

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

1 Since its inception, the role of the principalship in American schools has been in a constant state of change. The changes have mostly centered on the 2 issue of whether the principal is a building manager or a leader of the school. Furthermore, 3 there have been wide variances in the roles of the principal with respect to curricular and instructional expectations.

4 According to Rousmaniere (2007), the position of the school principal emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century. 5 With the creation of graded education programs – particularly in urban areas – many systems created the position of a head teacher in order to provide leadership, guidance, and support to other teachers in the school. 6 The lead teacher, later called the principal teacher, came to serve as the authority figure and the disciplinarian. In addition, his/her responsibilities included the 7 organization of curriculum and supervision of various school operations. 8 Rousmaniere pointed out that as the urbanization in America continued, so did the evolution of the position of school principal. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, most urban schools had a principal at the helm, and the roles of that position were as 9 diverse as the schools in which they were carried out. In some systems the principal was primarily a lead teacher with minor duties pertaining to school operations, while the principal's role in other systems included a clerical or record keeping capacity.

10 By the turn of the century, however, the principal's role had been transformed into one of school administrator, with prerequisites of the job being professional

experience and necessary licensing required for employment.¹¹ According to Usdan, McCloud, and Podmostko (2000), for much of the next century, "The role of the principal was that of manager who was expected to uphold district mandates, manage personnel, manage the budget, and handle other operational issues."¹² With the movement toward increased accountability in the later part of the twentieth century, the role of the school principal necessitated a transition from manager to leader.¹³ Cawelti's (1984) findings support this transition: "Continuing research on effective schools has verified the common-sense observation that schools are rarely effective, in any sense of the word, unless the principal is a 'good leader'" (p. 3).¹⁴ Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko further illustrated findings in support of this change in roles by emphasizing that "principals today must serve as leaders for student learning" (p. 2).¹⁵ The following is a list of characteristics of principals that they suggest for successful fulfillment of this role:

- Has a knowledge of academic content as well as pedagogical knowledge;
- Deliberately plans for helping teachers strengthen instructional skills;
- Analyzes and uses pertinent data;
- Recruits all stakeholders to aid in the increase of student achievement; and
- Possess strong leadership skills (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko).