

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### The School Principal

1 The role of the principal in American schools has been in a constant state of change since its emergence. The issue has been mostly around whether the principal is a manager of the building or a leader of the school. Additionally, 3 there has been discrepancy in the expectations of the principal in regard to curriculum and instruction.

4 The emergence of the school principal began in the mid-nineteenth century (Rousmaniere, 2007). 5 With the formation of graded schools in urban areas, a head teacher emerged in many districts to help guide or lead the other teachers in the school. 6 As Rousmaniere points out, the lead teacher or principal teacher was the authority in the school, 7 organized curriculum, was the disciplinarian, and supervised operations. 8 With the continuation of urbanization in America, the development of the principal's position continued through the end of the nineteenth century when most urban schools had a principal. The role was very 9 diverse in that some systems had the principal as primarily a teacher with minor operational duties while others had the principal as simply a clerk with record keeping duties.

10 Into the twentieth century, the principal continued the emergence from teacher to administrator with professional requirements and licensing becoming required for the position of principal. 11 For much of the twentieth century, the role of the principal was that of manager where the principal was expected to uphold district mandates, manage personnel, manage the budget, and handle other operational issues (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). 12 As American education moved into a new era of accountability in the

later part of the century, this role necessitated the inclusion of leadership.<sup>13</sup> As Cawelti (1984) stated: "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).<sup>14</sup> Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko (2000) further develop this role of principal by stating: "principals today must serve as leaders for student learning" (p. 2).<sup>15</sup> They list the following items as the requirements for fulfilling this role:

- Knowledge of academic content and pedagogy.
- Working with teachers to strengthen skills.
- Collect analyze and use data.
- Rally all stakeholders to increase student performance.
- Possess the leadership skills to fulfill the role.