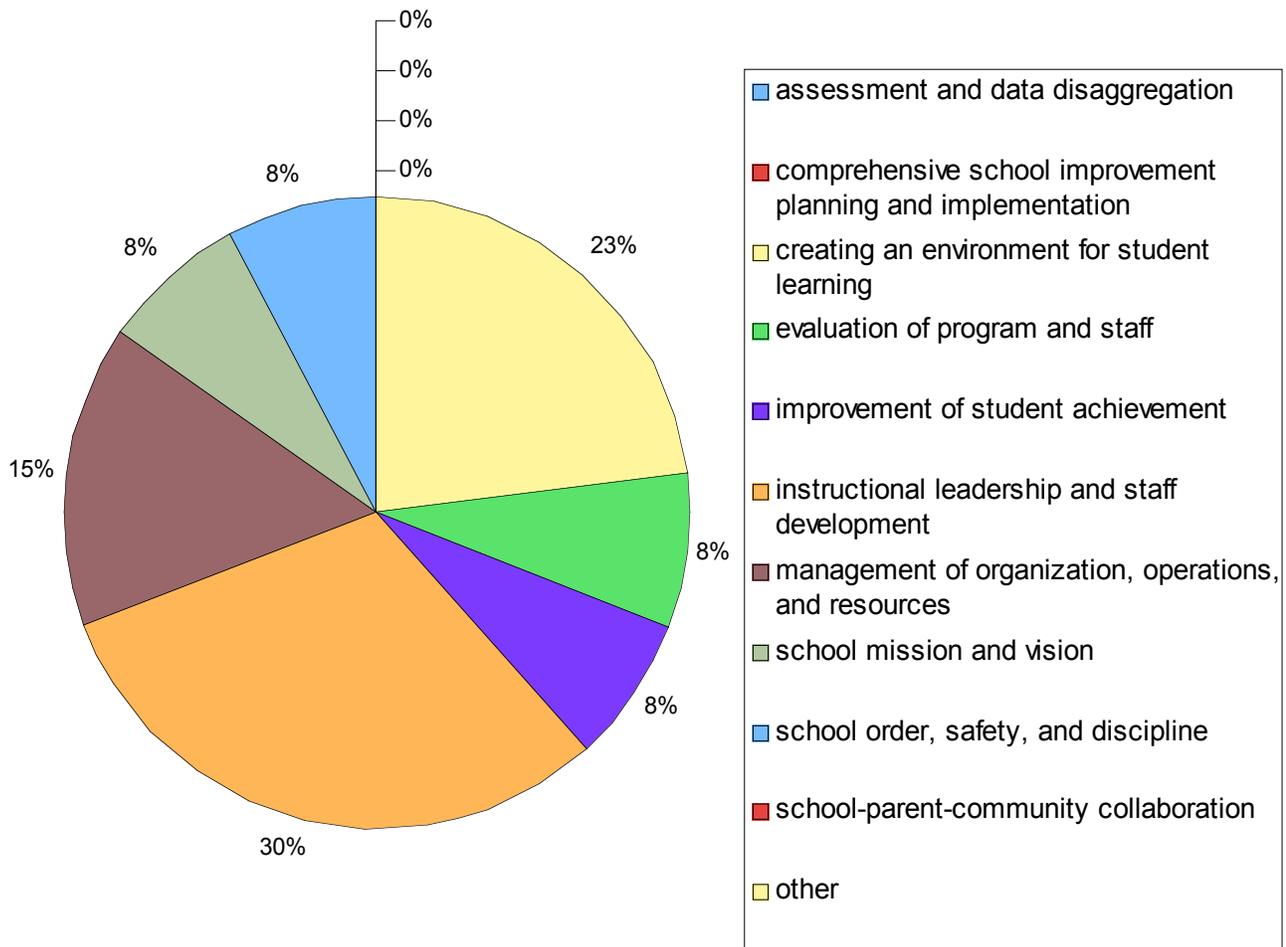




Graduates of IPLA Cohorts I and II were asked to identify personal strongest and weakest perceived qualifications using the above tasks and responsibilities. Four persons identified instructional leadership and staff development, and three persons identified creating an environment for student learning as his or her strongest perceived qualification. Four identified school-parent-community collaboration; while four identified management of organization, operations, and resources as his or her weakest perceived qualification. Two persons identified management of organization, operations, and resources as his or her strongest qualification, while two others identified instructional leadership and staff development as the perceived weakest qualification. The charts follow.

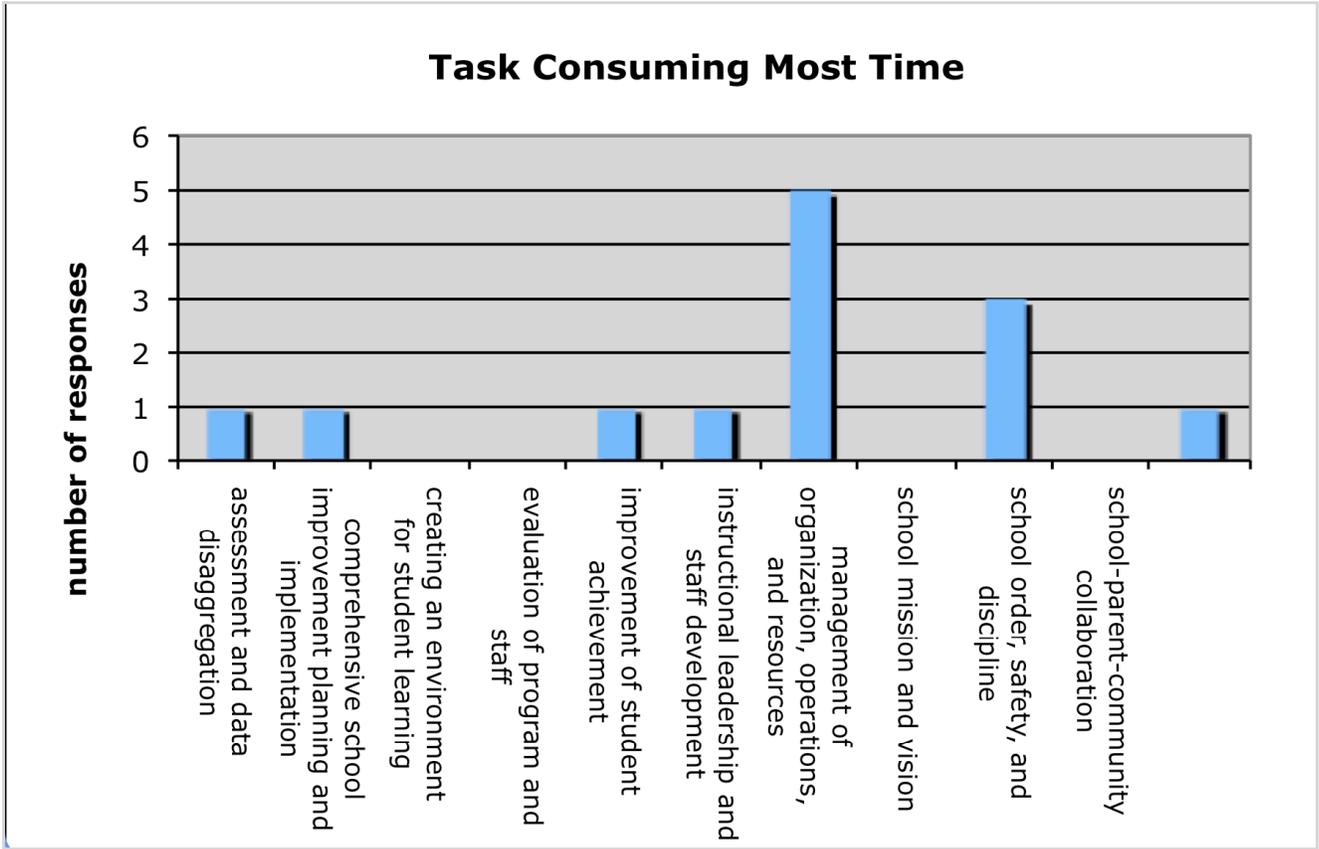
**Percieved Strongest Qualifications**



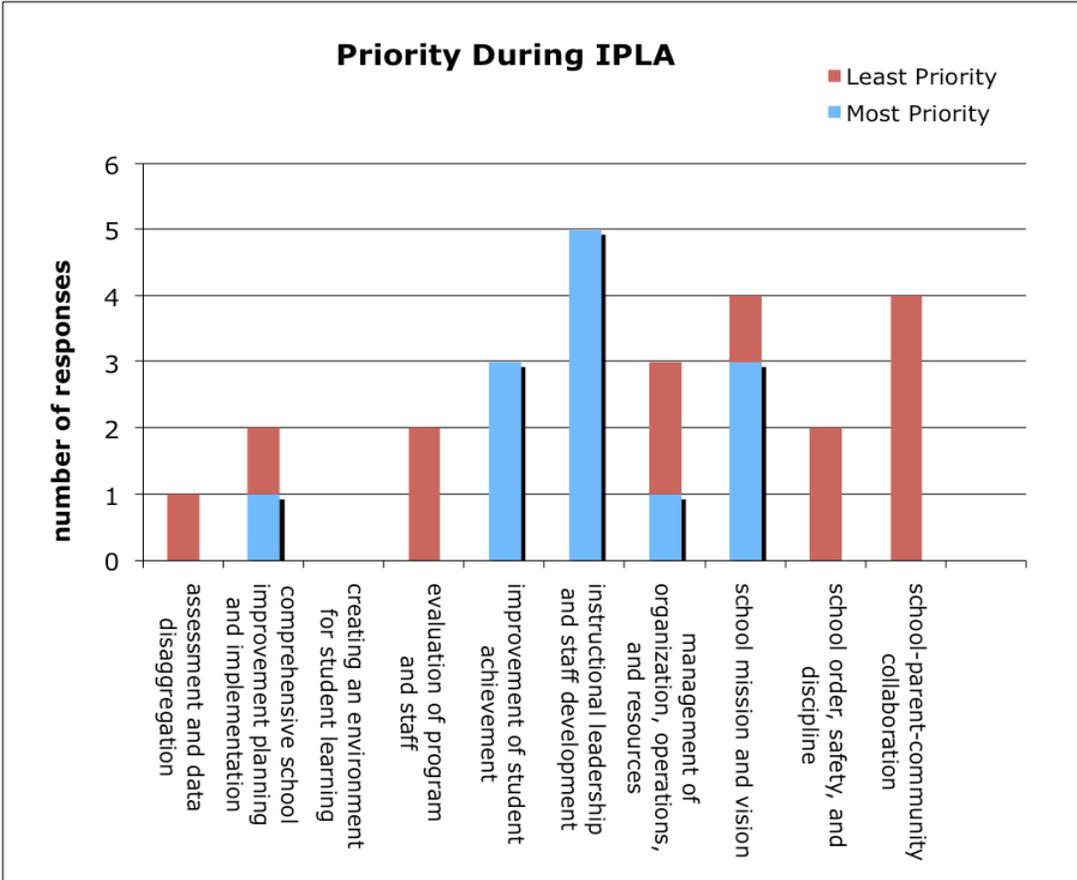
**Perceived Weakest Qualification**



The chart below indicates the number of respondents who named a certain task as the single task consuming the most time. Management of organization, operations, and resources; and school order, safety, and discipline received the most responses, 5 and 3, respectively. The responses indicate that these educators spend more time involved in tasks that do not impact student achievement. IPLA participants are trained to become instructional leaders, although survey data indicate this is not a reality in schools in Iowa at this time. The same responses occurred regarding the single task considered the most important by each respondent!



The following chart indicates the perceived highest and lowest priority during the IPLA process.



Participants were asked several fill-in-the-blank questions.

***“If your school needed improvement in reading, math, or science, how would you determine the best strategy(ies) to use for improvement?”***

1. Collect student achievement data to target areas of need and then develop a plan to increase student achievement through a quality staff development plan, including time and resources for teachers, that has continuity.
2. The first priority is climate and people. If we get everyone working together, other problems will be taken care of as they come up.
3. Research and network to find strategies. Then compare the products to the needs we have.
4. Look to the Content Network for research-based strategies and then find out what we already do and decide if the strategies already utilized are done with fidelity. I would check with the DE and/or AEA and research journals, as well as fellow administrators.
5. Look at data. Talk with staff. Talk with AEA staff. Visit or talk with other schools.
6. Look to the research for guidance and consult the DE website for content resources.
7. Data would drive the decision and create a focal point for improvement. The School Improvement Team, which meets monthly, would investigate what successful schools are doing, what best practice indicates, and what research shows.
8. Determine what resources are available and what the staff decides is the best choice for the students.
9. Use data and research proven strategies.
10. I would use the information I learned in Data Driven Leadership. I would look at student scores (in class and on standard tests) and reading scores. I would visit with teachers to determine feelings on what needs to be improved. I would visit with past students on whether they think instruction could improve.
11. First, I analyze available data to determine exactly what the problem is. Once the problem is identified, I would begin looking for research-based strategies that lead to improvement. Using my BLT we would research to determine which one we believe would be best for our problem.
12. Use research and consult with others.
13. Use a joint effort of teachers, data, collaboration, and research; implement with fidelity; and secure staff buy-in.

***“During the IPLA program, what was the most effective method(s) used to prepare you for the principalship?”***

1. The use of practicing administrators and other voices of leaders in the state.
2. The information we had to include in each portfolio was excellent. The amount of research and reading that was done really helped me. I also appreciated working with my cohort group who gave me new perspectives. The speakers for each strand were excellent.
3. Although I am not a "principal" I do assume those duties as needed when a fellow administrator is not in the district or building. The most effect method used in IPLA to prepare me for this was cooperative learning experiences with smaller groups within the larger cohort. This expanded my view of the 'world' as at that time I was more focused on the classroom level rather than the district or building level.

4. There were many! I enjoyed hearing from the speakers who were experts in their area.
5. Collaborative discussion.
6. I thought the communication with the people in my class and the experienced professionals who presented to our class was important.
7. Real world problems (inbox activities/problems), discussions, and research instruction.
8. Have realistic work to do--using data and information from our own districts.
9. Group discussions and projects as well as just being able to interact with the other students in the class and the instructors for each class.
10. Use of in-basket situations with practicing principals. There can never be enough of this. We needed more in my opinion.
11. The guest speakers that were experts in their fields and were or are actually doing the job. We were able to ask them specific questions in the "In Box" setting. They were there for mentoring as well. They didn't cut any corners or look for the "politically correct" way to say things - straight shooters!
12. Collecting the material for each of the six standards has been very useful.
13. The guest speakers who talked from experience and Dennis.

***“During the IPLA program, what was the least effective method used to prepare you for the principalship?”***

1. Not sure.
2. Can't think of any! Dennis was awesome in knowing what was worthwhile to do!
3. I suggest an administrator's assessment camp type of addition. In another state a group known as M.A.P.L.E. and the LEAD Center put together an assessment program that in two days can let someone know if this job is one you want. Very realistic. Ask them about the Springfield simulation.
4. Lecture with very little dialogue from the presenter. This did NOT happen very often.
5. I learn well in situations where the methods vary so I didn't find any of the methods particularly ineffective - although lectures bore me sometimes if my mind is on other topics!
6. None
7. Saturday format.
8. Not enough time on the legal aspects. I was in the first group and I've heard that the cohort time is much better utilized than we were able to do.
9. NA
10. Some of the information was presented in such a manner so that I could not understand how it would help us in becoming principals. I don't feel as though the projects that were due at the end of each standard really prepared me for what I needed to know. I did not understand how they related to what we were studying.
11. It is hard to say! Maybe some of the group work, but I thought that is how it is! You have to learn to work as a group and there were many learning experiences from the group work.
12. Needed more "internship" training
13. We spent a great deal of time on our projects. They have been resources since that time, but I have not used them very much.

***“What support is (was) provided or made available to you from IPLA since you graduated?”***

1. Ability to contact instructor/mentors.
2. I haven't had contact with anyone from the class (either students or instructors).
3. I know that I can talk to Dennis anytime. Also there are other people in my cohort that I can call.
4. Dennis checks in with me from time to time, has made personal contacts and wrote letters of recommendation when I interviewed two years ago!
5. Email, phone call, and brief contacts. Opportunities to return to the new groups for a visit.
6. Not applicable at this time.
7. The ability to call the director of the program if I have questions.
8. I feel the network that was created between the cohorts. Most everyone has been very supportive and lines of communication has stayed open.
9. I know I can contact any of the cohort members if I ever needed anything, and the same goes for Dennis. That network of professionals is a definite plus for IPLA.
10. Dennis has always offered to help.
11. Follow-up emails & I know that Denny Bahr is always there if I would need a recommendation.
12. I would feel comfortable calling anyone from our program at anytime. One of my classmates is in our district and we communicate on a regular basis.
13. Dennis is a great confidant. I make phone calls, and have connections through HS reform, and visits with team members.

***What must occur to improve principal preparation programs in Iowa?”***

- 1.Emphasis on "real world" topics - learning about data driven decision making is great, but a huge portion of my principal's job is dealing with discipline, parent issues, students with emotional disabilities, and working with outside agencies. There also needs to be more emphasis on special education issues.
2. The 'old school' principals need to retire first. When there is such a disparity in training it can be difficult for an administrator trained to be an instructional leader if they are paired with administrators who are not effective leaders. I don't know how you would ever tell the difference between the two, except maybe SAI's evaluation instrument? That is what is disheartening to me and was disheartening as I interviewed for principalships. I feel that the position I have now is almost like an internship where I am learning even more about effective leaders. Perhaps that is the way to improve preparation programs - to have internships like nurses, doctors, and even teachers complete? I think Iowa is on the right track with the new administrative mentoring program.
3. There is still nothing like the actual experience! I think schools should some how compensate retiring principals to stay on to mentor new principals.
4. Make a connection to real world training while in the training phase to allow reflection of real world experiences while training.
5. Make other programs more collaborative and less class and book-to-book.
6. Continue the IPLA. It was a great program.

7. The IPLA is the right idea. I would add time with a realistic assessment activity and Dr. Ed Porthan, formerly with ND Lead, with his Instructional Leadership. You put these together and you will have the finest program in the USA.
8. Keep practical information coming and recognize that these people, by and large, have full time positions already. Make it reasonable and challenging!
9. I think the IPLA did a satisfactory job of preparing me for becoming a principal. I think we need more hands-on training.
10. I don't feel qualified to answer that question.
11. More programs like IPLA.
12. School administrators must know that people coming from IPLA are extremely well trained and bring vast knowledge to the schools.
13. I believe that more programs, such as the PLA, are needed. Jumping through hoops is not what's needed. Real world - real life situations with more time in a school would be helpful.

***“What was the most beneficial component of the IPLA process?”***

1. The projects and the speakers.
2. In-box sessions. Talking with other teachers on their experiences. Good speakers for the most part.
3. The guest speakers and inbox.
4. Practical assignments.
5. The Standards work.
6. I think the most important aspect of the program was the people. The people in the program with me and the people involved in teaching us.
7. There were two—instructional leadership and role of the principal.
8. The opportunity to hear from, and network with, working administrators
9. Hearing the variety of speakers!
10. Learning to look at the bigger picture was the most beneficial to me. Experiencing some of the technology available was also beneficial.
11. Listening to quality speakers "in the field" and portfolio projects.
12. The many view points and experiences.
13. In-basket real situations that administrators have to deal with daily.

***“What was the least beneficial component of the IPLA process?”***

1. Time working alone. More cohort time would have been better.
2. Can't recall any!
3. ????
4. There were still some things that felt like jumping through hoops. There are probably some hoops at times, but with technology I think those could be reduced.
5. At times some parts of the action research did not seem to fit the standard.
6. Completing so many SAR matrices. I didn't mind it, but it lost it's meaning after the first couple of matrices. Now that I am where I am, I don't use that process very much, which makes me think I am not doing something I should be doing!
7. Can't think of anything right now.

8. Nothing.
9. I don't think anything sticks out as the least important aspect of the program.
10. None.
11. None were poor, I would add more as I mentioned earlier.

***“Suggestions to improve the IPLA program...”***

1. People aren't aware of the program. Educate superintendents about the program—lead the way for systemic change.
2. None
3. More hands-on experiences. More in-box discussions.
4. As I was the first group, I wonder if we need an “update” or breakaway time again. Possibly an update flyer in some way.
5. Maybe a reunion of the cohorts to officially touch base and to share.
6. More time spent on school law, time spent shadowing a principal at different levels.
7. Need more coverage on certain issues: discipline, budget, state requirements, DHS, etc.
8. Internship or mentoring.
9. Refer to earlier comments.
10. Shadowing a current principal that is an effective instructional leader. (Not shadow one just because it is 'convenient' which I see with other programs. I think this would be very difficult however, due to the nature of the program. Maybe cohorts need to schedule 2 days per year to actually go to a school to shadow and also have time to collaborate with the person they are shadowing in an online fashion such as blogging or use of Blackboard technology.
11. Make sure there is constant dialogue regarding in-basket situations that administrators deal with on a daily basis.

***“Other information important for us to know...”***

1. I take great pride in the program and wish I could find a similar one for Specialist.
2. It was difficult at the time, but it was worth the time and effort. Even though I have not pursued a principal position, I do not regret graduating from the program.
3. I know they change this periodically, but it would be beneficial if IPLA cohort groups could experience the DE secure log-in information and requirements. Perhaps the DE would allow access to their fictitious district for training purposes for cohort members?
4. A follow up meeting with cohorts should be included. Some of the graduates are now in the position to hire others and this would be beneficial to the program.
5. I feel honored to be one of the first graduates of the PLA.
6. None.
7. Need to let us know from a superintendent's perspective what they are looking for in principal candidates.
8. Journal articles are a good way to stay current on best practices, but could maybe assign different areas to individuals and report out! This way you would not have to do as many articles and put your time to good use in some other area.
9. Interviews still concentrate on school order, safety, and discipline.

***“How did the program prepare you for an administrative position?”***

1. I think I would be well prepared.
2. About 75% of it, and from what I hear, that is better than most.
3. It helped me understand using data to help make decisions. It helped me to try my best to keep my focus on instructional leadership. I understand the importance of collaborative leadership and "best practice."
4. I read much more professional literature now than I did before. I also have a better understanding of the principal's role in a school building and in a district.
5. It allowed me to be well rounded in my education.
6. I don't have an administrative position yet. But I think the IPLA did a pretty good job of preparing me.
7. I feel totally prepared.
8. ...I use many of the ideas and practices from class.
9. It assists in seeing the whole picture.
10. I felt I was pretty well prepared since I knew much of the learning would have to be "on the job" anyway. I think it is valuable to develop the relationships as we did in the cohort groups. That is a good way to prepare for positions that require teamwork, such as my position. Not much happens in isolation, at least not with effective instructional leaders.
11. It enlightened me to all the different aspects of being a principal.
12. It really gave me the confidence to handle the things I have faced as a first year principal.
13. The program provided background knowledge for me to feel professionally confident.