three or four looks different than kindergarten and first grade. He mentioned a variety of resources and ways to ensure he was learning and up to speed with his training. The suburban and rural principals did not mention as much or any adaptation or modifications of thinking or action during evaluation. The suburban principal stated,

I think I could observe and effectively evaluate them. I think me offering suggestions that I offer my k-5 teachers would be a little different. I think if it is age 4 it could be similar to kindergarten, but lower, I might have to immerse myself in the learning of how this age group operates/instructs. I would need to learn what is positive feedback for the teachers.

The final concept in this composite score region was the notion of professional development. I began with a question pertaining to current professional development for K-4/5, would it be appropriate to the new early childhood staff? All three demographic regions reported that the majority of their planned professional development would be appropriate; however, on the same note they also made it clear that they would have to do some research and find resources that were specific to the early childhood teachers. They recognized that what they
have is good for all, however, not good enough of depth for the early childhood specific teachers. Again, the rural principal was very much focused on the “get it done” attitude and that he could make it happen stating,

I would find provided I had the means anything and everything they would need to become effective early childhood teachers. That is part of my position here at the school I have always led the PD thing and I have to find resources for the teachers in my building. Whether it’s me finding the best preschool conference to send someone to or working to bring in the top guru of the preschool field for the development that we need to the school that's what I would do. I am confident that I can create that.

The urban and suburban had the same attitude of getting the job done, however, in a manner that was more resourceful. In summary, the three demographic region principals had a very tight and common answer set with only one variation being the rural with less depth on how they would actually get the work done.

Impact of early childhood program composite score (IECPCS). Each of the three demographic principals agreed in full that early childhood has a positive impact on the lives of children in general and that it does provide higher academic achievement in the primary school age years. There was little discussion; it was simply a strong belief among the three.

When the same question was asked but in regard to students of poverty the answers were common, but had a different level of depth. For example, each of the principals suggested that students of poverty benefit from the programs, but when asked about services within their community, there was a different range of understanding of what was offered or what could be offered. The urban principal was very passionate with this question and said,

Students who come from poverty, almost 100% of the time, come to school lacking the
general skills to function at school. That is no one’s fault, they just have parents who work or they don’t have the resources to expose their children to. They might live in a place that doesn’t allow being outside as safe. Neighbors may not be supportive and sometimes dangerous, so kids are essentially held up in their apartments with limited resources to learning outside of school.

The suburban principal was equally passionate about the need for programming for students of poverty and could list the many different types of environments offered in the school community, but was less able to pinpoint who is coming in from what programs, but clearly noticed a difference in readiness for students of poverty. She also had a previous experience in an urban school where the school had the opportunity to offer preschool in the building for two years and she remembered the difference from siblings that she had taught prior to the program and after who were much less prepared than their preschool experienced sibling. The rural principal felt strongly that programming is essential for students of poverty and mentioned that the community has had a variety of programs that have come and gone, mainly due to the economic changes in the region, and he clearly stated that any program is better than no program.

The discussion around middle/upper class was very interesting as each of the demographic regions expressed some form of need for the students of middle/upper class for a few different reasons. First there was a theme of socialization and brain development. The idea being that any child will benefit from being immersed in an early learning opportunity and will certainly begin building a social skill set, the ability to problem solve, collaborate, and begin to learn how to “act” at school. The level of program was noted and that for some students the act of learning literacy/math skills will begin early for the middle/upper class demographic. Another key point came through with each demographic that noted middle/upper class parents are often
working very hard to provide their families with their middle/upper class lifestyle. Having two working parents etc. may be a negative impact for such students so early childhood opportunities are still essential for them. The rural principal also agreed with this notion stating,

I think it’s more about the fact that they have the means to do more. Obviously many of those parents are educated they spend a great deal of time doing things that children in the community. These kids typically go to preschools where they promote higher academics with kids coming reading their letter awareness and is more academically prepared.

The final question was in regard to the level of belief that there was a clear difference in programming education for early learners vs. the K-4/5 learning population. In this section, the urban and suburban principal proposed the argument that there is a strong difference, however there are bridging points for early childhood to kindergarten that they were confident in providing. The urban principal went deep into the differences and again stated:

I would say, because of the developmental level of the kids, there would need to be more specialized and attention to staff development with where kids are emotionally, physically, and mentally at age 3 or 4 compared to kinder. Per the foundational pieces of what we need to stimulate in thinking, building dendrites into the brain, build problem solvers, these things start in kindergarten. This can be built up beginning at preschool. This will require training and attention that is specific to early childhood.

The suburban principal talked about the “crossover” of programming but had a strong feeling that the socialization piece was unique and different. The focus had to be balanced and also help students with beginning literacy skills and the general ability to know how school works (behavioral). The rural principal had less specific details to the difference, but did
acknowledge a subtle difference between early childhood and K-4/5.

**Universal early childhood (pre-k) readiness composite score (UECRCs).** In regard, to state regulations for operating an early childhood program, each of the demographic principals rated themselves very low and that they would have to seek resource to ensure that they were in compliance, however each felt strongly that they could figure it out if given the time. The urban and suburban principals were more detailed in their resources.

When asked to share their level of excitement about Governor Pence’s recent push for early childhood offerings for children in the state of Indiana, there were several common themes from each of the demographic regions. First, there was a very clear concern for funding and space. The idea was exciting, but how do they find the funding to pay for teachers, classrooms etc. came through in all three demographic regions. There was also a genuine support for such programming and for the urban principal awareness that parents in the state expected more now that their children were attending full day kindergarten. With a newfound expectation among the public, the government may find a way to respond. The urban principal stated,

I think, personally, it is very exciting just as kindergarten has never been mandated in Indiana, almost all students I have worked with in every environment have attended full or half day kindergarten. Now there is very much a request from all of our parents to attend full day kinder, we can assume that the request for pre-k in the urban setting would be highly requested. It would not only provide supervision and nutrition, but it would also be free to parents and families. Transportation, materials, supplies, etc. etc. It is terribly exciting and although the program may need to start out small it is I see it growing immensely as it did with kindergarten.

The discussion around the ability of each of the principal’s ability to fit the supervision of
an early childhood program small or large into their workload was interesting. Again, each of
the principals stated they could “get it done” but at what cost? The urban principal mentioned a
specific size range, no more than 100 early learners, and the suburban principal shared a concern
about schools that were large in size and that the pressure of total students might not allow them
to do the work appropriately. The rural principal had some uncertainty saying,

Laughing . . . I am interested in it but I also have to remember that my careers almost
over. Do I really want to stamp out one more thing that I need to commit to? I don’t
know but I surely haven’t quit yet, so I guess the answer is yes.

This was an interesting contrast due to the prior push for early childhood and certainty that he
could accomplish the task of programming an early childhood throughout the interview.

Qualitative Summary

I interviewed three public school principals who participated in the survey completion
process in June 2014. Each of the principals represented a demographic region: urban, suburban,
and rural. Constant and comparative coding was completed on each of the transcriptions of
interviews and was initially coded within the same composite scores designed for the
quantitative research components. The three composite score regions were linked by themes
based on questions from the survey and then commonalities and assertions were noted.

Summary

I created composite score categories from the survey questions that highlighted four
distinct areas of focus in regard to principals and their ability to understand, implement, and
service programming for early childhood learners. The four composite score questions were
identified as:

1. Does degree type, years of teaching experience, school enrollment (size of
population), and years as principal serve as significant predictors of the principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score? I utilized a multiple regression to investigate this question and no significance was identified.

2. Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal's demographic region? I ran a one-way ANOVA with this question and significance was identified.

3. Is there a significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school has a current existing early childhood program? A t test was run on this particular question and no significance was identified.

4. Is there a significant difference on the universal pre-K program readiness composite score based on the principal's demographic region? A one-way ANOVA identified no significance with question four.

Although the quantitative research findings above were very helpful in answering the core research questions, the researcher also utilized interview data in the qualitative form to compare findings of the quantitative research to a small sample of actual survey participants. After interviewing one principal in each of the three demographic regions (urban, suburban, and rural), a series of coding reviews occurred with each interview and ensured that assertions were developed in direct relationship with the four core composite questions highlighted above. Chapter 5 further reviews and shares descriptions of the relationship between the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative data collected.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes the summary of the study, conclusions, and researcher’s recommendations for future research and study. The summary restates the general purpose of the study, hypotheses, population, sample, respondents, instrument description, and procedures. The conclusion highlights the summary of the results, the study’s limitations, and conclusions. Last, the author offers final recommendations for future study on the topic.

Summary of the Study

The central focus of this study was to examine the general capacity of Indiana’s public elementary principals to effectively implement early childhood education programming for four year-old students in their community. This study had four specific research questions.

1. Do public school principals believe that their educational background has an effect on the following variables?
   • Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   • Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
   • Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
   • Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
   • Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

2. Do public school principals believe that their specific teaching experience has an effect on the following variables?
   • Ability to develop appropriate early childhood programming in a public school?
   • Ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum?
• Ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms?
• Ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development?
• Ability to understand early childhood state regulations?

3. Do public school principals believe that they can successfully create the following early childhood program components?
• Appropriate early childhood program
• Early childhood curriculum
• Evaluate early childhood teachers
• Provide appropriate early childhood professional development
• Follow state regulations for early learners

4. Do public school principals believe that early childhood programming is unique and servicing students in pre-kindergarten requires a knowledge base that is different than that of a kindergarten or elementary school service background?

**Population.** The study’s population was composed of public elementary principals who were licensed and served as acting principals in their current school during the spring of 2014. There were an estimated 800+ potential responders in this desired population.

**Sample.** A random sample of all elementary principals in the state of Indiana produced a return of 165 respondents. Of the 165 participants (Indiana public elementary principals) there were 53 men (32.1%), 111 women (67.3%), and 1 unidentified participant (.6%). A total of 53 (32.1%) participants represented schools that were located in an urban setting, 58 (35.2%) represented the suburban region, and 52 (31.5%) represented the rural region. When describing the tenure as a principal, 21 (12.7%) had 1-3 years of experience as the lead principal, 28 (17%)
had 3-5 years, 49 (29.7%) had 5-10 years, 35 (21.2%) had 10-15 years, 15 (9.1%) had 15-20,
and 17 (10.3%) had 20+ years of experience as a principal.

**Instrument.** The survey used in this study was designed and developed based on prior
research noted in the literature review. In order to provide validity to the survey, there was a
sample data set that was reviewed by experts in the field and based on their feedback adjustments
were made to the survey prior to its finalization. In order to ensure reliability a Cronbach’s alpha
was used to ensure internal consistency among the survey questions that make up the inferential
section. The survey was administered with a Cronbach’s alpha score of .806 that was higher
than the required level of .7. With this score it was determined that the results of the survey were
reliable. In order to define the data set, I designed three specific composite scores for three
defined elements that were highlighted by the content of the survey questions.

**Procedures.** I gained permission from the Ball State University Institutional Review
Board to conduct the research of Indiana elementary principals’ perspectives on early childhood
programming. I also gained expert feedback on survey validity from professionals in the field of
elementary education. An email was sent with research descriptors, potential risks, and
following up information to all listed Indiana public elementary school principals on June 9,
2014. A follow up email was sent on June 16, 2014, after the original email invite. Results were
released to the participants who requested the research outcomes and results. During the survey
distribution period, I sent a formal email to three principals (one per region) requesting
permission for a face-to-face interview. After consent was granted, the interviews took place.
The quantitative survey data was paired with the qualitative interview data and was reported
appropriately in distinct sections (quantitative and qualitative) in Chapter 4.
Conclusions and Summary of Results

**Null Hypothesis 1.** The educational level, degree type, years of teaching experience, previous teaching assignment, and years as principal do not serve as significant predictors of the principal early childhood leadership capacity composite score. The null hypothesis was accepted due to the multiple regression analysis indicating that the principal’s leadership capacity composite score do not explain a significant amount of variance in the criterion variable. The principal’s educational level, years teaching, years as a principal, and school total enrollment do not serve as predictors of the principal’s leadership capacity due to the $F(4.158) = 1.308, p = .269$.

**Null Hypothesis 2.** There is no significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal’s demographic region. The null hypothesis was rejected due to the results of the one-way ANOVA results where in this case the Urban significance ($M = 35.26, SD = 3.13$) was higher than the rural ($M = 32.73, SD = 6.13$) with a $p = .026$. The difference in urban and rural was the only significant comparison within the variable relationships identified in the multiple comparisons of demographics and the IECPCS.

**Null Hypothesis 3.** There is no significant difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the school has a current existing early childhood program. The null was accepted as an independent $t$ test was used to identify the difference in one measure between the two groups. A Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized to show that the assumption was met due to the $p$ value of $.262$. A Levene’s test of equality of variances was utilized and the assumption was met as the $p$ value (.262) was greater than .05. There was no violation for assumptions of homogeneity of variance with a non-significant Levene’s ($F = 1.265, p = .262$). Therefore, significant difference was not found between schools with an early childhood program ($M =$
34.66, $SD = 3.75$) and those without ($M = 34.02, SD = 4.97$).

**Null Hypothesis 4.** There is no significant difference on the UECRCS based on the principal’s demographic region based on the principal's demographic region. A one-way ANOVA was used due to the fact that the research question involved only one factor or independent variable. The UECRCS was not significantly different among urban ($M = 37.60, SD = 7.67$), suburban ($M = 36.41, SD = 8.75$), and rural ($M = 36.38, SD = 7.76$). This was evident as the result of the one-way ANOVA was non-significant with $F(2,160) = .395, p = .674$. In this case I used a Shapiro-Wilk test and assumption was met due to the $p$ value (.67).

**Limitations**

**Convenience sample.** The study survey was distributed to over 800 public elementary principals in the state of Indiana. The population used in this study was limited to Indiana public school principals. This population limitation reduced my ability to generalize the study’s results and implications across other or different educational populations.

**Expert validity.** In order to ensure reliability a Cronbach’s alpha was used to ensure internal consistency among the survey questions that make up the inferential section. The survey was administered with a Cronbach’s alpha score of .806 that was higher than the required level of .7. Although attaining expert validity by highly qualified educational experts, utilizing a larger sample for future analysis of such a survey may provide a higher level of construct validity.

**Selection of participants.** Indiana is one of the few states that has yet to require full day kindergarten for all five year old children. The majority of states in the United States have already implemented full day kindergarten and many others have implemented some form of universal or targeted preschool to four year old students. The fact that Indiana has not legally mandated Kindergarten nor any form of early childhood at the state level may cause a decrease
in participation as the general public principal population may not see early childhood for four year olds as a priority or a relative notion at this time.

Response bias and self-reporting. Self-reporting can produce inflated scores regarding personal professional attributes. This can affect the answers accuracy at a variety of levels. This anonymous study was designed to limit bias it must still be considered.

Discussion

After compiling both the qualitative and quantitative data and analyzing both, the researcher concluded the following based on the research composite score questions. First, the analysis of the principals’ early childhood leadership capacity composite score measured principals’ belief and level of their ability to select and implement an early childhood curriculum, utilize their current evaluation tool with early childhood teachers, and provide quality early childhood professional development to early childhood staff, regardless of degree type, years of teaching experience, school size and years as a principal. Although no statistical significance was found in these particular relationships, the comments from principals in the qualitative analyses provide hints that there is a potential for inflation of self-assigned “ability” among all principal participants. Principals, regardless of training, in the state of Indiana believe they can “get the job done.” There were hints of resource and research utilization; however, this particular level could be highly varied among larger populations. In 2006, Illinois became the first “preschool for all” state, mandating state support for preschool education for all children whose parents wanted it. This particular law initiated a new school leadership program for the preparation of administration for a P-12 system vs. a K-12 system (Goncu, Main, Perone, and Tozer, 2014). As mentioned by Goncu et al., if principals are to lead schools that include preschools they should understand both the unique and familiar issues that preschool involves in
relation to the later grades. Leadership preparation faculty and their candidates often lack substantive training in early education as did this sample population with only three of the 165 participants (1.8%) who had a degree or study focus in early childhood education.

This research concluded that self-belief or confidence levels in regard to the selection of curriculum, the evaluation of teachers, and the development of professional development may be elevated, hence leaving principals coming up short on actual delivery in real life implementation scenarios. This particular notion was also identified in the Boston public in 2005 when researchers identified that principals failed to provide appropriate curriculum, evaluation, and professional development after implementation of the public targeted early childhood program (Dessoff, 2010). Providing developmentally appropriate preschool means learning about completely different developmental periods of childhood, working with teachers who hold different types of certificates, and learning about instructional approaches, curricula, and assessment practices that infrequently exist in the upper grades (Goncu et al., 2014).

The second research composite score defined the potentially significant difference on the principal’s impact of early childhood program composite score based on the principal's demographic region. In this particular question, the researcher asked principals to rate their level of belief in regard to early childhood program impact on a variety of populations (all students, students of poverty, and middle/upper). This question did in fact produce a statistically significant relationship between the urban ($M = 35.26$, $SD = 3.13$) and rural ($M = 32.73$, $SD = 6.13$) subgroups with a $p = .026$. In the case of urban principals, they believe that early childhood has a profound impact on all children and those of poverty. As mentioned previously in the review of research, it is understood that a high-quality childcare makes a huge difference in getting vulnerable young children ready to start Kindergarten (O’Brien, 2012). The notion of
“quality” also came out among the different demographic areas within the qualitative research. Matching the significant difference of the statistical findings the comments of the urban principal in regard to quality of program was substantial compared to that of the rural principal. Three decades of scholarship into the influence of early education on children’s later cognitive growth have shown that well implemented preschool programs have positive effects on children’s cognitive development, academic achievement, language growth, and problem solving skills. Research on the influence of early education programs on children’s later social-emotional growth and adjustment has also reported pronounced results (Karnes, Schwedel, & Williams, 1983). Simply put, in this research study a significant difference of the understanding of quality was noted between the urban and rural principal participants.

The third area of investigation was focused on the difference on the impact of early childhood program composite score when the principal’s school had a current existing early childhood program. In this study, 67 participants (40.7%) had some form of program up and running in their current school. Essentially the researcher sought to determine if there was any significant difference in the ratings of those with a program compared to those without. No significant difference was identified in this study however warrants some reflection of the notion that principals are currently running or supervising early childhood programs and have no statistical difference in belief ratings compared to those who do not run or have a program. Wheatley (2000) reminded of this danger, noting that principals cannot successfully facilitate the successful integration of preschool into the rest of the school in a way that is best suited to the community served by the school and reflects the school’s mission, the effectiveness of the preschool program and even the school more broadly may be in jeopardy. His research also showed that principals of early childhood certainly do not have the appropriate knowledge and
background designed to provide leadership that has a positive impact for early childhood. It is clear that instructional practices, selecting appropriate curriculum, and understanding of assessment in the early years among the respondents varies a great deal leaving me with the notion that principals only know what they know and assume they will be resourceful enough to ensure that they provide positive programming.

The final research focus sought to identify a significant difference within the universal pre-k program readiness composite score based on the principal's demographic region. In this segment of research the composite score asked principals to rate their ability to follow regulations for early childhood programming, level of support for Governor Pence's early childhood policy, personal workload capacity for early childhood leadership, and ability to provide a welcome workplace for new early childhood staff. This particular composite score relationship did not produce a significant result, however it was noted via the qualitative results that there were some generalities. There were several common threads within each of the demographic region noting a particularly strong support for early childhood programming policy. This was also shown in a common mean (around 6.50) for each demographic group. The qualitative findings also presented a hint of what might be of a common concern for each principal region, noting that there was concern for implementation. What level of programming (quality) would be provided and would the state be able to fund such quality? If a program was afforded, where would they be placed (space issue), and how would teachers be funded to support the classrooms, over time? Goncu et al. (2014) reminded us of the importance of the role of legislation has on providing additional funding to help make the program a success. Modest funding could be quite effective if targeted at high leverage areas. Infrastructure and
tangible supports must be developed to effect the design and redesign of such programming to ensure success for principal’s implementation of early childhood (Goncu et al., 2014).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The author acknowledge the fact that the findings of this study and recommend the following action steps for future research. This investigation of elementary principal perceptions in relationship to early childhood readiness is a first in the state of Indiana. The survey design, in its infancy, was targeted to identify core elements of the “state” of the readiness level of principals in the public school setting, however may have been too broad in nature. The next natural step in this particular research field is to narrow the focus of the questions and seek further statistical relationship significance in key focus areas. In providing a more targeted research survey of the same population, the respondent pool may increase due to the release of findings of this study and further detail the strengths and weaknesses of principals in regard to their actual ability to implement early childhood programming in the public school setting.

As Governor Pence and the Department of Education continue to investigate and seek funding for early childhood programming for students of poverty it is essential that policy makers and education decision makers make informed decisions about implementation of such programming. This research, although not highly compelling, can inform, educate, and guide policy makers in learning about the research of public implementation of universal early childhood. It will also provide a higher statistical level of developing a quality program and ensure that they do not make the mistakes of those in other states who have failed by ignoring the core components that ensure a public school principal’s success with program implementation. Desso (2010) reminded us of the challenges of the Boston public early childhood program discovered and identified specific problems or weaknesses in regard to leadership, instruction,
and implementation of programming. Each of the focus area weaknesses or sometimes failure was the direct result of the principal’s inability to recognize or understand early childhood services. This study’s results provide clear indication that principals truly believe the can accomplish any programming or development by simply working hard. Further research in Indiana could identify the significance of the actual weaknesses vs. the perceived weakness that this study attempted to identify.

The research noted in this study and findings also warrant further investigation into the development of stronger principal preparation programs that are designed to educate perspective principals in the art of supporting P-12 vs. K-12. States, like Illinois, have taken the lead on making laws to enforce such a change; however, if Indiana seeks to be a leader in education, then a serious overhaul of the administrative education path and licensure must be addressed. This study and the results have shown that the educational preparation of principals is highly varied and that there is potential for difference in readiness to serve early childhood learners when comparing the urban and rural principal population. Changing licensure requirements based on the findings of this study and those within other states will provide a greater guarantee in the successful implementation of such programming. Understanding that school principals are critical for ensuring that early childhood programs are implemented well, without the support of qualified and effective school leaders, it is far less likely that the development of early childhood programs can or will live up to their true potential under the guidance of public school principals (Goncu et al., 2014).
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT INTERVIEW

Providing Early Childhood Education in Public Schools: Perceptions of Elementary Principals in Indiana

My name is Dana Kaminski. I am researching the perception of elementary principals in regard to serving early childhood learners in the public school setting. I am certain that policy makers will make a more informed decision about public school early childhood programs if they are aware of the principals perceptions. I am the principal investigator, under the direction and leadership of Dr. James Stroud from the Elementary Education Department at Ball State University. You were selected as a possible interview candidate in this study because you are listed as a licensed and practicing public school principal (age 27-65) in a school that is elementary in nature or that services students in the primary grades.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study interview. There are no costs to you for participating in the interview. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. The interview will take 30 minutes and will be a follow up to the questionnaire you have completed on the study topic. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study may provide you with a better understanding of providing early childhood education in the public school setting. Audio data and transcripts collected from the study will be stored digitally on my computer for a duration of no more than three years.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By responding to this email and scheduling an interview appointment you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. During the interview you are free to decline any particular answer to any question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You are welcome to stop the interview at any time. Partially completed interviews will not be part of the study.

If you decide you want to participate in my research study, I would simply need to schedule a 30 minute meeting with you. I would be happy to meet you at your school for the 30 minute interview. I am recording the interviews to ensure that I capture the information you share accurately. I will ask questions based on the initial principal perception survey, but I am most interested in hearing your thoughts and feelings about each of the survey questions. When we are finished with our interview, I am going to write a final report on what we talked about in our interviews. I will not include your name or any other names you mention in any of my written documents. I will also not include the name of your school or any other school(s) you mention. I will use pseudonym’s, which means using a different name. No one, besides you and me, will know that your answers came from you personally.
Agreement

____I have willingly decided to participate in this research study and researcher Dana Kaminski has answered all of my questions.

__________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Study Participant                  Date

__________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Researcher                        Date

If you have any questions about the study or would like to schedule an interview, please contact Dana Kaminski by phone at 317-517-5750 or by email at dkaminski@hse.k12.in.us. Or you can contact Dr. James Stroud, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, by phone at 765-285-5251, or by email at JSTROUD@bsu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Ball State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of Research Integrity at 765.285.5070 or email at irb@bsu.edu.
Providing Early Childhood Education in Public Schools: Perceptions of Elementary Principals in Indiana

You are being invited to participate in a research study about perceptions of Indiana public school principals in regard to providing early childhood programming in the public school setting. This study is being conducted by Dana Kaminski, principal investigator, under the direction and leadership of Dr. James Stroud from the Elementary Education Department at Ball State University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are listed as a licensed and practicing principal in a school that is elementary in nature or that services students in the primary grades.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take about five to ten minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study may provide you with a better understanding of providing early childhood education in the public school setting. Data collected from the study will be stored digitally on my computer for a duration of no more than three years.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing this survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You are welcome to stop the survey at any time. Partially completed surveys will not be part of the study.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dana Kaminski by phone at 317-517-5750 or by email at dkminkski@hse.k12.in.us. Or you can contact Dr. James Stroud, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, by phone at 765-285-5251, or by email at JSTROUD@bsu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Ball State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of Research Integrity at 765.285.5070 or email at irb@bsu.edu.
Providing Early Childhood Education in Public Schools

Q1 Title: Providing Early Childhood Education in Public Schools: Perceptions of Elementary Principals in Indiana. You are being invited to participate in a research study about perceptions of Indiana public school principals in regard to providing early childhood programming in the public school setting. This study is being conducted by Dana Kaminski, principal investigator, under the direction and leadership of Dr. James Stroud from the Elementary Education Department at Ball State University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are listed as a licensed and practicing principal in a school that is elementary in nature or that services students in the primary grades. There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There is no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take about five to ten minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study may provide you with a better understanding of providing early childhood education in the public school setting. Data collected from the study will be stored digitally on my computer for a duration of no more than three years. Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing this survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. You are welcome to stop the survey at any time. Partially completed surveys will not be part of the study. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dana Kaminski by phone at 317-517-5750 or by email at dkaminski@hse.k12.in.us. Or you can contact Dr. James Stroud, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, by phone at 765-285-5251, or by email at JSTROUD@bsu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Ball State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of Research Integrity at 765.285.5070 or email at irb@bsu.edu. This survey can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

☐ I understand the purpose of this study and that participation is voluntary. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Dana Kaminski by phone at 317-517-5750 or by email at dkaminski@hse.k12.in.us. (1)
☐ If you do not wish to participate, you may exit the survey at this time. (2)
Q2 What is your gender?
- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q3 I am a licensed public school administrator in the State of Indiana.
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q4 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have achieved?
- Master's Degree (1)
- Master's Plus (hours) (2)
- Ed.D/D.Ed (3)
- Doctorate/Ph.D (4)

Q5 Which of the following best describes the field in which you received your highest degree?
- Curriculum and Instruction (1)
- Administration (2)
- Early Childhood (3)
- Technology (4)
- Reading (5)
- Math (6)
- Science (7)
- Other (8)

Q6 The following describes how many years of teaching experience I obtained prior to becoming a school principal.
- 0-1 Years (1)
- 1-5 Years (2)
- 5-10 Years (3)
- 10-15 Years (4)
- 15 Plus Years (5)
Q31 Check the grade levels that you taught as a licensed educator in the public school setting.

- Pre-K (1)
- Kindergarten (2)
- 1st grade (3)
- 2nd grade (4)
- 3rd grade (5)
- 4th grade (6)
- 5th grade (7)
- 6th grade (8)
- 7th grade (9)
- 8th grade (10)
- 9th grade (11)
- 10th grade (12)
- 11th grade (13)
- 12th grade (14)
- University/College (15)

Q7 The following describes how many years I have served as a principal, total in my career.

- 1-3 Years (1)
- 3-5 Years (2)
- 5-10 Years (3)
- 10-15 Years (4)
- 15-20 Years (5)
- 20 Plus Years (6)

Q8 My school's community is best described as

- Urban (1)
- Suburban (2)
- Rural (3)
Q9 My school's student population is best described as
○ 250 or less (1)
○ 25-500 (2)
○ 500-800 (3)
○ 800 or greater (4)

Q10 My school has an early childhood program.
○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

Q13 If you answered yes to question 10, please describe the early childhood program.

Q11 Please rate your level of belief. Early childhood education has a positive impact on children's academic achievement in elementary school.
Q14 Please rate your level of belief. Early childhood education has a positive impact on the lives of students of poverty.

Q15 Please rate your level of belief. Early childhood has a positive impact on the lives of students who are considered middle to upper class.
Q16 Please rate your level of belief. A principal’s educational background effects his or her ability to select an appropriate early childhood curriculum.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q17 Rate your level of belief. If I were assigned an early childhood program in my school setting, I would require support in selecting an appropriate early childhood curriculum.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)
Q18 Rate your level of belief. A principal’s educational background effects his or her ability to evaluate teachers in early childhood classrooms.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q19 Rate your level of belief. Evaluating teachers of early childhood does not require any additional evaluative skills or competencies. I can use my current system and actions to evaluate early childhood teachers.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)
Q20 Rate your level of belief. A principal’s educational background effects his or her ability to provide appropriate early childhood teacher professional development.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q33 Click to write the question text

- Click to write Choice 1 (1)
- Click to write Choice 2 (2)
- Click to write Choice 3 (3)
Q21 Rate your level of belief. I am confident that my current professional development options would benefit the early childhood teacher.

○ 0 (0)
○ 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ 5 (5)
○ 6 (6)
○ 7 (7)
○ 8 (8)
○ 9 (9)
○ 10 (10)

Q22 Rate your level of belief. A principal’s educational background effects his or her ability to understand early childhood state regulations.

○ 0 (0)
○ 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ 5 (5)
○ 6 (6)
○ 7 (7)
○ 8 (8)
○ 9 (9)
○ 10 (10)
Q23 Rate your level of belief. I am very confident in my ability to adhere to state regulations for early childhood learning programs.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q24 Rate your level of belief. I believe that the recent push for increased early childhood intervention for children of poverty, by Governor Pence, will in fact promote the addition of public early childhood programs in the public school setting.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)
Q25 Rate your level of belief. I am excited about Governor Pence's push for increased public early childhood educational programming for children of poverty.

○ 0 (0)
○ 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ 5 (5)
○ 6 (6)
○ 7 (7)
○ 8 (8)
○ 9 (9)
○ 10 (10)

Q26 Rate your level of belief. I am confident that my current work schedule allows me the ability to easily develop, implement, and evaluate an early childhood program.

○ 0 (0)
○ 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 (3)
○ 4 (4)
○ 5 (5)
○ 6 (6)
○ 7 (7)
○ 8 (8)
○ 9 (9)
○ 10 (10)
Q27 Rate your level of belief. I am confident that teachers on my staff would welcome and appreciate early childhood professionals into the school organization.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q28 I believe that early childhood programming is unique and servicing students in pre-kindergarten requires a knowledge base that is different than that of a kindergarten or elementary school service background.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)
Q29
Urban Transcript

R: Tell me about your educational path and story.

P: I have a master’s in elementary education and a k-12 mid-management in Texas. I have been a principal for 24 years, one of those years as an assistant. I have served in the urban setting high poverty in several states, a suburban demographic middle upper class with limited poverty/diversity. I have spent most of my time in very diverse schools with high poverty and also a year in a hybrid school that was half in school and half online. My current school is inner city, 85% poverty, majority black and Hispanic. My school has 740 students.

R: Do you have any specific early childhood background? Does your current school have a program?

P: I have experience with early childhood programs, but no formal training. My current school does not have a program.

R: How many years did you teach and at what grade level prior to becoming a principal?

P: I did my student teaching in 2nd and taught 2nd – 6th general education and did 6-8 specialized in sciences.

R: At this time I am going to run through the survey questions and have you describe your level of belief and elaborate on why you feel that way.

Rate your level of belief, does early childhood have a positive impact on children’s’, generally speaking, academic achievement in k-5?

P: I rate myself a 9, the only factor that keeps me from stating a 10 is the quality of the program.

R: Tell me more about that do you see some differences in quality? Tell me why you said that?

P: I think you need to have a staff that understands the developmental needs of their children. It needs to be a positive experience for the students so that they are excited about coming to school. Their needs to be positive reinforcement process in place for students to have a reason to work hard and find strong citizenship skills all while having exposure to strong literacy programming to develop the core skills of readers. Lots of reading, exposure to story and learning trips for students of poverty. There must be a nutritional component to the program as well as time for kids to rest during the school day.

R: You mention sleep; do you provide any time for kids to rest in your full day program?
P: We do not, however I do allow kids who are struggling with separation anxiety or the ill side effects of poverty, to rest to regain their ability to function. Many of these are boys who are one of many siblings that they just don’t get enough attention or time. Sometimes they need to rest.

R: Tell me about the impact on students of poverty only.

P: 10, students who come from poverty, almost 100% of the time, come to school lacking the general skills to function at school. That is no ones fault, they just have parents who work or they don’t have the resources to expose their children to. They might live in a place that doesn’t allow being outside as safe. Neighbors may not be supportive and sometimes dangerous, so kids are essentially held up in their apartments with limited resources to learning outside of school.

R: Now tell me the same about middle and upper class students.

P: I think it does because there is a social component. Many kids from affluent families have study trips, travel that are learning focused. There are, however, children that have not developed social skills for school. They may not be ready to share, participate in a group, or function within a group setting. All of those things help; you also never know how much time professional parents are spending with their children. Preschool for middle and upper class students is definitely beneficial.

R: Curriculum question: level of belief tell me why you feel this way?

P: It definitely does, I think we elementary principals have a great deal of opportunity to observe students in our school. With all of our assessment data we can identify where kids are at and because of our training in curriculum it puts in a good position, particularly if the principal is a instructional leader, we can identify what needs students have in all content areas and differentiate appropriately.

R: How would you know if you are selecting the right curriculum knowing you don’t have a degree in EC?

P: Research clearly points out the advantages of reading to children, developing vocab, thinking skills, communicate, express feelings, content, etc. Through literature, it is the window of the world for students of poverty. I would also look at the level of interest of the children and ensure they are engaged in the curriculum. They have to be motivated, excited, and have an opportunity engage in the learning process.

R: Do you have anyone in your life that you would reach out to in order to get support for such a curriculum decision?

P: We have a director of curriculum and instruction. We also have a person who designs our staff development, but I would be more comfortable going to my kindergarten team and professors of universities that are masters in their field. I would also be inclined to visit programs that are successful to learn more about what is best for early learners. I would want to consult with people like this prior to moving forward with such decisions.
R: Evaluation Question

P: We have the RISE evaluation model and it is used for certified staff. 80% of our model would apply to evaluating strong teachers not only for preschool, but through high school as well. There are certain components that are universal and highlight behaviors that need to occur during effective instruction.

R: Professional Development Question

P: I feel like because we do have an effective evaluation tool, RISE, all of our teachers receive valuable input about best instructional practices. So 80% of our PD is geared towards the evaluation process so I feel like it would be suitable for early childhood teachers. The other 20% is not, so it would make sense that I would seek out help from people with more expertise with early childhood education to offer components that more specifically address the needs of early childhood learners.

R: State Regulation Question

P: I would need to research and learn about it, but I am sure that there are certain components that are very much the same of being aware of the laws with kindergarten students. I would see that there would be a lot of overlap, but in terms of the number of students per adult, mobility of students, taking children out of the school, nap time, what kind of equipment needed. Those kind of extenuating circumstances. I would certainly want to brush up and learn more about that.

R: Pence and Poverty Push Question:

P: I think, personally, it is very exciting just as kindergarten has never been mandated in IN, almost all students I have worked with in every environment have attended full or half day kindergarten. Now there is very much a request from all of our parents to attend full day kinder, we can assume that the request for pre-k in the urban setting would be highly requested. It would not only provide supervision and nutrition, but it would also be free to parents and families. Transportation, materials, supplies, etc. etc. It is terribly exciting and although the program may need to start out small it is I see it growing immensely as it did with kindergarten.

R: Work Schedule Question:

P: I feel…I have been involved with a prior program, although I didn’t evaluate the teachers, but I do feel like I could supervise, evaluate etc., but would need support with PD and curriculum. I do feel like I could handle it with my workload, maybe four classrooms (around 100), but with my current 740 kids it would be unreasonable to go any higher than four classrooms.

R: EC acceptance by staff question:

P: To be honest I think they would work closely with them, they would collaborate, discuss deficiencies coming into Kinder. Likewise the EC staff would be equally accepted in their knowledge and ability to assist with the kinder staff with their transition practices.
R: EC is unique and different question:

P: I would say, because of the developmental level of the kids, there would need to be more specialized and attention to staff development with where kids are emotionally, physically, and mentally at age 3 or 4 compared to kinder. Per the foundational pieces of what we need to stimulate in thinking, building dendrites into eh brain, build problem solvers, these things start in kindergarten. This can be built up beginning at preschool. This will require training and attention that is specific to early childhood.

R: Play Question:

P: Again if you look at the developmental needs of kids; how they grow, how they mature, how they comprehend. You have to have a balance of time to engage in academics and physical play. You also have to have a time to allow for students to engage in free play where they are learning how to play and communicate with other children. There has to be no more than 15-minute blocks of instructional time without a mixture of movement and left/right brain activity. If it is not part of instruction, it must be part of the learning day so that they can stimulate thinking and absorb the information.

R: Any final thoughts:

P: I think that early childhood education is immensely important; it is a major step forward. If it comes to fruition in IN, there is a definite importance in creating a solid program with trained professionals, emphasis on nutrition, emphasis on health, and developing positive school environments.
APPENDIX E: SUBURBAN INTERVIEW

R: Go ahead and start by telling me about your school, size, demographics, etc. please don’t use the name or district.

P: Ok, I have 640 students K-5 elementary. We are 52% free and reduced, 60% African American, 30% Caucasian and we have a growing Hispanic population and 74 ENL students, not all Hispanic. We have a very diverse population with very mixed population with Burmese, African, and Eretria. That is about it.

R: Let’s back up and tell me what your degree was in or describe your schooling process prior to becoming a principal.

P: I attended University of Notre Dame, St. Mary’s and studied psychology and elementary education. My Master’s was completed at Butler University in administration.

R: How many years have you been a principal?

P: This will be my sixth year as a principal and prior to that I was an assistant principal for two years.

R: What grade levels did you teach before becoming a principal and how long?

P: I taught 4th and 5th grade for 12 years in both a suburban school and then urban for the majority of the 12 years. All schools were over 700 students.

R: Does your current school have an early childhood program?

P: None of my schools had a formal program, but one of them, an urban school, received a grant to have pre-school for two years while I was there.

R: Have you had much experience or interaction with the people who ran the classroom or program?

T: No, at the time, I didn’t have any contact or time with the program teacher. I do work with her in my current district where she works with early childhood at the district level.

P: Was that program designed for special needs students, general education, or both?

T: That grant was for students of high poverty who were not attending pre-school in hopes to create a transition program for the local neighborhood. The current program is designed for special needs students.

R: I am now just going to review the questions that you already answered on the survey and have you tell me a little more about each of the questions.
Let’s talk about early childhood programming for children in general, does it have a positive affect on academic achievement? 1 being no impact and 10 extremely beneficial. What would you rate and why do you believe that.

P: 10, absolutely I believe that. I say that because, even recently, that started in the grant program, and compared to their siblings who did not have a chance to attend that same program. Their siblings are not as prepared and very much limited on readiness for school. I see this in general, kids who don’t attend any early childhood are not as prepared as those who do not.

R: Does early childhood have a unique impact on students of poverty? Rate your level of belief and tell me why?

P: Yes, it does. It has a much greater impact on the lives of students of poverty, mainly because they have less experience in life with their families. They are able to have experiences and conversation, academic vocabulary when they have that program experience.

R: In your current school community do you see a difference in the level of early childhood offerings for students? Be specific to students of poverty, do they have options? What are those different options?

P: Some of them go to preschools, some go to daycares that advertise they are preschools, but they are not. Not a lot of kids come from Head Start or other like programs. We try to find siblings and locate potential preschools that they might attend or we seek out first steps for kids who we know might be in need of service. There is definitely a different range of service for students of poverty in the community.

R: Tell me about middle upper class students, same questions, but with this demographic, does early childhood have a positive affect on their achievement and what are their options? Are they different?

P: They are different. I can’t say that I could say that it is because they have more or just that they have parents who are offering them more. We do have children who are coming in reading or know their letter names and sounds, numbers. I know this comes from some form of early childhood preparation. I know most of these families have both parents working, so their children are not getting everything form the parents. I also can’t pinpoint the exact or specific reason that they are more prepared, but they are.

R: Do you ever track the students’ preschool experience when they register for kinder?

P: A couple years ago we did a needs assessment and went back to what school they went to. We then reached out to them to provide them resources for early readiness skills for kindergarten. We didn’t force them to use the resources, but wanted to offer them resources so that they might be more aware of what kindergarten students are required to know. We sometimes reach out to preschools that students attend to attempt to help them with being more aware of the appropriate readiness skills.
R: Let’s talk about early childhood curriculum. Do you feel like principals, in general, based on
the principal’s educational background, do they or would they have the ability to design or
choose an appropriate curriculum for an early childhood program. Rate yourself as well.

P: I would say I would be a 5 or 6. I know where to look and know where resources are to start.
I would definitely need to get more information on what is best in curriculum for early learners.
I think having my own young children helps me as I am more aware now, but I would also use
the resources in the district and my kindergarten teachers to guide my thinking on where to go.

R: Same concept, now let’s talk about evaluation of teachers. Could you effectively evaluate
instruction at the early childhood level?

P: I think I could observe and effectively evaluate them. I think me offering suggestions that I
offer my k-5 teachers would be a little different. I think if it is age 4 it could be similar to
kindergarten, but lower, I might have to immerse myself in the learning of how this age group
operates/instructs. I would need to learn what is positive feedback for the teachers.

R: Could you use your current evaluation tool for such observations?

P: We use our own system to evaluate and it would work fine for early childhood teachers.

R: Same concept, could you develop early childhood teachers with appropriate professional
development?

P: I could handle developing teachers, most of what needs to be done, but diving into pedagogy
and curriculum would be necessary. I would have to be very clear on my understanding of what
was best prior to getting started with PD. If you gave me a program next week I would not be
able to offer the same professional development to early childhood that I do my k-4, I would
have to do some learning first to be sure it was the best and most appropriate.

R: Are there any resources in your district to get that help? Do you have a program director or
any other resources?

P: I would definitely look into the districts early childhood team for help, but would also look
outside of the district as well.

R: Would any of your normal day-to-day PD be appropriate for the early childhood teachers in
your school?

P: A lot of it, most of it is literacy based, so it would be taking the concept to the appropriate
level. I think the socialization piece is huge; I would rely heavily on their help to ensure we used
them to help us with this part of the professional development.

R: Tell me about your awareness of state regulations for running a program.

P: Mine is a 4, I would need to learn a great deal.
R: Tell me how you feel about Pence’s recent push for early childhood services for students of poverty in our state. Do you feel it is a “real” plan for future development or just a political statement?

P: I think it is real, but space is huge, if we really want to do this how will we do it? We really have to think about how we can house these teachers. How will we fund them? Our district might have some spaces, but it will be hard to find enough. It is a fabulous idea, but it must be very well thought out prior to implementation.

R: Thinking of your current work schedule. Would you be able to run an early childhood program or classrooms in your school under your current workload?

P: I could, but I do have one of the smaller schools in the district, I am not sure if the larger schools could handle the extra work load with their current administration size.

R: Tell about the level of acceptance your current teaching staff would have to new early childhood teachers or a program at your school.

P: I think they would totally accept it, as they understand the benefit of a good early childhood program. They would see it as a high value opportunity and help to ensure it had a positive impact on the kids in the community.

R: Last question, tell me do you think there is a distinct difference between early childhood and elementary?

P: I think there is a great deal of cross over, but the socialization piece I mentioned earlier is very unique and different. Spending time learning how to interact at school, especially kids of poverty, just understanding how school works is very important. Ensuring that we have appropriate literacy development is key, but that preparation and learning readiness is so important.

R: Last question…do you have full or half day kinder? Do you allow any free play?

P: Full day only, yes we have “discovery” time and we allow students to learn how to interact, in some cases we have to teach or set that up so that it is successful open time. This time is also used for some assessments or instruction.

R: Any last thoughts on early childhood, the questions in this survey, and or anything you want to share?

P: I think it is a positive thing and I hope our state has a well thought out plan for implementation.
APPENDIX F: RURAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

R: Tell me about your educational background and career as a principal.

I have 34 years total career in the same district. I have served 22 years as k-4 principal, two years the K-1 principle, and ten years as an assistant principal of the k-4 elementary school. I am now the principal. I attended Marion College, which is now Indiana Wesleyan University. I have a Masters and an Ed.S from Indiana State University and I love what I do. I have two children, daughters.

P: So my experiences have been as a K-4 for principle for 22 years we averaged about 300 to 350 students. Then the school board decided to develop grade level center. I had to kindergarten and first grade and it was a delightful position. The toughest days were kids with whet pants and they didn't want to come to school. It was a really rewarding job. I was in the assistant of this K-five building but the really I was a partner co-principal for 10 years. We had as many as 1100 students of the school but now we are down to 1000 students.

R: Does the school currently have a kindergarten program or any early childhood programs?

P: The school currently has kindergarten and a developmental preschool.

R: Tell me more about your educational background said you had masters and EDS what specific field or nature study did you participate in?

P: Back in the day then EDS was just an administrative focus that was it, that's all they had was just administration. There was neither particular focus nor a thesis.

R: Tell me more about the development of preschool you have in your school just give me specifics about the program.

P: Our developmental preschool is part of the special education program. We have one teacher and two assistants. We reach out to the community to reach the needs of the students of this community. These are students with speech and language challenges. We also have students of other health impairments disabilities and this is just a chance for them to get started in school at the right step. We typically interview the students and they usually start at age 4. It's a half-day program 830 to 11 and then 12 to 2:30. The students go to school five days we can we provide whatever they needed in regards to their developmental needs. Many of the kids have language delays work on language and we also have many students who have social skills or social developmental needs so we work on those skills.

R: Do you bus the students?

We do, we bus them in and take them home by bus. We also offer them a healthy snack.

R: you have a director of that program work you supervise the program yourself?
P: The special education director runs the program and Mrs. special director oversees the program.

R: Does Mrs. Sped director typically spend any time in house?

P: Are you asking me if she spends time in the classroom observing teachers?

R: Yes, does she evaluate the teachers or the program?

P: She evaluates the teachers and the assistants, yes.

R: you've been in this country for a really long time I'm really lucky to have the opportunity to talk to you about the school and school District. Tell me more about the community and in their childcare options or opportunities just explain how the community receives childcare and the different types of care.

P: We have always had preschools in this community. The local YMCA also has a preschool program and all those kids come to our school. They're 2 to 3 private preschools in the community remember were talking a span of 36 years that we've had similar programs. My two children went to a private preschool was a retired teacher or teacher elementary teacher who chose to spend her time or her expertise with kids in preschool so many of the kids in the community with spent time with her as preschoolers. As the years gone by we don't seem to have as much support for preschool for preschoolers we have some but it's not the same as it used to be. Seems the past few years and this new generation they just don't seem to come in prepared it seems like they come from nowhere and are not ready for school. Students are coming to school not knowing any of their letters and we're expected to take them from day onetime day 180 and have them perfectly ready for first grade. There is an absolute need for preschool. I think preschool would help those families that don't have the means to offer the kids preschool experience and the fact that we just need preschools so we get more kids in the preschool. Our community has changed over the years economically too. Back in the 1980s we had 15 to 20% of our kids on free and reduced lunch. Last year we had 60% free and reduced at the school. Our community truly has changed we were a long time ago really a rural community but then some big companies came in like Delta faucet really change the face of our community. For a time these companies paid very well but now the new companies are Japanese and French and they're not paying as well. They offer ten bucks an hour and the means are just not there to support families, especially preschool.

R: does the school district have any allotted finances for preschool outside of the early childhood program that you already described?

P: No

R: Is there any discussion about the need?

P: Our current superintendent has made the comment to the public and to administration that if he could afford it he would definitely offer preschool children of the community. But you know
there's never any money you're in administrator, you know how that is! This year we had the cut three teachers in this building alone and that's life as an administrator it's just how it is.

R: Tell me about the level of rating one being the least 10 the greatest how would you rate the impact of achievement based on early childhood experiences. Do early childhood experience have an impact on their academic achievement in kindergarten?

P: Absolutely, absolutely!

R: What about students of poverty you stated that you have five 50 to 60% your kids on free and reduced. How does early childhood experience affect their academic achievement?

P: Students who have an experiences in preschool, certainly.

R: Is there any variance or difference in the level of service comparing faith-based, private or public options in the community?

P: The only faith-based preschool that I'm a where's the Catholic school and the students typically go to the Catholic school or private, although we do get some.

R: Do you see a different level of readiness of the kids who to attend preschool based on the different places that they can receive services are there difference in the outcomes of the different services in the community? Are any programs more academic or rigorous than others?

P: I think today that they are more even than ever before that they were in the past. I think that the kids account and come with an advantage those kids that go to preschool they have an advantage although some come far more prepared than others for example the YMCA has facility so they can offer more programming outside of academics the offer physical social developmental programs. For example the kids can use a swimming pool and a play games and although not academic they have an opportunity to have social experiences, which does impact their readiness for school.

R: let's talk about the middle upper class students in your community do their preschool experiences have a greater impact than those of students poverty and or is it just the fact that they have more means to more opportunity within their community, tell me more about that.

P: I think it's more about the fact that they have the means to do more. Obviously many of those parents are educated they spend a great deal of time doing things that children in the community. These kids typically go to preschools where they promote higher academics with kids coming reading their letter awareness and is more academically prepared.

R: let's pretend that you have some open space and you received a grant and you're given a preschool program for students of poverty or for any students in the community. Based on your academic background tell me your comfort level or belief in yourself that you could select the curriculum for that program.
P: I would probably would be in the middle. I think I can work on pulling together program if I had to using the resources I have. I certainly am not without a clue, but I would need some help! I am in between.

R: You mention resources, where would you pull these from?

P: The special education early childhood admin and staff most likely.

R: do you see any difference in teaching and learning (curriculum) from early childhood and the primary years?

P: Oh absolutely there's a big difference complete difference in curriculum for the early childhood years versus the primary years. A big part of that preschool service years is the social interaction and have to start with the basics like you do with your own kids at home, unfortunately more more parents are not taking care of things at home, some do but some don't.

R: What about teacher evaluation, do you feel like if you had a preschool or early childhood program in your school could you evaluate those teachers and could you use your same evaluation system that you use for the K-4 teachers?

P: Yes, yes I do.

R: What system do you currently use?

P: We use RISE.

R: Would it work as is or would you need to create a separate rubric for early childhood?

P: I believe you could do it but I believe you have to modify it.

R: what about professional development for early childhood staff? What is your comfort level in getting early childhood teachers what they would need to become better teachers.

P: I would find provided I had the means anything and everything they would need to become effective early childhood teachers. That is part of my position here at the school I have always led the PD thing and I have to find resources for the teachers in my building. Whether it's me finding the best preschool conference to send someone to or working to bring in the top guru of the preschool field for the development that we need to the school that's what I would do. I am confident that I can create that.

R: Would you have any interest in finding a training or background knowledge based on early childhood for yourself during this leadership experience with early childhood?

P: Laughing... I am interested in it but I also have to remember that my careers almost over. Do I really want to stamp out one more thing that I need to commit to? I don't know but I surely haven't quit yet, so I guess the answer is yes... Laughing.
R: Do any of the current professional development activities or plans that you have that utilize for your kindergarten through fourth grade transfer to early childhood staff? Would any of them benefit early childhood teachers?

P: Good question I know that we do dibbles for k - 4, I'm not sure if Dibbles drops down to early childhood? We are strong on dibbles. I am not sure, it would seem some things would apply?

R: kindergarten full day or half-day here?

P: Full day

R: What about play? Do your kindergarten student have play built into the current day? How you feel about play in the early years?

P: I have not seen where students have play outside of recess. Teachers to recognize when the kids need a break and they we give them some opportunities five minutes to get the wiggles out. We don't have any organized playtime blocked in their day.

R: Do believe that principles in general, that their educational background would impact their ability to comprehend an early childhood program?

P: Yes yes I do.

R: talk me about state regulations for early childhood programs what is your comfort level or your awareness of state regulations? 1 being nothing and 10 very aware?

P: Laughing.....I'll go with a 1 or 2! I know that this was recently in the legislation, some form of program pilots with certain expectations.

R: let's talk about Gov. Pence and his recent push for early childhood programs for students of poverty for a minute. Do you believe that these pilots and these programs are truly initiatives that will begin a preschool movement in the state of Indiana?

P: I am not optimistic that this will be a full-blown start to an initiative for preschool. I see this more as a dabbling in the water to satisfy some people's notion of preschool in the government. People are saying preschool so he's talking about it.

R: Pretend for a minute that you have received a pilot program you have three classrooms of early childhood students. Do you have the time to build the program, select the curriculum, evaluate the teachers, provide professional development, all while doing your normal job for the for k-4 population? 1, I am not able to and 10 I am confident and it's worth the money I earn on my current salary.

P: I would say that if it's something that has to be done but I'm going to get it done it would take a lot of work it would take a lot of extra time it would impact what I would do with the rest of
my position with the other part of the day for sure.

R: How does your current staff except or participate or communicate with the early childhood staff on in your building or if you would expand the program and you added more teachers to early childhood how would you teachers perceive those teachers or would they accept them as others in K-4?
   1, total rejection and 10 being full integration.

P: I would say six or seven because they would want to embrace it. They would embrace the fact that it's what's best for kids. Our early childhood class were not always here and after a few years they are completely an integral part of the staff community.

R: Final thoughts?

P: The middle upper class kids have access to programs, but we really need our students of poverty in school at age four! It's so Important!