

ABSTRACT

SMITH, JR., JAMES RUSSELL. Local Leadership of North Carolina Career-Technical Education: Leadership Development and Future Directions. (Under the direction of Kenneth H. Brinson, Jnr.)

Education is faced with unprecedented challenges in preparing students for further education and careers. Increasing public demands for accountability in academic performance and from economic developers challenge educators to provide an education for all. Under the direction of local career-technical education (CTE) administrators, strong and innovative CTE programs can make a significant contribution to meeting the educational and economic needs of the 21st century. This study seeks to expand the dialogue regarding the leadership development of local CTE administrators and challenges they face.

Qualitative methods were chosen to seek an improved understanding of what future practice may be needed for local CTE administrators. Criteria were established to select participants considered effective. Twenty-six administrators participated. Electronic interviews were used to collect data.

As a group, the participants were considered veterans. Eighty-five percent had twenty-six years or more service in education and 65% had responsibility in areas other than CTE. Findings from interviews were categorized into four areas: leadership qualities, professional development, recommendations for developing future leaders, and challenges ahead. The leadership qualities exemplified by this group include being a good administrator, visionary, credible, role-model, and a collaborator and system builder. In terms of professional development, the participants were intellectually curious, sought out mentors, and took advantage of

networking and various professional development programs as a means to develop their administrative skills.

Overwhelmingly, the participants did not support a degree in CTE administration. Instead, they recommended a formal leadership program, mentoring, and a revised and more rigorous internship program for developing future leaders. The challenges ahead for CTE administrators include a poor image of CTE, identifying and keeping qualified teachers, budget cutting and new sources of funding, state leadership, and the evolving role of the CTE administrator to include multiple roles within a system.

These findings provided a better understanding of this pivotal player in the effectiveness of local CTE programs. Also, this study began a dialogue for developing future leaders of CTE in North Carolina.

**LOCAL LEADERSHIP OF NORTH CAROLINA
CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION:
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

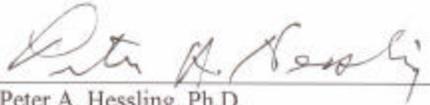
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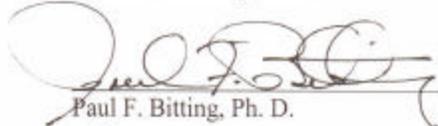
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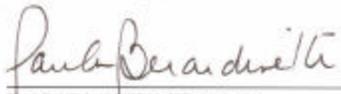
Education Administration and Supervision

Approved by


Kenneth H. Brinson, Jr., Ph.D.,
Chair of Advisory Committee


Peter A. Hessling, Ph.D.


Paul F. Bitting, Ph. D.


Paula Berardinelli, Ed. D.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, father, and sister, DeAnne. Surprise, I finally did it! Unknowingly, your support helped me through this process. Thank you for the sacrifices you made to help me get to where I am today. Also, I must not forget, Sophie. Your unconditional love was greatly appreciated during the long nights of studying and writing.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my late friend and colleague, Sonya Williams Dismuke. Without your encouragement, I probably would not have started this journey. I miss your daily presence and kind words of support and advice.

BIOGRAPHY

A native North Carolinian, James Russell Smith, Jr. “Jimmy” was born in July 1962 in Roanoke Rapids and spent his childhood in Northampton County. His parents worked hard to provide a stable and supportive environment. Jimmy’s mother was an educator in Northampton County for 30 years and his father farms corn, peanuts, and cotton. Jimmy has one sister. A good education was emphasized and played a dominate role in his development.

After completing high school, Jimmy earned his Bachelor of Science in Business and Marketing from East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. He continued with his education earning a Masters of Arts in Education degree from East Carolina University as well. Following a brief teaching experience at Chowan College in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, Jimmy pursued his education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. After receiving an Advanced Studies degree in Vocational and Technical Education in 1988, Jimmy began teaching secondary Business and Marketing Education in both the Charlotte/Mecklenburg and Beaufort County school systems.

In October of 1992, Jimmy joined the state consultant staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh. As a member of the Business and Information Technology Education state staff, Jimmy coordinated the development, enhancement, assessment, and maintenance of statewide curriculum in Business and Information Technology Education. He has provided staff development for teacher and administrators in North Carolina and across the nation through national conferences. He has held several leadership positions in professional

organizations, including President of the National Association of Supervisors of Business Education in 2001. He served on a committee sponsored by the United States Department of Education to develop national standards in Information Technology Education. Jimmy enthusiastically supports the North Carolina chapter of Future Business Leaders of America and assists, when time allows, with other career-technical student organizations.

In the fall of 2000, Jimmy became adjunct faculty to the Business and Marketing Education staff at North Carolina State University. He has taught classes in instructional methods and developed an Internet-based course in Business and Marketing Education program administration. Through his teaching, Jimmy has been able to influence the development of hundreds of Business, Marketing, and Information Technology Education teachers in North Carolina.

Jimmy resides in Raleigh, North Carolina with his loving dog, Sophie. He is surrounded by encouraging and supportive family and friends.

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I am particularly indebted to the local career-technical administrators in North Carolina who participated in my study. My promise to keep your identity confidential prevents me from publicly acknowledge you individually, but I greatly appreciate each of you taking time away from your impossible schedule to share your experiences as a local career-technical education administrator.

Special acknowledgement is given to my committee members—Drs. Kenneth Brinson, Jr., Peter Hessling, Paul Bitting, and Paula Berardinelli. I am very thankful for the helpful comments, advice, and careful guidance throughout this process. I look forward to our continued friendship and professional collaborations. I am especially grateful to Dr. Brinson for serving as the chair of my committee. You kept me going in the right directions and expressed the confidence I needed to complete this project. Thank you for your friendship and scholarly guidance. Thanks again to all of you for your time and energy!

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The field of education today is faced with unprecedented challenges in preparing young people for further education and careers. Increasing public demands for accountability in academic performance and from economic developers challenge educators and administrators to provide an education for all young people. Under the direction of local career-technical administrators, strong and innovative career-technical education programs can be in a position to make a significant contribution to meeting the educational and economic needs of the 21st century. This study expands the dialogue regarding the leadership development of local career-technical administrators and the challenges they face in meeting these educational needs.

Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of clarity and this study, the following terms and definitions are used.

Career-Technical Education. The terms vocational education, vocational and technical education, workforce development education, and career-technical education are used interchangeably. The concept of vocational education, applied studies or practical arts has evolved over the past eighty-five years as the federal legislation that established its place in the American education system has changed. The latest terminology is “career-technical education” as outlined in the passage of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998.

Program areas. The traditional business/industry career clusters for career-technical education include the following areas: Agricultural Education, Business

Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Health Occupations Education, Marketing Education, Technology Education and Trade and Industrial Education.

Senior Leadership in Career-Technical Education. These individuals provide the state-level direction for career-technical education in North Carolina at the Department of Public Instruction. For the purposes of this study, the positions considered as “senior leadership” are the director and three section chiefs for career-technical education in the Division of Instructional Services.

Local Career-Technical Education Administrators. These are the individuals charged with overseeing career-technical education within a school system usually at a director level at the central office level.

Statement of the Problem

To meet the needs for the 21st century worker and economy, the education community must respond appropriately to provide opportunities for our society and the future workforce. In North Carolina, career-technical education programs are an integral part of the public school curriculum. The State Board of Education is responsible for providing direction and leadership to career-technical education. The State Board of Education’s guidelines are outlined in the *ABCs of Public Education, Basic Education Program*, and the *Master Plan for Career-Technical Education*. The *Basic Education Program* for North Carolina’s Public Schools outlines the curriculum which should be provided in all schools throughout the state. Career-technical education is one of the curriculum areas included. The mission, common goals, and other information about North Carolina Career-Technical Education are included in Appendix A.

The *Master Plan for Career-Technical Education* establishes the philosophy and framework of the State Board of Education for career-technical education. The framework of the State Board of Education is listed in the 2003 edition of the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Career-Technical Education* and includes the following:

- Courses should be available to students without regard to race, sex, national origin, or handicap.
- Teaching transferable and thinking skills is important in preparing students to adapt to a changing work environment.
- Instruction should provide opportunities for students to apply communication, computational, scientific, and other academic skills to specific areas.
- Input from local advisory committees, employment data, community surveys, student surveys, and student follow-up are necessary in planning, implementing, and evaluating local programs.
- Students are provided opportunities to earn industry credentials or certifications documenting specific competencies achieved through participation in a career-technical education program.
- Counselors and teachers should coordinate programs with business and industry to ensure that educational objectives match work requirements. Additionally, work experiences achieved through shadowing, internships, cooperative on-the-job

training, or apprenticeships ensure an easy transition from a student to a competent, wage earner.

- All students in career-technical education programs have an opportunity to develop and extend their learning through participation in active career-technical student organizations. The program of work for each organization should be based on instructional competencies and be an integral part of the program.
- Strong career development, guidance, counseling, job placement, and follow-up services are to be available to assist students in planning for their careers and enrolling in appropriate courses. All students should have tentative career development plans.
- Parents are to be actively involved in helping their children choose courses.
- Full cooperation, communication, and coordination between secondary schools and community colleges are necessary for each student advancing to a higher education level (pp. 2, 3).

The career-technical administrator is the responsible entity in the local education agency (LEA) to establish, implement, monitor, and assess this framework for career-technical education. These challenges call for superior leadership to provide for both vision and direction.

Local Need for Leadership Development. The local administrator for career-technical education wears many “hats.” This individual has to communicate and collaborate with other central office staff, school-based administrators, teachers, parents, guidance counselors, business and industry leaders, and representatives of community colleges and/or technical schools. This individual has to be familiar with federal and state legislation and guidelines directing education in general as well as the operation of career-technical education programs. In conjunction with other administrators, he or she has to assist schools in coordinating academic and career-technical programs to educate every child in the system. He or she is usually involved in the hiring of career-technical teachers for the secondary and middle schools for the LEA (Local Education Agency). He or she must be financially savvy to furnish all schools in the system with the needed equipment to run the many career-technical education programs offered. This individual is responsible for reporting to the state information regarding the performance of their local career-technical programs. Finally, this individual plays a part in the economic development of the community.

Where do local career-technical administrators obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to master the tasks they are charged to perform? There are no functioning preparation programs for career-technical administrators in the institutions of higher education in North Carolina. However, the state does require these individuals to be certified as local administrators of career-technical education. The licensure requirements are detailed in Appendix B. If there were preparation programs, what would be the curriculum? What knowledge and skills are needed to be an effective career-technical administrator?

North Carolina's Need for Leadership Development. From my experience as a consultant with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, I know the Career-Technical Education section of the agency conducts an internship for new local administrators. This is a year-long program designed to acquaint them with the state and federal mandates for which they are charged to oversee and report. However, in some cases, local emergencies may prevent "interns" from attending each of these sessions. In some cases, the new administrator will have a mentor to guide them through the activities of the school year, but most do not.

The Department of Public Instruction employs regional coordinators charged to work with local administrators in their region to update them on current procedures and to assist them in the completion of their local plan, a requirement to receive federal funding. At best, the regional coordinators cannot mentor or instruct to the extent needed by new administrators.

The local career-technical administrator has traditionally come from one of the identified program areas of career-technical education. This individual was typically a veteran teacher whose years of service in the system familiarized him or her with the federal and state legislation regarding career-technical education, the particulars of the LEA, and may have been "groomed" by the previous administrator. Today, with the downsizing of central office staff, the tasks of the local administration of career-technical education are increasingly being delegated to existing central office staff who may have administrative experience, but lack a background or experience with career-technical education programs. In addition, this individual may have other administrative functions to perform in the LEA. In any case, many local career-

technical education administrators of career-technical education are at a disadvantage in performing the duties to which he or she is charged.

National Need for Leadership Development. From a national perspective, the leadership problem in career-technical education is not new. Over a decade ago, Moss and Lang (1990) reported that vocational education did not have the number of leaders that were urgently needed nor was there a systematic effort to develop them. At a local level, few school systems have made it a priority to identify and groom potential leaders, despite a wave of impending retirements and chronic difficulties in finding candidates (Olson, 2000). This crisis in leadership for career-technical education is a problem at the local, state and federal level.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of successful and effective local administrators of career-technical education in North Carolina regarding what visions, roles and competencies the local administrator will need to be successful in the area of career-technical education in the 21st century. In addition, I set out to examine the issues the participants see as challenges facing local career-technical education administrators as they work for education reform and improvement, workforce preparation, and economic development in North Carolina. To accomplish this, I interviewed current local administrators identified as being effective at their jobs. For the purposes of this study, “effective” local career-technical education administrators had to meet at least two of the criteria established for this study. The criteria used to select the “effective” participants included a local administrator who has:

- met the benchmarks established in their local plan for the seven performance standards and measures identified by the state,
- uses a local business and industry advisory committee to provide direction for their career-technical education programs,
- implemented innovative career-technical education programs within the schools in the system, and/or
- identified by senior career-technical education administrators at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

the “effective” criteria was defined as a local administrator whose system has met their benchmarks established in their local plans for the four performance standards identified in federal legislation and one state-level performance standard. (For more information about the five performance standards and indicators, see Appendix C); has implemented innovative career-technical education programs within the schools in the system; utilizes a local business and industry advisory committee to provide direction for career-technical education programs; and/or has been identified as effective by senior career-technical education administrators at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. I gathered information about the identified local administrator’s background, experiences, training, education, and overall preparation to be a local administrator of career-technical education. I also asked the participants their recommendations for developing leaders for career-technical education administration. Specifically, the following research questions drove this study.

1. What are the leadership qualities (skills/knowledge) needed by local career-technical education administrators to be effective?

2. What professional development or on-going support is needed to effectively handle the varying aspects of the job responsibilities as a local career-technical education administrator?
3. What recommendations do effective local career-technical education administrators have for cultivating/developing future leaders for career-technical education?
4. What is their current role and what are the challenges facing local career-technical education administrators as they work for education improvement, workforce preparation, and economic development in North Carolina?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

To organize this study of local administration of career-technical education, I utilized the findings of a study commissioned by the National Association of State Directors of Career-Technical Education Consortium. This study examined the role and nature of state leadership of career-technical education and made recommendations for developing future leaders. From an analysis of job descriptions and interviews of current state directors, Kister (2001) reported most directors indicate that their jobs included roles or responsibilities in eleven areas. These eleven areas provided the framework for the interviews and for analyzing the data collected from the selected local administrators. The eleven areas, although adapted to reflect the local nature of the administrators being studied, include:

- Policy—developing standards for career-technical education; preparing information, budget and policy recommendations for local boards of education and state agencies. Policy recommendations include both standards for program and design, methods of local funding, and budget.

- Program Design—analyzing labor market data, developing program standards based on academic standards and industry credentials, developing models for program delivery, and developing program approval criteria.
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment—developing, promoting overseeing curricular frameworks, technical assistance to system schools to strengthen the quality of instruction and assessment for career-technical education.
- Professional/Staff Development and Teacher Education—providing and overseeing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff, and working with the Department of Public Instruction, private vendors, and Institutions of Higher Education deliver staff development and training.
- Evaluation, Accountability, and Reporting—evaluating local programs, developing implementing, and maintaining the state performance accountability system; preparing state and/or federal reports, including the implementation and maintenance of the state’s data system.
- Strategic Planning—developing a strategic plan for career-technical education; coordinating with LEA plans, and developing a local plan required in federal legislation.
- Monitoring—ensuring required state and federal mandates are being implemented and maintained appropriately.
- Management of the Organization—managing local resources, including budget and personnel.
- Public Information and Marketing—providing public information, responding to media; promoting programs to local business and industry representatives.

- Collaboration—developing collaborative relationships in areas including academic and technical education, middle, secondary and postsecondary institutions; with business and industry, with local workforce development constituents.
- Student Organizations—advocating for and overseeing the management of career-technical student organizations within the LEA.

Kister's (2001) findings are supported by Brannon (2002) and his work to create a *Local Administrator's Guide to Performance Excellence* for local administrators in North Carolina. This guide includes a listing of local career-technical education administrative functions needed in a LEA. This guide is intended to assist local administrators in complying with the seven performance standards and measures established in the state governance of career-technical education. After reviewing ten job descriptions of local career-technical administrators, Brannon (2002) aligned the administrative functions into the seven Baldrige categories of Leadership; Strategic Planning; Student, Stakeholder, and Market Focus; Information and Analysis; Faculty and Staff Focus; Process Management; and Organizational Performance Results. These job responsibilities and tasks served as a basis for determining the interview questions used in this study.

Nature of the Study

I conducted this applied qualitative research study with local administrators of career-technical education from across the state of North Carolina. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that “applied research efforts are those that seek findings that can be used directly to make practical decisions about, or improvements in, programs and practices to bring about change with more immediacy” (p. 209). Applied research studies are

more directly related to practice and seeks to inform a variety of audiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The audiences I seek to inform include local school systems, career-technical education state staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and individuals in Institutions of Higher Education as they are involved in the preparation of local administrators of career-technical education.

For this study, I attempted to answer the research questions by interviewing via email the individuals seen as effective local administrators of North Carolina Career-Technical Education programs. Electronic interviews offer a researcher many advantages (Mertler, 2002). There is no travel cost and since all local administrators have access to email, this allowed me to include all cases of “effective practice” no matter where they may be located in the state. Additionally, this electronic interview format allows participants time to reflect and the opportunity to compose their thoughts in their own words. It is logical to assume that the data will be richer in detail since the participants had the time to compose their thoughts.

Further, Carbonaro and Bainbridge (2000) state when the web is used for research, the interview questions must be as simple as possible. Therefore, the electronic interview used in this study consisted of demographic short-answer questions and open-ended questions for the participants to respond. While the use of electronic research is on the rise, not much is known about its effectiveness (Mertler, 2002). It is hoped this study can contribute to that body of knowledge.

Limitations of this Study

The techniques of collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative study are too labor intensive to examine every local career-technical administrator in North Carolina.

Surely, there are numerous local career-technical administrators across North Carolina who are quite successful and effective at certain elements of their role as a local career-technical education administrator. However, this study is limited to examining the local career-technical administrators identified by the senior career-technical education leadership at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the criteria previously identified.

Another limitation of this study is that the findings may be specific to North Carolina local administrators. While federal legislation mandates certain accountability measures, it does not dictate specifically how career-technical education programs are implemented. The philosophical approaches to the implementation of career-technical education vary from state to state. Therefore, findings from this study cannot be generalized to local administrators of career-technical education nationwide. However, this study will add to the general discourse concerning the leadership development of local career-technical education administrators both in North Carolina and nationwide.

A final limitation of this study is that the findings should not be used in a comparative sense to evaluate local administrators of career-technical education in North Carolina. However, the results may be used to strengthen current leadership development efforts to bring about the creation of new leaders and the improved performance of present local administrators to assure the effective delivery of sound career-technical education programs.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The review of the literature has been organized into three sections: a historical overview of secondary career-technical education, general education administrative leadership, and leadership development in career-technical education. First, this review explains the context and evolution of career-technical education and its expanded role in the comprehensive high school. Second, an overview of contemporary education administration; and third, the literature related to the role of leadership development specific to the administration of career-technical education are examined.

Historical Overview of Secondary Career-Technical Education

Historically, career-technical education programs were established to provide an alternative to the general curriculum found in schools. In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act emphasized separatism from the classical curriculum and called for a new curriculum that would better meet the needs of the children of the working class, who, for the first time, were attending high school but were not headed for the professions (Gray, 1991). As the needs of our nation and society have evolved, so has career-technical education legislation. Today, the federal direction for career-technical education is grounded in school reform and achievement. For the first time in federal vocational education legislation, emphasis was placed on academics and funds could be directed to “all segments” of the population (AVA Guide, 1998).

The beginning of the major federal influence in molding and shaping secondary and postsecondary vocational education began with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This legislation was in response to a complex set of social, economic, and political

forces, but was especially enacted to prepare youth for jobs resulting from the industrial revolution and to contribute to the support of the nation's economy. This act also provided them with an alternative from the general curriculum of schools which were "too exclusively literary in spirit, scope, and methods" (Swanson, 1951, p.16).

Smith-Hughes provided for a continuing appropriation for vocational education in agriculture, trades and industry, and home economics and for teacher training in each of these fields. Funds were also appropriated for the administration of the program at the national level. In essence, Smith-Hughes provided for an alternative high school education to that typically provided at the time for middle and wealthy classes of students. Overall, the intent of this legislation was to separate "vocational" students from those in the classical curriculum and prepare them well for the factories, farms, and homes of the era.

Since the beginning of this separatism in 1917, vocational education teachers have emphasized job-specific skills, almost to the complete exclusion of theoretical content (Hayward & Benson, 1993). Also, program areas or fields of study matching the specific industrial categories called for in the legislation were developed and have persisted over the past 85 years and others have been added. These program areas were developed with separate teacher certification or training programs, usually separate state administrators and often separate local supervisors, separate teacher organizations, separate student organizations, and separate lobbyists for federal and state funds. These separate programs, especially through their teacher and student organizations, became very powerful and influential (Lynch, 2000). Until the 1990s, student organizations such as the Future Business Leaders of America (Business Education), the FFA

(Agricultural Education), and the Health Occupation Students of America (Health Occupations Education) and professional organizations such as the Association of Career and Technical Education, and the National Business Education Association benefited from the use of federal funds that supported student and teacher participation in their services and activities. However, since the 1990 reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, these organizations have experienced some decline since there are more restrictions on how a state's federal grant can be administered.

The strong federal influence on the development, growth, and nurturing of career-technical education largely remained unchanged throughout the years. The earliest career-technical education programs were grounded primarily in the need to prepare more immigrants and blue collar-type students with practical skills for the nation's farms, factories, and homes. The emphasis in the federal legislation shifted over the years to ask states to offer programs and training to support national defense efforts (1920s), reduce unemployment problems (1930s), assist the war effort (1940s), include community colleges in the 1950s, and to transition industries to peacetime economic development in the 1950s and 1960s. However, the general thrust of federal policy and funding was to train students for jobs in the economy (AVA Guide, 1998).

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, a good deal of criticism was leveled at career-technical education. Notwithstanding the criticisms, in 1963, bills based on recommendations of a Presidential study were introduced to replace expiring federal legislation. This period saw the advent of area vocational schools and special programs for the disadvantaged and for displaced and unemployed persons. Later amendments in

1964 and 1972 continued “set-asides” to expand Congress’ leverage for career-technical educators to serve handicapped students, disadvantaged students, bilingual students, postsecondary students, and to prepare students for occupations not traditional for their gender. By 1976, federal legislation was beginning to push career-technical education to address social issues, such as the needs of the disabled and disadvantaged students. This trend continued until the 1980s.

In 1983, with the publication of the report *A Nation at Risk*, the education world set out to reform schools and schooling. Career-technical education followed suit and joined the reform efforts. In 1984, Congress passed the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act), the forerunner of today’s federal career-technical education legislation. The Perkins Act contained two main objectives: the improvement of vocational programs, and better services and increased access to vocational education for students with special needs. This new Perkins Act reflected the education policies and reform efforts of the time.

The 1990 reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins II) placed a great deal of emphasis on the integration of career-technical with academic instruction. Congress believed that for vocational education to remain relevant and be able to prepare students for the increasingly technological and complex jobs of the future that it would have to teach broader skill sets and incorporate basic academic concepts into its curriculum.

With the 1990 and 1998 (Perkins III) reauthorizations of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, came dramatic shifts in the federal direction for career-technical education. Both of these pieces of legislation are grounded in

school reform and achievement. For the first time in federal vocational education legislation, emphasis was placed on academics and funds could be directed to “all segments” of the population (AVA Guide, 1998). The federal focus continues to be the development of academic, vocational, and technical skills of students through high standards and to link secondary and postsecondary programs.

More than eighty-five years after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, Congress has continued to reconfirm the importance of career-technical education in preparing a skilled and educated world-class workforce. The federal direction for career-technical education has almost come full circle in its mission to educate students. The early legislation was enacted to prepare more students with the type of education it was thought they would need for the economy of the 20th century. Today, the latest legislation challenges us to prepare more students with the contemporary education they will need to work successfully in our ever-changing, technologically sophisticated, and internationally competitive workplaces. Infusing career-technical education with academic knowledge can provide the kind of flexibility desired in the 21st century worker (Lynch, Smith, & Rojewski, 1994). The local career-technical administrator plays a central role in fulfilling legislative mandates for career-technical education and in the local reform of the public schools in the system.

Contemporary Education Administration Leadership

During the past twenty years, our country has witnessed an unprecedented effort to improve our nation’s schools and raise achievement for all students (Hoachlander, Alt, Beltranena, 2001). Increased funding, reduced class size, “Smart Start” programs, high stakes accountability, and increased graduation requirements are only a few of the

many efforts states have employed to improve our schools. According to Hoachlander, Alt, Beltranena (2001), “despite all of this activity and attention, significant changes in student achievement and in basic school practices have been slow at best” (p. i).

While there have been some successes, the reasons for slow progress are many and complex. The need for stronger school leadership—educators who direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction and school organization—is one area receiving a great deal of attention (Hoachlander, Alt, Beltranena, 2001). According to Alkin (1992), there is an extensive body of literature that attempts to define the qualities of effective school leaders and link key characteristics to successful schools. Likewise in other disciplines and in the popular press, there are many publications seeking to describe and develop good leaders. DuBrin (1998) states there are “about 30,000 research articles, magazine articles, and books have been written about leadership in the twentieth century” (p. 2).

There is a wealth of discussion and concern for the development of good leaders in both education and in other fields. In his 1997 book, *A Passion for Excellence*, author Tom Peters notes that leaders have five important roles:

- To educate—to inform when conditions change;
- To sponsor—to spotlight/celebrate outstanding performance;
- To coach—to provide on-the-job assistance as people tackle new skills;
- To counsel—to offer support and services when off-the-job problems cause on-the-job problems; and
- To confront—to inform individuals when their behavior or performance is unacceptable.

Research has yielded many insights into the characteristics of good leadership. Many agree that education leaders should be charismatic, decisive, and passionate about their fields. They should be life-long learners, motivators, and they should possess a clear vision and have high expectations of both students and faculty. They should be able to engage the community, parents, and area business and industry. They should be able to use data to analyze and improve student achievement and school performance. Good leaders and administrators should be able to multi-task and be good managers and stewards of a school's or school system's human and physical resources (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1996).

In addition to the desire to produce stronger and more effective school administrators, there is another problem of great urgency in the education community. School administrators are retiring and resigning from education at alarming rates (Olson, 2000; Shults, 2001; Glass, 2000). Moreover, fewer and fewer educators appear to want these positions. The increasing pressures of high-stakes accountability, financial concerns, multiple instructional mandates and a changing society can deter the most able candidates from pursuing leadership positions in education. Hoachlander, Alt, Beltranena, 2001, relates the most frequently cited reasons for this declining interest "are the imbalance between responsibility and salary, the stress of the job, and unreasonable time demands" (p. 11). While schools and school systems grapple with the many ills of the American education system, leadership is an important ingredient in the mix of strategies for improving schools.

Leadership Development in Career-Technical Education

Leadership and leadership development, as previously stated, are important and long-standing concerns in education. Career-technical education is no exception. As with general education administration, concerns for leadership in career-technical education arise from the retirement of experienced leaders and the changing demands placed on education leaders from those in the past. Given the importance of leadership and administration in career and technical education, very little research or literature exists on this topic and no published research or literature was found on the local level of administration of career-technical education.

Leadership skill development has been a part of a total career-technical instructional program (Cahill and Brady, 1999). Students participating in Career and Technical Education Student Organizations benefit from social and leadership experiences both inside and beyond the classroom through meetings, conferences, competition, and community service sponsored by the various organizations. Ten Career-Technical Students Organizations are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and served approximately two million students in 2002 (U.S. Department of Education Web Site, 2003). These organizations help draw students to career-technical programs. Postsecondary organizations also offer leadership development opportunities to students, but they are not as popular as those organizations targeted to the middle and high school levels.

Administrative leadership development in career-technical education has traditionally reflected an opinion that leadership, although a complex construct of characteristics and behaviors, can be observed, learned, and taught (Wanacott, 2001).

In recent years, reacting to the changing nature of work and public demands on education, practitioners have moved to a model of transformational leadership (Moss and Liang, 1990). Moss and Liang (1990) describe this model as “the process of perceiving when change is needed and influencing the group by such non-coercive means as persuasion and example in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement” (p. 5). From this model, newer definitions of leadership have evolved for career-technical education. The National Center for Research in Career and Technical Education has conceptualized leadership development as:

Improving those attributes—characteristics, knowledge, skills, and values—that predispose individuals to perceive opportunities to behave as leaders, to grasp those opportunities, and to succeed in influencing group behaviors in a wide variety of situations. Success as a leader in vocational education is conceived primarily as facilitating the group process and empowering group members (Moss, et al. 1994, p. 26).

During a 2002 Trends and Issues Forum, the National Committee of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, identified the “career-technical leadership crisis” at the national, state, and local levels of administration as one of the top fifteen issues facing Career and Technical Education (ERIC Clearing House report, 2002) . Also during a 2002 need sensing/future scanning survey, the National Centers for Research and Dissemination identified leadership and leadership development as a top priority for Career and Technical Education as Congress prepares for the 2003 reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (National Center for Career and Technical Education, 2002). In a memo regarding the

reauthorization of the Perkins Act, McKinney and Hopkins state that “given the rapid changes occurring in our culture and the workplace and given the leadership crisis at all levels of career and technical education, the federal legislation needs to address these issues with a strong program for the initial preparation of teachers/faculty; local, state, and national leaders; and the continuing professional development needs of all staff in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education” (F. L. McKinney, & C. R. Hopkins, personal communication, May 24, 2002). They further state that “special attention needs to be given to the development of a cadre of individuals at the highest local, state, and national leadership levels” (F. L. McKinney, & C. R. Hopkins, personal communication, May 24, 2002).

In 2001, Kister conducted a study focused on leadership as it related to the state directorship for career and technical education. In her report, Kister (2001) stated the purpose of this study “was intended to inform both policymakers and practitioners of the role, nature, and value of state leadership for career technical education and to make recommendations for developing state leaders” (p. v). The findings of this research are presented in the Theoretical Framework of this proposal. Partly as a result of this work, the National Dissemination Center launched a National Leadership Institute for Career and Technical Education in 2001-2002. As a result of participating in the National Leadership Institute, the scholars are expected to:

- Develop an understanding of the role of a leader and how to exercise the responsibilities inherent in that role.
- Improve their understanding of and ability to lead reform/change processes.

- Develop/improve ability to influence policymaking at the local, state, and national levels.
- Develop skills in interpreting and using research findings and evaluation information to improve programs and develop new initiatives.
- Increase knowledge of the legislative process and learn how to impact that process.
- Develop an understanding regarding the political and financial challenges of planning and implementing programs. (National Leadership Institute brochure, 2001).

With an initial class of thirty-three “scholars” from eleven states and a second class underway in 2002-2003, the Institute continues to develop future leaders to serve at all levels of career-technical administration.

Summary

This chapter was a review of literature related to this study. To set the context of this research, a historical overview of the origins of, and federal legislation impacting, the creation and development of career-technical education was presented. Although the research specifically related to leadership development in career-technical education was limited, relevant research was presented.

Literature specifically related to the local administration of career-technical education programs was non-existent. From the literature presented, there was recognition of the need to focus the attention of the profession on developing its future leadership. The study conducted by Kister (2001) and the work of the National Centers for Research and Dissemination for Career and Technical Education was presented as

evidence of initial efforts to address future leadership concerns in career-technical education. This study adds to the dialogue surrounding the future leadership and administration of local career-technical education programs. The next chapter addresses the methodological procedures to be used in conducting this research study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to better understand the perceptions of successful local career-technical education administrators regarding what visions, roles and competencies will be needed in their profession in the twenty-first century to maintain currency and reform in the profession. The context of this applied qualitative study involves career and technical administrators for local education agencies in North Carolina. North Carolina was chosen to limit the scope of this study and have a population with the same philosophy of secondary career-technical education. This chapter describes the methods used for this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the research design, and then proceeds to describe the participants and sampling techniques. The plan and method for collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the data is followed by validity and ethical issues in this study.

Research Design

Qualitative research methods were chosen for this study. The purpose of the research was to seek an improved understanding of what future practice may be needed for local career-technical education administrators. The outcome was to improve practice rather than to prove or disprove theory, an outcome that lends itself to qualitative research methodologies. Merriam (1998) has indicated that qualitative research is best when trying to seek an improved understanding of a phenomenon or improvement of practice. This purpose of this research was to do just that, to seek improved understanding with an outcome of improved practice.

Qualitative methods are research methods that find out what people do, know, think and feel by observing, interviewing and analyzing (Patton, 1990). Since the plan of this research project was to elicit perspectives from successful or effective local administrators of career-technical education and to understand their perceptions, a qualitative method of data collection was used as this type of research fits a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. Qualitative methodology was recommended as most appropriate in this context as it provides a richness not necessarily available through quantitative methods. Qualitative research is best in these situations because the study sought the perceptions of participants and the study was not directed towards theory testing and proving.

Participants and Sampling Techniques

The participants selected for this study represented multiple sites across North Carolina since there was generally one lead career-technical administrator per local education agency. The sampling was purposeful since I was looking for cases of effective local administration of career-technical education programs. To be considered “effective,” local career-technical education administrators had to meet at least two of the criteria established for this study. The criteria used to select the “effective” participants included a local administrator who has:

- met the benchmarks established in their local plan for the seven performance standards and measures identified by the state,
- uses a local business and industry advisory committee to provide direction for their career-technical education programs,

- implemented innovative career-technical education programs within the schools in the system, and/or
- were identified by senior career-technical education administrators at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

These selection criteria provided consistency in the selection process of participants to be included in this study.

Data Collection

After the local administrators were selected, I used the Internet, via email, to interview them. Witte, Amoroso, and Howard (as quoted in Mertler, 2002) indicated that Internet research is “an area marked by great potential but also little experience” (p. 49). The benefits of Internet research include: a faster response, protection against the loss of data, convenience for the respondent, and the possibility of wider geographic coverage (Mertler, 2002). These attributes allowed me to include and efficiently reach local administrators from across the state to participate in this research. I did not limit my research to those local administrators within a certain distance to Raleigh, which using traditional face-to-face interviewing techniques would have dictated.

The use of the Internet, as with every method of data collection, has its limitations. According to Mertler (2002), these limitations include: unavailability of participants’ email address; computer access; lack of technological familiarity on the part of the respondents; the potential for identifying respondents; and various technology-related issues. Overcoming these limitations was important to the effectiveness of my data collection. All North Carolina local career-technical administrators have access to an active email account and are familiar with the

technology. Local career-technical education administrators are used to receiving updates and notices from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on a regular basis. The familiarity of using email and the Internet to receive and access information increased my participation rate. To increase confidentiality, all participants were assigned a pseudonym and instructed on the procedures I employed for confidentiality. Also, for this research, I established an email account neutral to my work account at the Department of Public Instruction and all participants were instructed to use this account as it related to this study. To participate, all respondents signed a consent form. (See Appendix E for a copy of the Consent Form.)

Participants were emailed the study instruments in two parts. The first part consisted of demographic questions about the participant and their background and experiences. Additionally, questions were asked about the school system in which they work. The second part was open-ended questions relating to their experience and development as local career-technical education administrators as well as challenges for the future of career-technical education. The questions used in the interview were informed by the works of Kister (2002) and Brannon (2002). The two parts were created as forms so the participants could check their responses or key in appropriate areas for their open-ended responses. The “form” helped increase the likelihood participants responded to all questions accurately. (See Appendix F and G for a copy of the study instruments.)

Participants were given approximately one month to return their responses. A week before the due date, participants were emailed a reminder to return their responses. A second reminder was emailed two days before the due date. Follow-up

questions were emailed and in some cases phone calls were necessary to obtain more detail or to complete responses to the study questions.

Data Analysis

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) recommend the constant comparative method of data analysis as a “flexible means” of generating social theory. The constant comparative method is a form of qualitative data analysis that combines, by an analytic procedure of constant comparison, explicit coding and theory development. Merriam (1998) states, “the constant comparative method of data analysis is widely used in all kinds of qualitative studies, whether or not the researcher is building a grounded theory” (p.18). Basically, the constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. This dimension was tentatively given a name; and became a category. The overall objective of this analysis was to seek patterns in the data.

Validity

With every type of research, the validity of the findings are an important question for the researcher. However, the validity questions for experimental or quasi-experimental studies differ from those associated with a qualitative approach. Regardless of the type of research, Merriam (1998) states that “validity is a concern that can be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented” (pp.199-200). In the case of qualitative research, Wolcott (1994) reports that the researcher seeks, “something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations from them,

something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with the right or ultimate answer, the correct version of the Truth” (pp. 366-367). For Wolcott, the “something else” is understanding.

According to Merriam (1998), “validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality. How congruent are the findings with reality? Do the findings capture what is really there?” (p. 20). Several strategies were used to enhance the validity of this qualitative study. For the purposes of this study, validity was first addressed through the purposeful sampling of the participants. Using multiple indicators of “effectiveness” allowed participants reflecting several dimensions of effective practice. Validity was further addressed by the use of member checks, and peer examination. The data and tentative interpretations of this study were shared with several participants for ascertaining the accuracy of the data and my interpretations. In addition, two career-technical education consultants of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and one career-technical education regional coordinator were asked to comment on the findings as they emerged.

Generalizability or in this case, applicability, is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study apply to another situation. The major issue regarding generalizability relates to whether one can generalize from a single case or from a qualitative study in general. For this study, participants were selected using a standard set of criteria to define successful and effective local career-technical education administrators in North Carolina. This measure was completed prior to the selection process and not altered once the selection of participants began.

To enhance the possibility of the findings from this study being applicable to other local situations in North Carolina, the following strategies were used: rich, thick description and multi-site design. According to Merriam (1998) a rich, thick description, “provides enough description so that readers are able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (p. 211). For this study, participants were electronically interviewed to allow local career-technical education administrators to be included in this study from anywhere in North Carolina—not just limited to the a certain geographical area. This allowed for the findings to be applied to a greater variety of other school systems in North Carolina. The strategy of multi-site design was accomplished through purposeful sampling described previously.

My Role as the Researcher

Possible Strengths. The biggest strengths I bring to this study are my professional standing and my reputation with the audience I studied. I have worked at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for eleven years in career-technical education as a business and marketing education consultant. In addition to my experience as a consultant, I have eight years of experience as a career-technical educator. Outside of my work in North Carolina, I have served on national research panels, in a national leadership capacity with career-technical education professional associations, and as a free-lance consultant with two major publishers of textbooks for career-technical education. I have developed a well-respected reputation as being an honest, fair, and straightforward person.

Over the years, I have visited various school systems, participated in the local administrator's internship training and I have been available to answer local director questions via email and telephone whenever needed. Based on this relationship with the local career-technical education administrators, I experienced excellent participation and a willingness to participate in this study. From my observations and interactions with many of the state's local administrators over the past eleven years, I have found they truly care about what they do and have been eager to participate in any way to strengthen their role as administrators or the programs they administer.

For the group of local administrators I interviewed, I have had opportunities to talk one-on-one with many of these individuals and have come to them from time to time to ask their opinions/input on curriculum issues. There has been a trusting relationship between us and they know I valued and respected their honest opinions.

Possible Weaknesses. There was always the possibility of a "big brother" kind of mentality since I am with the "state" and our role is, at times, an evaluative one. I was careful how I presented this research to the local administrators and how I asked interview questions to relieve some of that possible anxiety. Also, I reminded the participants in this study that their identity would remain confidential. Again, the fact that I would not be sharing with my colleagues at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction the specific responses given by the participants helped ease any anxiety and contributed to the richness of their responses. Furthermore, since I was deliberately seeking "effective" practice, participants realized I was not out to "get" them or catch them doing something wrong.

Additionally, because of my role as a “state” career-technical education consultant, I had to be aware of how the “Halo” effect may have influenced the responses I received from the participants. There was the possibility that I may get responses that the participant thought I wanted to hear as it related to the tasks they perform. In other words, they would give me answers of what they should have been doing in their role as a local career-technical education administrator instead of talking about the duties and responsibilities they actually performed. Again, I was conscious of how I approached the interview and what I asked to make sure the participants were comfortable answering the questions truthfully.

Biases I Bring to the Study. In my role as a Department of Public Instruction consultant, I have the responsibility to administer career-technical education programs across the state. Although I have never been a local administrator, I have eleven years experience as a state administrator of career-technical education and have a good understanding of the tasks involved in administering these programs at a local level. From a state perspective, I know what should be happening locally to comply with state and federal mandates. However, in a time of tight budgets and central office downsizing, I was aware of the many responsibilities that are put upon our local administrators that may prevent them from overseeing their career-technical education programs effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, I reminded myself that the local administrators do not report to me or to the state directly. They are hired by local boards of education and superintendents. Therefore, they are responsive to their directives first. The local administrator must

balance what their local “bosses” want with what the state requests. So, I kept that “reality” in the forefront of my thinking.

Ethical Issues

While conducting any research, I was cognizant of ethical issues and procedures regarding the issue being researched and the handling of data from the research. As this study concluded, I was mindful of the consequences of how the study’s findings were reported and to whom. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) cite the ethical principles adopted by the Council of American Anthropologists as being appropriate. Those guidelines, paraphrased, include: 1) the right, interests, and sensitivities of those studied must be safeguarded; 2) the purpose of the investigation must be communicated to those who participate; 3) participants have the right to remain anonymous and such promise should be explicitly stated by the researcher at the outset of the study; 4) exploitation of participants for personal gain is not allowed; and 5) the researcher must consider repercussions of research and publication on the population being studied. Throughout this study, I abided by these guidelines. Permission to complete this study was requested and received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at North Carolina State University. A copy of the Institutional Review Board form is located in Appendix D.

Risk to participants. Lecompte and Preissle (1993) defined risk as “the possibility of any ill consequence of a research study—the chances of injury, damage, harm, or losses to anyone associated with an investigation” (p. 106). This research study did not involve any risk to the participants.

Confidentiality. Maintaining confidentiality is vital to any study (Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002). Participants were assured through all correspondence with me that I kept any identifying information confidential. All data obtained from responses were coded to protect anonymity. All email communications with the participants in this study are stored in password files so that they will not be accessible to others. When direct quotations are used in the research findings, participants are identified only by a number and all findings are reported without identifying characteristics. Information was stored in a secure location protected from all persons not involved in this research study. Reasonable precautions were used to protect the identity of the participants and their responses.

Interviews. In regards to using interviews as a data gathering technique, I asked myself, “What might be the residual effects of conducting this interview or study?” For this study, a local administrator may have been reluctant to be included in the interview portion because they would fear being “evaluated” by a state department person concerning their job performance. However, for the purposes of this study, I was more interested in finding out “how” they performed their job and how they learned the knowledge and skills needed to do their job as local career-technical education administrators.

Having participated in this research may bring about positive results for the participants if they are moved to further refine their practice or take certain actions as local administrators. Because the participants in this study were selected due to their effective practice, the participants were provided a measure of confidence and

significance. This affirmation of their practice as local administrators gave a richer description of how they perform their jobs.

Informed Consent. Before any data were collected related to this study, each participant was asked to review and sign an informed consent form to indicate their agreement to participate in this study. The informed consent document briefly outlined the steps in the study and how the data was handled in terms of security of identity. Any deception of human subjects was avoided by conducting the interviews with fully informed participants.

Summary

This chapter addressed the research methodology used in conducting this study. In particular, the research design was presented including specifics about the criteria used in selecting the participants. Additionally this chapter spoke to the means utilized in the analysis of the research data. Finally, issues of validity and the ethical concerns related to this study were presented. In Chapter 4, the research findings are presented and summarized.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of effective local administrators of career-technical education throughout North Carolina regarding what visions, roles, and competencies the local administrator will need to be successful in the area of career-technical education in the early 21st century. This chapter describes the study's participants and their perspectives of effective career-technical education administrators. The findings came from electronic interviews of selected career-technical education administrators from school systems across the state of North Carolina.

The participants were chosen by using the selection criteria previously mentioned in this study. From the selection process, thirty-three career-technical administrators from a total of 117 local school systems were identified as being effective at their jobs. The participants selected for this study were representative of the geographic regions of North Carolina. Additionally, the study participants were from varying sizes of public school systems found in the state. Of the thirty-three administrators initially selected, twenty-six responded to this study.

The data were collected electronically over a three-month period in the winter/spring of 2003. In certain cases, responses by study participants were followed-up with additional questions via email or telephone to make sure that the response was interpreted correctly or to gather more information if needed for clarification. The structured interview was divided into two parts: demographic data and interview

questions. These two areas, therefore, serve as the major divisions for this chapter. Within each major area, analytic categories capturing the major themes emerged from reading and re-reading the transcripts of their electronic interviews. Although themes emerged from the data, many of the responses crossed over into other categories. Selected excerpts and quotations from the interviews were used to accurately illustrate the participant's feelings and perceptions regarding the role as a career-technical education administrator, their challenges, and vision for the future. Citations and quotations from individual participants were identified by their assigned participant number in parenthesis.

Demographic Information

The objective of this portion of the research study was to gather information and characteristics about the selected participants. Of the 26 participants responding to this study, three came from small school systems, 12 came from medium sized systems and 11 came from large systems. For this study, school size was defined using average daily membership (ADM)—a method used by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. A small school system was defined as having fewer than 3,999 ADM, a medium-sized system having 4,000 to 9,999 ADM, and a large system as having 10,000 or greater ADM.

Although all of these individuals serve in the capacity of career-technical administrator, their “paths” to this position are unique as well as the circumstances in which they perform their jobs. To organize the reporting of information in this section, the subcategories of experience/education/professional development, previous work experience, work environment, and job tasks are used.

Experience/Education/Professional Development. The participants in this study are considered veterans in the field of education and are highly educated. Eighty-five percent of the group has twenty-six or more years of service in education. No one in this study had less than 15 years of experience and approximately 15.4% of this group had 16 to 25 years of experience. Thirty-four percent of the participants in the study had 16 to 20 years experience as local administrators for career-technical education. The experience level of the remaining participants was as follows: 23% with 5 years or less; 23% with 6 to 10 years; and 19.2% with 11 to 15 years experience as a local administrator of career-technical education.

Each of these local administrators possessed a master's degree or higher. Specifically, 57.6% had a master's degree, 26.9% had a degree beyond their master's, and 15.3% had a doctorate. Three from the group are currently enrolled in a doctoral program and two of the three have finished their doctoral coursework and are writing dissertations. Of the 26 participants, 24 had an undergraduate degree in one or more content areas found in career-technical education. Eight of the participants had a master's degree in one or more content areas found in career-technical education.

From various comments, obtaining further education was very important to this group. One participant stated, "I am working on my dissertation in the area of career-technical education and planning to retire July 1st [2003]" (P-26). All of the participants in this study indicated they earned their degrees while working full- or part-time.

The areas for their highest degrees were evenly split between content area/curriculum and education administration. Forty-six percent had degrees in education administration, 42.3% in a content area/curriculum, and approximately 11%

in guidance or counseling. Of the study's participants, nine individuals earned their degrees from East Carolina University, four from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, three from Appalachian State University, three from North Carolina State University, one from North Carolina Central University, one from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, one from Western Carolina University and the remaining four were from outside of North Carolina.

When asked where these local administrators received their greatest professional development, 55.8% indicated the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 21.1% from their local school system, 15.4% from their professional associations, 11.5% from institutions of higher education, and 1% from other means of professional development delivery.

After reviewing the responses to the professional development question, it appeared there may have been some confusion between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Career-Technical Education Administrator Professional Association that influenced their decision-making. Each year, the Career-Technical Education Administrators meet twice. Historically, this meeting was organized and delivered by the Career-Technical Education Staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. During the past several years, this responsibility has been taken over by the professional organization representing local career-technical education administrators. However, the Career-Technical Education State Staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction primarily delivers the program sessions. The change over in responsibilities may have influenced some participants to choose one or the other.

Previous Work Experience. Seventy-seven percent of this study's participants have worked for one or two school systems. Of this group, the majority (46.1 %) of the participants have worked in only one school system. Thirty-one percent have experience in two school systems, 15.4% in three, and 7.6% in four school systems. No one had experiences in more than four school systems.

The participants in this study had a variety of positions prior to becoming local administrators, but primarily they came to the position directly from either a career-technical education classroom or a school-level administrative experience. All but three of the participants had a background in career-technical education. The three non-career-technical education background individuals came respectively from an English, social studies and elementary education backgrounds. Other notable experiences included: three individuals had experience working in career-technical education at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and three came to the job from a career development coordinator or guidance/counseling background.

Work Environment. Three of the local administrators came from a small school system, 12 from a medium sized school system, and 11 from a large school system. When asked about having a staff or assistants to help with the administration of career-technical education in the school system, 13 participants stated, "No" and 13 stated, "Yes." While analyzing the responses and based on my personal experience, I realized some individuals may have counted their VoCATS Coordinator as an assistant while others did not. VoCATS is North Carolina's name for the instructional management and accountability system created to identify student achievement and growth required by federal legislation. Almost every school system employs a VoCATS Coordinator to

oversee the responsibility of instructional management and accountability for career-technical education. The majority of participants indicated they had one or two assistants, while one indicated they had over six assistants. The career-technical education assistance was primarily either a VoCATS coordinator or career-technical education content area specialist, but in the case of some of the larger systems, the roles included: business/industry liaison, budget/finance, and various other specialist roles.

The numbers of career-technical teachers and staff that the participants had supervisory responsibility, ranged from 16 to more than 76. Specifically, 11.5% have 16 to 25 teachers/staff; 26.9% have 26 to 35; 7.69% have 36 to 45; 15.4% have 46 to 55; 3.8 percent have 56 to 65; 3.8 percent have 66 to 75; and 30.7% have more than 76 career-technical education teachers or staff. The majority of the teachers and staff are career-technical education content area teachers, but other staff members include: career-development coordinators, special population coordinators, and VoCATS coordinators.

Nine of the 26 participants indicated they had no responsibilities other than those associated with the administration of career-technical education. One participant said, “I am glad I can devote all my time and energy to the administration of Career-Technical Education—if done right, it’s a big job!” (P-10). However, the remainder of the participants were not so lucky. Other duties cited by participants include: 9-12 Curriculum Director, K-12 Curriculum Director, Personnel, System Staff Development, School Information Management System (SIMS) Administration, SACS Coordinator, Director of Transportation, School Construction Coordinator, Character Education, English-Second Language (ESL), Student Accountability, and various other system

responsibilities. Several participants mentioned the administration of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Tech Prep within their system, but both those duties could technically be called career-technical education. It was clear from looking at the data, that the smaller the school system, the more varied the responsibilities of a local career-technical education administrator, therefore leaving less time to devote to many activities related to career-technical education.

Job Tasks. Table 1 lists a variety of administrative tasks performed by career-technical administrators. Participants were asked to specify what percent of their time was devoted to each of these tasks. The average percentage of time for each task is listed in the second column. In some cases, there were wide variations in the percentage of time spent on certain tasks; therefore the range of percentages and the most frequently reported percentage of time spent was also reported.

Instructional leadership accounted for 23.75% of the participants' time followed closely by 17.69% devoted to budgeting and finance. Most of the wide variance in the range of percentages can be attributed to the number of assistants and the size of school system. From the responses of the participants, their time was fairly evenly distributed among the other tasks listed. Three tasks—instructional leadership, personnel issues, and business/industry involvement—were bimodal, having two peaks in the range of percentages. One reason contributing to this phenomenon is the differences between smaller and larger school systems. As noted earlier, small school systems require more “other” duties for the local career-technical administrator than do larger systems. This point is further made when looking at the percentage of time devoted to “other” tasks.

While this task category only amounts to 5.76% of an administrator’s time, the percentages of time spent ranged from zero to as much as thirty-five percent.

Table 1—Percentage of Time on Administrative Tasks

Administrative Task	Average % of Time	Range of % of Time on Task	Most Frequently
			Reported % of Time on Task
Instructional Leadership	23.73	5 – 55	15, 30
Budget/Finance	17.69	5 - 40	20
Business/Industry Involvement	10.46	5 – 25	5, 10
Collaboration to Support Local Initiatives	9.53	3 – 25	5
School System Planning	9.34	2 - 20	10
State Accountability Reporting	8.23	1 – 20	5
Staff Development	7.57	2 – 25	5
Personnel Issues	7.46	2 – 15	5, 10
Others (Please describe)	5.76	0 - 35	10

Appendix H contains figures by task and by individual participant responses to each of the job task categories.

When asked in what area(s) the participants felt they were most effective, every participant mentioned budgeting. One participant said:

Our programs cost money to either establish or maintain . . . state and federal funding are tight these days . . . we have to make sure we are getting all we can from every penny. Every year the financial situation gets tougher and tougher to keep everything running. (P-2)

Another participant stated, “I don’t know if I am most effective in this area [budget/finance], but I spend a great deal of time making sure I spend every bit of money that is sent my way.” (P-12) Computers, emerging technology and their upkeep were the items most often cited as difficult to keep current for the many program areas in career-technical education.

Instructional leadership was the area where participants spent the majority of their time. The emphasis on accountability on the federal and state levels require time to make sure students are learning and making sure every program is a success.

Participant 17 stated:

I feel the pressure for my area to perform even though we are not specifically cited in North Carolina’s ABCs program. My superintendent expects my area to contribute to the school-wide efforts. I look for opportunities to show how career-technical education relates or supports the core areas. In addition to the state-level accountability, Perkins legislation requires us to show academic gains for all students. This has been difficult. I have to work to encourage my teachers to take advantage of staff development opportunities to learn better how to relate their content to the core areas.

The state’s emphasis on accountability centers on The ABCs Accountability Model, which was first implemented in 1996-97 school year. The ABCs Accountability Model is a comprehensive plan to organize public schools in North Carolina around three goals of strong accountability, an emphasis on the basics, high educational standards, and on improving schools and school districts with as much local control as possible. The ABCs model rewards schools for growth in student achievement and for overall

percentages of students performing at or above grade level with a focus on individual school performance. Accountability measures defined in Perkins (1998) federal legislation requires recipients of federal dollars to establish performance measures consisting of, at a minimum, the following:

Attainment of challenging academic, vocational, and technical standards, attainment of a secondary diploma or equivalency, skill certificate, or postsecondary degree or credential, placement in further education or training, employment, or military service, and completion of programs for nontraditional training and employment. (p, 68)

Many participants related similar situations/frustrations as mentioned above, but Participant 5 added another dimension to the task of instructional leadership. She related:

My teachers work hard to make kids see the connections between career-technical education and the core areas . . . just wished the efforts were reciprocated. My teachers and I get discouraged sometimes when trying to get all teachers [core and academic] to work together in the best interest of the child.

Participants, most often from smaller school systems, related frustration over not being able to devote enough attention to all aspects of their job as local administrators. All three local administrators from small school systems in this study indicated they had as many as three to four major administrative responsibilities in addition to career-technical education. Many expressed they did not always feel effective in any of the categories. Participant 5 lamented:

I often do not feel very effective in many areas because the work load is so heavy. Secondary Education and Career-Technical Education are very large areas, even in a small school system. ESL, which really requires a full-time person to over see that area, has consumed a large amount of my time this year. While I am very organized and often triage assignments, etc. I do feel overwhelmed.

Participant 14 related his frustrations as to which area he is most effective by saying:

None—there is too little time, too few resources, and too many hats for me to wear to feel I am doing enough justice to any one of these. If I had to pick one, it might be Instructional Leadership. That is a much smaller term for all we do however.

While many of the participants were frustrated by the many “hats” they wear,

Participant 1 summed up his feelings by stating:

According to my annual evaluations by my teachers, I am good at all of them . . . however, I am very flattered to have been selected for this study. It is a good feeling somebody wants to know how we feel about our jobs.

Findings from the Interviews

The interviews were a rich source of the participants’ perspectives on the four overarching topic areas driving this study—leadership qualities, professional development, developing future leaders, and challenges for career-technical education. Within each of the four topic areas, analytic categories emerged from reading and re-reading the electronic interview transcripts, follow-up emails, and/or notes made during follow-up phone calls. The analytic categories were identified within major topic areas

for facilitating the understanding of the findings. Citations and quotations from individual participant interviews were identified by their assigned participant number in parentheses.

Leadership Qualities

All local administrators in this study were positive about the role they played in their school system and each could be described as “passionate” about what they do. The objective of this topic area was to attempt to identify what qualities or characteristics contributed to these local career-technical education administrators’ effectiveness. The qualities or characteristics mentioned in this section were “above and beyond” the routine functions of an administrator.

The analytic categories that emerged from the data reflecting the characteristics of an effective career-technical education administrator were: the good administrator, visionary/change agent, establishing credibility, modeling excellence, collaborator/coalition builder, and envisioned roles.

The Good Administrator. Since the participants were administrators, being a good administrator was a quality identified by all the participants. The career-technical education administrator had traditionally been responsible for the over-all administration of career-technical education in the school system, and the ultimate person responsible for getting things done. Tasks performed by an effective administrator included advocacy, delegation, coaching and mentoring, and attending to administrative duties. The career-technical education administrator had a recognized role of advocate and spokesperson for the system. He or she must “never assume that people know what CTE programs are doing,” and should develop reports and

presentations and “toot your own [career-technical education’s] horn” (P-14).

Participant 1 summed up the feeling of the good administrator:

I do not see myself as their ‘boss’ rather their support person to make sure they have what they need to do their jobs effectively. This involves performing all the major functions of administration including planning, organizing, staffing, directing, communicating, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

The career-technical education administrators in this study are the authority figures in the system and had recognized power and could augment his or her credibility and leadership capacities because of it. The local administrator not only established the direction, but set the pace for what he or she expected to happen with career-technical education in the system. One participant related:

As in any supervisory position, some people can just sit back and be satisfied with ‘status quo.’ However, early on in my career I realized I could not be satisfied with that. I believed in being as close to ‘cutting edge’ as I could so I pursued many grants to help our programs grow (P-7).

The participants in this study articulated the rules, regulations, policies, and continued direction. The “administrator role” kept the attention of the system’s career-technical education programs on the goal in order to lead an integrated team as its supervisor, evaluator, and manager of budgets.

Visionary/change agent. Thirteen participants stated that the career-technical education administrator provided leadership to anticipate what programs and courses should be offered to support the needs of students and the business community (P-2, P-4, P-5, P-7, P-9, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-15, p-16, P-19, P-20, P-23). The career-technical

education administrator had to get out into the community and its businesses to learn of the problems, the needs, and the changes taking place in the community, to respond to community needs and to be a catalyst for change. A majority of the local administrators indicated that the effective administrator must have the ability to see the “big picture,” to be globally oriented, and to temper self-interest on behalf of the entire school system and career-technical education (P-2, P-4, P-5, P-7, P-9, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-15, p-16, P-19, P-20, P-23).

According to thirteen of the twenty-six local administrators, their role is to be a “change agent” (P-1, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-9, P-10, P-12, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-19, P-20, P-23). They saw their role as a visionary, having a vision, or changing visions and leading people in the direction of the vision. A majority of the participants mentioned that developing the vision for career-technical education and leading the strategic planning towards that vision needed to be handled by the local career-technical education administrator (P-1, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-9, P-10, P-12, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-19, P-20, P-23, P-26). The local career-technical administrator is in charge and responsible for making things happen for career-technical education in the system. The local administrator sensed movement towards a goal or goals and the sensed of movement and priority needs to be shared by everyone in the system, including the superintendent, other central office administration, principals, teachers, the business community, and the community at large. Setting goals and developing a road map or path to follow provided direction for prioritizing, creative thinking, and problem solving (P-1, P-5, P-8, P-12, P-23, P-26). Although the objective was for the vision to be shared, the local administrator conveyed the vision and provided the leadership and energy to make

innovations possible (P-2, P-5, P-8). Planning is important in order to ascertain the resources necessary, anticipate needs, and to recruit for the plan. To get things done, the local administrator worked through people, so an organizational structure was developed that made sense, thereby reducing barriers to productivity (P-1, P-5, P-9, P-23).

The role of change agent was seen as growing in intensity as changes in the needs and demands of the economy and the business community were becoming more dynamic. For example, technological changes were cited and the massive demand for technology and computer courses in career-technical education programs were the result across the state. The visionary/change agent was not just reactionary. According to these participants, the local administrator needed to be more of a risk taker, an innovator/pioneer, an “initiator of change,” informing and persuading people, providing rationale and information, and being the content expert and consultant. Participant 5 thinks that pro-activity and inclusiveness might not be enough, that perhaps “dragging people kicking and screaming into the 21st century,” might be necessary. The creators of programs, the pioneer, the goal setter and the challenger, but not micro-manager were specifically mentioned by several administrators (P-3, P-6, P-10, P-15, P-17, P-20, P-23, P-26).

A significant number of local administrators cited that change was recognized as being here to stay, the only constant was change, and will be so at least for the early 21st century (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-6, P-9, P-10, P-15, P-17, P-20, P-23, P-24, P-25, P-26). Being open to and making change happen meant listening, reading and perceiving, and by

sharing what one has learned. It involved action, by taking calculated risks, by volunteering for challenging tasks, and by simply being open to change.

Being willing to take a risk and take on new challenges not only improved the chances for learning, but allowed one to become more of a team player relied on by others. Risk taking was another characteristic of a visionary offered by several participants (P-5, P-8, P-10, P-15, P-18). Having a sense of self-confidence was mentioned as a prerequisite, as one should be looking forward to a vision. Support for risk taking from the superintendent was cited as important. Having knowledge of the history and culture of the school system and the community assisted local administrators in determining how to address change and how much risk to take. One participant related her feelings on this characteristic of an effective local administrator: “I hope my legacy will be that I was a visionary that saw the potential for every program area and that my emphasis was on high achievement and quality curriculum” (P-7).

Establishing Credibility. The majority of participants cited his or her credibility in the eyes of their colleagues and superintendent as paramount to their success or effectiveness as a local career-technical education administrator (P-2, P-3, P-5, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-12, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-19, P-20, P-23, P-24, P-26). Participant 26 established her credibility by “being visible and accessible to teachers, putting student needs first, and forthright, but firm with other administrators.” Within their local school system, the importance of establishing a track record for getting things done and being reliable was necessary for accomplishing their goals and visions for career-technical education. Words like integrity, trust, and reliability were frequently mentioned in

relation to this characteristic or quality. One participant spoke to the importance of establishing a “track record” of getting things done:

I believe my credibility was established through my various experiences in other school districts and my involvement in Vocational Education at various levels. My teachers knew who I was when I arrived on campus through my serving on many committees with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and my involvement with FBLA and DECA [career-technical student organizations] . . . The school administrators were impressed with my use of resources across the state and realized that I knew what I was talking about when it came to Vocational Education—my Board of Education and Superintendent were always supportive of anything I asked (P-18).

While relating the importance of credibility, six local administrators were adamant about the importance of integrity (P-3, P-5, P-10, P-12, P-15, P-20). Local administrators who cited this attribute found that the importance of trust will be more apparent as relationships and partnerships are developed. Local administrators will be successful when they can “follow through on commitments and make things happen” (P-10, P-1, P-4). Keeping confidences, giving credit where credit is due, and maintaining integrity and quality in programs were also mentioned. This leadership quality can best be summed up by Participant 9, who stated:

This isn't rocket science . . . ways you deal with people and ways that we want to be treated are age-old principles . . . I do not mistreat people and I don't expect them to do that to me. I trust people . . . unless they give me a reason not to . . . I draw on these principles and have long-lasting relationships.

Modeling Excellence. Local administrators contributing to this characteristic cited how important it was to be able to be a role model for the teachers and staff with which they work. Participant 20 stated, “I really love what I do and I hope my enthusiasm will be intoxicating and infectious with my teachers.”

While related to credibility, this characteristic seemed to be what had to take place in order to be credible with teachers and other administrators. Participant 5 stated:

I try to set an example for all those who work ‘with’ me not ‘for’ me. I never ask anyone to do anything that I would not do. If I want cleaning done, I roll up my sleeves and help.

Participant 9 added:

I do quality work in all that I do and expect the same from those with whom I work. I guess having high expectations is the keyword. Expecting and modeling what you want has been successful for me.

Twelve local administrators stressed the point that to be effective the local administrator should serve as a coach and mentor to his or her teachers and support staff (P-2, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-8, P-10, P-12, P-15, P-18, P-21, P-24, P-26). The coach listens and makes suggestions or considerations. The coach will mentor and bring people along, encouraging and developing the staff and teachers for greater responsibility and stronger roles within the system. The coach/mentor may be motivated by productivity, “the more people know the more it frees you up to do other things” (P-19), to focus on problem solving, and empowering teachers and staff, or to simply keep people up-to-date. The participants in this study felt the effective administrator must be continually

learning, and seek out a mentor or leader in order to maintain currency and to upgrade their skills and capabilities. One participant stated that, for himself, he learns and will continue to learn from the experiences of others, “by benchmarking to . . . programs and leaders in the field” (P-1).

Collaborator/Coalition Builder. Throughout all the participants’ responses, the themes of relationships and being a team player were present. Improving organizational support and moving towards a supportive central administration was an imperative in an effort to be a part of the system. To achieve their goals or visions, these local administrators mentioned over and over again how important it was to understand the realities of the power structures within the local school system. Several of the local administrators made comments related to the importance of being at the table where decisions were made as attributing to one’s effectiveness (P-5, P-8, P-11, P-18, P-20, P-23, P-25). There was general recognition of the importance of being part of a team to achieve the more global goals of student success in the system and economic development for the community. Participant 12 stated, “I see the immense importance of involving groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission in the development of our programs.”

Within a local school system, all the local administrators in this study recognized themselves as being a “lone ranger” of sorts. The nature of their position charged them with implementing career-technical education programs and being responsive to the needs of the community and business and industry. They controlled the “purse strings” and had the vision of what career-technical education should become in their system, but in order to make their vision a reality they had to convince the

superintendent, principals, and faculty to “buy into” their vision. They knew they did not have the “power” to make it alone, hence the necessity of becoming a coalition builder. Participant 16 related the challenges of having to work through someone else to accomplish goals:

The most frustrating [obstacle] for me is that you introduce/push initiatives at the school level, but since you are not the principal, you cannot institute the initiative. All you can do is pitch the idea and hope the principal takes hold of it. I’d really like to have more control of that! It’s difficult to understand that principals don’t always see my ideas as wonderful and want to jump on!

Being a “coalition builder” meant joining together so one can achieve that which would be unachievable alone. Being a team player was important, but not enough. These administrators understood the importance of establishing collaboratives or support systems for projects or missions—especially when it was an innovation or new project. The characteristic of coalition builder enabled these administrators to compromise his or her interests or agendas in an effort to strengthen partnerships, especially with their core area counterparts, business community, and/or faculty, sacrificing short-term objectives for the long-term accomplishments.

The outcome of this development was not only the combining of various resources not under one’s control, to maximize and leverage one’s own resources, but the strengthening of internal relationships results in allies for career-technical education to enhance the credibility of career-technical education in the school system and community. Actions related to this role or function included identifying the interests and agendas of others and relating common interests or goals career-technical education

may have that could lead to the development of a coalition. Participant 9 shares ways she makes “opportunities” for coalition building:

I am a native of the area and [I] am active in the church, community clubs and organizations, Chamber of Commerce, and other public agencies such as Mental Health and Smart Start Board. In the school system, I promote career-technical education as a ‘value added’ component through various methods—I publish a local newspaper quarterly that goes to all 8-12 students and elected officials which highlights Career-Technical Education events and accomplishments. Our ‘Report to the Community’ is sent out (8,000 copies) through the local newspaper to update the community on what career-technical education is doing in our school system.

Ascertaining the goals, needs, or problems of others and assisting them with your capacities or contributions will strengthen the coalition. The goal was to make coalition building a “win-win” situation. However, as several local administrators put it, you give with the expectation of not receiving. The giving of 70% on your part might yield only 30% on theirs, but the value was in the outcome, in the coalition, in building the relationship, and an investment in the future (P-1, P-3, P-5, P-10, P-17, P-20, P-24).

Envisioned Roles. All twenty-six participants felt strongly that their role as a local administrator of career-technical education should continue and become more critical in the future as the workplace and economy changes. However, the majority fear their efforts will become diluted by other duties if the trend for “leaner” central office staff continued (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-16, P-7, P-9, P-10, P-13, P-16, P-17, P-19, P-20,

P-22, P-23, P-25, P-26). This fear will be elaborated upon later in the challenges section of this chapter.

Visions of the local director can drive their actions and decisions. Their visions of the future influenced their perspectives on the roles and competencies needed to be effective career-technical education administrators. Participant 4 related his vision for the evolution of career-technical education was to add options for students as well as the economic development for his county:

I would like to see the community college and the two other school systems in our county establish a 'shared' use facility. This would be [a] highly flexible facility that could quickly be adapted to the current job market in our area. The facility would offer 'high tech' training in Information Technology, Industrial Automation, Transportation Services, Health Care, and other high demand, high tech training. The facility would be used as a major marketing tool to attract major business and industry to [Name of County]. We could offer in-depth, unduplicated programs in the various building trades. On this campus, students could also take high school core academics and college-level academics in selected areas.

Interpersonal skills would appear to become more important in the future, according to these local administrators, as relationships and collaborations are stressed. Also, there will be more reliance on self-directed teams. Many of the local administrators predicted the future would require more people skills, listening, and communication skills. Identifying the needs of the teachers in the system was an outgrowth of listening and observing says one local administrator (P-5).

Professional Development

The participants of this study overwhelmingly recognized the importance of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction State Staff in assisting them with the administration of their duties. However, many stated this assistance was primarily informational and did not really help them to become better at what they do. According to the participants, keeping up-to-date was an important characteristic of a local career-technical education administrator. Keeping up-to-date meant “keeping aware of what issues are going on in your school system, the workplace, and the economy” (P-23), and “keeping current with the changing times in order to provide innovative programs within your schools” (P-19). The analytic categories emerging in this section included: a commitment to lifelong learning, on-going professional development, learning from each other/networking, and regional coordinators.

Committed to lifelong learning. The participants in this study felt to be an effective local career-technical education administrator, there must first exist a curiosity for learning, and a willingness on the part of the individual to grow, expand, and learn. Learning about changes and new directions in the profession, the local business community, more broadly the state’s economy are essential to be effective. Participant 9 shared her enthusiasm for learning by stating: “I fully believe education is a life-long process and I take advantage of any staff development opportunities available to me at the local, state, and national levels.”

The commitment to life-long learning was demonstrated by the amount of advanced degrees earned by the participants. Many indicated participating in various leadership or instructional programs, like the Principal’s Executive Program (PEP),

during their careers. The mission of the Principals' Executive Program is to strengthen and renew the knowledge, skills, and beliefs of public school leaders so they might help improve schools and schooling in the state of North Carolina. Participant 14 stated, "It is important to note that there is never a level of non-activity—that leads to complacency. The job of Local Administrator is one that is constantly at work in many areas and requiring constant preparation and learning."

On-going professional development. In the area of professional development, several of the local administrators in this study indicated they needed continued support and assistance to develop areas of expertise that would help them become better at their role as a local administrator. One local administrator said: "We need an ongoing support system . . . and the inclusion of more professional development opportunities—over and beyond the informational meetings twice a year" (P-19). For example, identifying and writing grants was a frequently mentioned topic. Participant 17 stated, "As funds get tighter and tighter . . . finding out about and writing grants for alternative funding will be critical . . . so I would like more help with this area." Other topics such as: workplace trends, how to develop business/industry advisory committees, incorporating industry standards into career-technical education programs, and establishing career academies were also frequently cited by the participants (P-1, P-5, P-7, P11, P13, P-15, P-20, P-22, P-24).

Many administrators recognized that the expertise needed to deliver the professional development they need exists among members in their ranks. Participant 11 said, "I hear about what other local administrators have accomplished and I wish we had time to discuss their successful innovations or programs during our meetings. I

would like to see us include panel discussions or forums to hear about what others are doing so I might do them too.” Participant 2 added, “I recommend a directors’ meeting with veterans as speakers, discussion facilitators, etc.”

The development of a state-level leadership program for new and current local administrators was mentioned by six participants in this study (P-10, P-14, P-16, P-18, P-19, P-22). Because of their involvement in leadership programs such as the Principal’s Executive Program (PEP), prompted several participants to recommend this model as a more formal way to prepare and sustain the development of local administrators of career-technical education in North Carolina. Participant 4 related the benefits of having a strong leadership program experience:

My experience at the Principal’s Executive Program [PEP] has had a tremendous influence on my effectiveness as an administrator. My relationships with other system administrators have been enhanced by my experience at PEP. My ability to influence the direction of our school system has been improved by what I learned there.

Participant 10 summed up the participants’ need for continued professional development:

Initiating a leadership academy for potential and current career-technical education leaders is a grand idea; leaders of the future need to have a well-grounded philosophy. ‘Situating learning’ has the most promise for effective leadership in both the public and private sectors.

Learning from each other/networking. While learning about and perfecting their roles as a local career-technical education administrator, a majority sought out their own

mentors to pick up good ideas and leadership skills. Participant 2 mentioned her approach to learn from others by finding good thinkers and local administrators with good programs and activities that she has high regard for:

Everybody does it uniquely, but again that's good. I am benchmarking my thinking against individuals for which I have high regard. I'm trying to model the leadership of others who I think are outstanding leaders. I interface as much as possible with these individuals through a variety of my activities. I'm trying to find out how they learn to think through my questions. I focus on where they learned their strategic thinking and analysis, because I think it all comes back to problem solving. I listen and observe intently to find out what they are saying and doing.

The local administrators in the study relied on their education and past experiences. They learned from their mistakes and had the willingness or comfort levels to share their mistakes so that others may learn from them. One local administrator indicated that "doing something like developing a new program or trying something new, learning from it, and then sharing it" was an effective process (P-10).

Networking was found to be effective in one's community, civic and business organizations, special interest groups, and places of worship. As Participant 12 stated, "I will make a contact or connection anywhere I am." Being involved beyond conference attendance in local, state, and even national professional associations and organizations appeared to be another source for learning. One local administrator mentioned the network of contacts he has made in the business community and local community college help him learn more of their culture and ways of doing things (P-

19). Another stated he has learned from the business community a wide-range of subjects such as customer service, training and development, and various roles of employees which will assist him making sure his programs meet the demands of the future workforce.

Regional Coordinators. Another source of professional development came from the regional coordinators working with local administrators in the field. Each participant mentioned their Regional Coordinators and praised their efforts and support. The Regional Coordinator interacted with local administrators, either by individual or regional meetings. The local administrators in this study saw this person possessing a wealth of information and possible solutions to the day-to-day problems they encountered. One participant related the value of the regional coordinator, having served in that capacity for several years. He related: “The best experience I have gotten was when I was a Regional Coordinator for twenty-three LEAs. I got opportunities to see the best and worst of all initiatives” (P-12).

The time spent in quarterly regional meetings was cited by many local administrators as a valuable experience (P-2, P-4, P-6, P-8, P-12, P-15, P-17, P-20, P-21, P-25). Regional meetings were spent passing along information and then were devoted to addressing issues most often related to the particular region. One participant commented on the importance of regional meetings and her development as a local administrator:

I feel very strongly that the Regional Meetings with other Local Directors and led by our Regional Coordinator helps a great deal. We get time to discuss regional issues and get feedback from those who are fighting the same battles

. . . and in some cases they may have won . . . and I want to know what they did (P-9).

Recommendations for Developing Future Leaders in Career-Technical Education

A growing sense of responsibility for building a cadre of leaders within the career-technical education profession emerged from this category. Also, the need to develop future leadership within their own system became evident as many of these local administrators were approaching or have arrived at retirement age. Admittedly, only those closest to retirement had thought seriously about the significance of this issue to the continuance of quality career-technical education at the local and state levels. Until confronted with this issue in the interview, several of these local administrators had not thought much about the development of future leaders. However, 22 of the 26 participants selected for this study because of their effectiveness, had 26 years or more years of experience in education.

The analytical areas that evolved from this major area of the study included internship/externship, mentoring, regional coordinators, and whether or not to have a degree program designed especially for career-technical education administrators.

Internship/externship. One method of obtaining licensure as a career-technical administrator in North Carolina is by completing an internship sponsored by the Career-Technical Education State Staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. All of the participants in this study had participated, in one form or another, in this internship experience. A majority felt the program was inadequate for obtaining licensure and felt the program needed serious restructuring (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-7,

P-8, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-15, P-17, P-19, P-20, P-21, P-23, P-24, P-26). Participant 12 summed up the feelings of this group of local administrators:

I believe that the current requirements for licensure could be enhanced . . . The [current] internship program is not quite adequate to fully prepare a local Career-Technical Education Administrator. An internship coupled with a rigorous program in Career-Technical Education Administration and leadership would suffice for licensure (P-12).

Recently, many of the newly appointed local administrators of career-technical education came to the job with no background in career-technical education. The study participants felt the current internship experience relied too much on sitting and listening to State Career-Technical Education Staff members (P-1, P-2, P-5, P-6, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-12, P-14, P-15, P-17, P-20, P-23, P-25). Therefore, many of the local administrators in this study felt the current internship program offered through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction should be coupled with field-based experiences to help the new administrators see quality career-technical education programs in action and follow an experienced local career-technical administrator through his/her daily routines (P-2, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-13, P-14, P-18, P-20, P-24, P-25). Participant 23 stated,

Going to someone else's system would give new administrators a chance to visit excellent career-technical education programs and see first-hand what it takes to full-fill the administrative duties of a local administrator. Also, the internship experience should provide new local administrators an opportunity to see what is meant by, for example, having an active business and industry committee

advising the development of local career-technical education programs. These experiences are hard to describe and absorb if you are not familiar with career-technical education.

Mentoring. Ten of the twenty-six participants mentioned a mentoring program for new career-technical education administrators as a productive way to develop new local administrators (P-5, P-6, P-8, P-9, P-10, P-13, P-15, P-18, P-20, P-24). Participant 26 stated, “A strong mentorship program . . . and a revised internship experience is a good start in developing new leadership.” However, many stated the current system of assigning mentors needed revision. Participant 16 spoke of her experience with the mentoring system now in place:

I think a mentoring program is helpful, but it needs guidance and revamping . . . although there are assigned mentors for new directors, I don’t know how effective these are. I only learned that I was a mentor to someone after the year was over—so you can imagine how much help I was—and I regret that.

With some guidance, seven of the participants felt the North Carolina Association of Career-Technical Administrators would be a good organization to facilitate the mentoring program. Participant 7 felt the state’s local administrators as a group could develop and mentor future leaders for career-technical education. She stated, “The career-technical education family is definitely one that is supportive and appreciative of each other (P-7).”

In addition to using mentoring as a means for developing new local administrators, eleven participants in this study felt they should be mentoring teachers for potential leadership in their local education agency as well as for state-level

administration (P-1, P-2, P-4, P-9, P-10, P-13, P-15, P-19, P-20, P-21). Participant 4 related how he was mentored while still in the classroom:

During my time as a teacher in [Name of County], my local director took a particular interest in my potential to be a local director. She helped me learn as much as she could in the five years I was a teacher. [She] was very instrumental in my preparation to be a local administrator.

Participant 1 continued with his account of his mentoring experience:

I had a mentor in [Name of School System], my local director, who nurtured me....I have worked with several great superintendents and some wonderful central office people who helped me and supported me in endless ways.

Several administrators stated they had failed to capitalize on mentoring teachers for assuming leadership positions within their school system due to the many tasks they perform as a local administrator (P-5, P-6, P-9, P-14, P-16, P-20, P-22, P-23, P-26). However, eight of the participants stated they saw great advantages in starting the practice (P-3, P-6, P-8, P-11, P-14, P-17, P-21, P-24).

Degree Program or Not? With the exception of two participants, all local administrators felt a separate degree program was not necessary for licensure or to assume the duties of a local career-technical education administrator. However, the majority felt strongly that a background in career-technical education was a necessity (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-13, P-15, P-17, P-18, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-24, P-26). Participant 11 expressed the feelings of the majority of local administrators in this study:

I think that there are certain skills and characteristics that a director should possess that would enable him/her to be more effective. I do feel that a career-technical education background is extremely beneficial to lead career-technical education for a school system.

The two exceptions as to whether or not to have a separate degree program cited other reasons for a degree program other than it being necessary preparation for the position. Participant 8 felt a separate degree program might deter someone without a background in career-technical education from being appointed as a local administrator for career-technical education. Participant 8 stated, “Yes, a ‘degree program’ for career-technical education administrators might possibly deter the position from being filled with non-career-technical education background personnel.” While the majority felt strongly that having a career-technical education background was advantageous for assuming the duties of a local career-technical administrator, Participant 8’s rationale for the degree requirement was supported by all of the participants except the three who do not have a career-technical education background.

While the participants in this study were not supportive of having a separate degree for career-technical education administration, eighteen of the twenty-six participants felt the current preparation was not adequate for those seeking the position (P-1, P-3, P-4, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-13, P-14, P-15, P-17, P-18, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-25). Participant 24 stated, “I think the State Staff needs to increase the orientation training for directors, but not a degree program.” The participants did not cite specifically what the additional requirements should be. Participant 1 characterized

the participants' feeling about the preparation of local career-technical education administrators:

The Educational Administration master's degree program was helpful, but it was very general. I do not favor a separate degree program however I do think there should be some requirements for licensure as career-technical education director beyond a degree in educational administration and a principal's certificate.

Challenges Ahead

As with any profession, obstacles and challenges exist. Participants in this study were asked to identify the major obstacles they faced in their job as a local career-technical administrator and what did they feel were the major issues facing North Carolina Career-Technical Education. Five analytical categories evolved from this category as major challenges in the future for career-technical education in North Carolina. The challenges most frequently cited by participants included the image of career-technical education, identifying and keeping qualified teachers, budget cutting and finding new funding methods, strong leadership and direction, and finally the evolving role of the career-technical education administrator.

The Image of Career-Technical Education. The problem of image was cited as an age-old problem for career-technical education. Six participants in this study stated they have worked to prevent career-technical education in their system as being a "dumping ground for difficult students" (P-1, P-4, P-10, P-15, P-20, P-23, P-25). As stated earlier in the review of the career-technical education federal legislation, vocational education was originally established to give the working class's children an education. However, the focus of career-technical education has evolved to reflect

changes in the economy, work, and society. The profession has worked to replace the old-fashioned auto shop/industrial arts/home-economics focus to provide content to help students be prepared both for careers and postsecondary education. Through successive reauthorizations of federal legislation, career-technical education has broadened its focus and worked to “upgrade” the curriculum. However, the change has apparently gone unnoticed by state policy-makers, local administrators, parents, students, and teachers, according to the participants of this study.

Battling a poor or unfavorable image of career-technical education programs was cited as a major problem by all twenty-six participants. Participant 20 spoke of how career-technical education programs are seen in her school system, “second-class image—Yes, it’s still here!” Participant 14 related his frustration in overcoming the stigma of a “second-class” curriculum:

Too many in school administration and in politics on the state level have little or no understanding of what it takes to run a quality program, or how important these programs are. I perceive it to often be the case of unconscious elitism. Too often, leadership is consumed with addressing the top 10% of academic students or the bottom 10% of students.

Participant 23 continued by sharing concerns of not being considered a priority with the school system he served:

What I see as major obstacles facing me in my job as a local administrator is a lack of priority given to career-technical education and the students it serves by school administration . . . by counselors . . . and a lack of knowledge of the benefits of career-technical education by the general public and among parents.

In addition to not being seen as a priority by local administrations, participants stated that parents all too often felt that career-technical education programs were fine, but “not for my child.” Fueled by a variety of misconceptions, one participant stated that parents felt that taking career-technical courses would harm their child’s opportunity to go to college and for a productive future (P-15). The misconceptions cited most often included that career-technical education courses are “low-level,” “dead-end,” and “not preparing students for college” (P-12, P-15, P-21). A majority of local administrators cited these misconceptions as being a major challenge and a constant battle to overcome (P-1, P-2, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-14, P-15, P-16, P-18, P-19, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-24, P-25, P-26). Participant 12 shared her frustrations with parents’ attitude of a “not for my child” attitude towards career-technical education.

A major issue is the continued effort to change the mindset of parents on the fact the jobs of the future will not all require a 4-year degree—and that’s ok. We [career-technical education] are in a unique position to assist in bringing about change in education. We will never get credit for it if it changes, but who cares. Integration of the core courses and technical courses is needed. We must continue to work on this.

Seven of the local administrators mentioned the implementation of the Occupational Course of Study to the options for graduation from North Carolina’s high schools as being a “set-back” to the image of career-technical education. The Occupational Course of Study was adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in 1999 as a means for students with individual education plans (IEP) to

graduate from North Carolina high schools. One participant stated, “The term ‘occupational’ is misinterpreted by many as being vocational education and that has hurt our efforts” (P-14). Another cited this course of study as being misleading to members of the business and industry community because “they expect these graduates to have specific occupational skills—and many do not” (P-10).

Eight local administrators cited that in addition to damaging the image of career-technical education, the implementation of the Occupational Course of Study had put a drain on their all ready tight resources (P-4, P-8, P-10, P-12, P-18, P-20, P-21, P-26). Participant 8 stated that “many of our courses are targeted for inclusion in the Occupational Course of Study.” This fact posed problems for smaller school systems in particular. Participant 20 stated:

In smaller schools where lots of upper-level career-technical education classes are not offered, students have actually complained about the number of EC [exceptional children] students in their classes and will not take courses in certain program areas.

Four participants in this study revealed that even career-technical education teachers perpetuated the poor image of their programs and the students they teach. Participant 18 shared her story of being a vocational education student while in school and her experience upon returning to the system where she graduated:

When I was a vocational student in high school, there was the same perception that I was taking classes that would prevent me from going to college and succeeding in life. It was really interesting coming back to my high school as a Regional Vocational Coordinator and seeing many of the teachers that had

taught me. When I was introduced to the faculty, one teacher told the group that we used to be in high school together—she didn't say I was her student.

In the light of the concerns shared by the participants concerning the image of career-technical education, Participant 5 related some optimism for changing the image of career-technical education in his current local administrative position:

Career-Technical Education isn't as much of a stepchild here as in my previous school system. I think there are more recognition and more conversation about the contributions of career-technical education. Personally, my role is changing to develop more internal partnerships here.

Participant 24 spoke of the goal for her system was “to establish the belief that career-technical education can serve *ALL* students and is not a ‘second class curriculum’ for ‘second class students.’” Participant 10 related her goal of making career-technical education programs available to all students in order to open the door to many possibilities for their future:

Being able to tell the ‘real story’ about career-technical education to external audiences and policy-makers . . . both student and teacher needs to be able to effectively articulate program offerings in relation to post-secondary opportunities . . . that is . . . completing a cabinetmaking program may lead to an engineering program; completing a drafting class may lead to a home construction career.

Identifying and keeping qualified teachers. Another serious challenge is a growing number of vacancies in career-technical education programs across the state and nation. While it is the goal of a local administrator to add new programs to schools

and it is expected that teachers will retire, however it becomes frustrating to fill the vacancies when there are so few qualified applicants. There existed an overwhelming dismay with university teacher education programs in their lack of action in addressing this problem.

With a lack of career-technical education teachers coming out of traditional teacher education programs, local administrators have resorted to hiring lateral-entry teachers to fill vacancies or to close the program. While many of the lateral-entry teachers proved to be strong and current on career-technical education content, five participants mentioned that “lateral-entry teachers in many cases are ill-prepared to handle the challenges of classroom management, student apathy, and the overall responsibilities related to teaching” (P-6, P-9, P-15, P-20, P-24). Participant 20 summed up the frustrations of local administrators in filling vacancies occurring in their systems:

I would like to see teachers teaching because they are excited about their curriculum and love students . . . but every year it gets harder and harder to find qualified teachers! We have less than 20 teacher candidates [statewide] in most program areas coming out of our teacher education programs each year . . . when is teacher education going to be a priority?

Adding to this challenge was the added responsibility to ensure that these teachers were nurtured and brought along, thereby reducing the amount of time available for their administrative duties. These local administrators understood that if new, and especially lateral entry teachers were not supported, they would leave the classroom, sending the administrator searching for a replacement.

Another dimension to the challenge of staffing qualified teachers was the responsibility to keep existing teachers' skills up-to-date. Advances in technology, more so than any other factor, presented a challenge to keep career-technical education programs relevant and current. Equipment and staff development costs added to the strain of already tight budgets. Three participants stated that after spending hundreds of dollars in training and developing to bring current career-technical education teachers' content knowledge up-to-date or to obtain an industry credential, some teachers had left education for higher paying jobs in business and industry (P-5, P-9, P-14). The task of hiring and retaining a highly qualified teaching staff for career-technical education programs remained a priority and a challenge.

Budget cutting/funding. All twenty-six participants cited budgeting and funding for career-technical education as a critical challenge in the future. Updating computers and other equipment needed to support classroom instruction was cited as the largest expenditures of the local administrators (P-1, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-8, P-11, P-12, P-14, P-17, P-22, P-24). Advances in technology and the need to implement innovative programs had driven up the costs related to career-technical education. Staff development for career-technical education teachers in order to stay on top of technology and other changes in the workplace are cited as expenses necessary to keep programs up to date (P-2, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-10, P-12, P-15, P-17, P-24, P-25).

State and federal allocations to career-technical education were perceived by all twenty-six participants to be declining and will continue to decline. This meant that increasingly these local administrators were being asked to tighten or retrench. Participant 14 stated, "with the state's focus on accountability and the ABCs, any state

and local resources we once received monies from are now being diverted to the core areas and student remediation in an attempt to drive up test scores.” Participant 12 added:

Programs other than career-technical education are feeling the budget crunch too. The arts, physical education, and other elective areas are experiencing cuts. Many school systems are looking to reduce or eliminate these electives from the curriculum because they are not prominently included in the accountability system.

The local career-technical education administrator needed to work with less and therefore must make strategic choices (P-1, P-5, P-10, P-15, P-25, P-26). Participant 4 expressed his concern about the scarcity of resources provided for developing and maintaining career-technical education programs within his system:

The erosion of state and federal funding for career-technical education . . . We have to constantly fight to continue to receive the marginal funding we get now. The continued erosion of state funding is eventually going to cause significant drops in program quality throughout the state and there remains some doubt whether or not career-technical education will maintain federal funding by the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Act.

Strong leadership and direction. Being an effective leader was mentioned by 19 of the local administrators (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-6, P-8, P-10, P-11, P-12, P-14, P-16, P-18, P-19, P-20, P-21, P-22, P-23, P-25, P-26). These 19 local administrators noted the importance of communicating the purpose and vision of career-technical education to everyone in the state from politicians, superintendents, administrators, teachers, and to

the business community. This communication was considered to be important in an era of rapid technological changes in the workplace. They also pointed out that a leader must also see that plans were developed and action steps were put into place to accomplish the goals established for career-technical education. The leader not only provided the connections, but led the group into effectiveness and change.

Six participants specifically mentioned a crisis in state leadership at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in career-technical education (P-1, P-4, P-8, P-10, P-14, P-18). One participant (P-1) summed up the problems with the state's fuzziness of purpose and direction by stating:

Our mission for career-technical education began to take a down-turn as the Department of Public Instruction began to recover from the reorganization in 1995. Due to the downsizing of the department, we lost our leadership and identity in the agency.

Fears related to the continued reduction in state staff for career-technical education at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction concerned eight of the participants (P-1, P-4, P-10, P-15, P-20, P-22, P-23, P-26). Their fear was that a lack of state-level support and services could diminish what the local administrators could accomplish locally. Participant 3 expressed her concern by sharing, "the cutting of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction consultant staff will eventually impact delivery of services."

Other concerns shared by the participants related to the planning and accountability process in North Carolina Career-Technical Education. Participant 2 shared her concerns for the time she spends in the planning process:

The job of vocational director has changed drastically during my tenure. At first, the budget and accountability process was not as time consuming as today. There was more time spent in schools helping teachers, especially new teachers, become successful. The local planning process has gone from simple to very cumbersome and time consuming.

Two participants mentioned specifically the state's VoCATS process for accountability in career-technical education. Participant 4 stated: "When the process first started as an instructional management system I whole-heartedly supported it, but now I have concerns as the state decided to go high-stakes." Three participants expressed worry that the system was driving career-technical education, but "in the wrong way" (P-4, P-17, P-23). Participant 23 stated that "career-technical education teachers in my system are more worried about test scores than what they are teaching."

Additional state-level leadership issues revolved around the lack of presence and influence of the North Carolina Association of Career-Technical Education (NCACTE). Three participants shared their concerns of "missed opportunities" for leadership over the years from the organization (P-4, P-7, P-22). Participant 7 stated, "NCACTE was not 'present at the table' on several occasions when legislative or state board of education actions threaten career-technical education." Two participants mentioned, that a strong professional organization can be an asset to the profession (P-14, P-18). Participant 9 stated:

There exists in the current administration a philosophy of education at the federal level that is totally 'pro college' and 'anti-career-technical education.' A state budget crisis threatens to undo strides the state has made in being a national

leader in the area of career-technical education. We need to have a voice when federal and state actions attack career-technical education.

Participant 4 summarized the collective concern regarding the need for strong and effective leadership and direction by stating:

Our role could go one of two directions. The first is to see a continued diminishing influence of career-technical education administration on the state and local levels. Over the last 10 years, the influence of career-technical education administration has eroded. We have been complacent and have become more reactive to the whims of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Legislature, and local school boards. The other direction our role could go is to return to the days when career-technical education administrators were effective in pushing career-technical education and our collective agenda at the local, state, and national levels. Ultimately these are our choices. If we can become more active, more proactive, and present a unified front, our influence will be re-established (P-4).

Evolving role of the Career-Technical Education Administrator. All the participants felt that their roles within the school system were critical for the school system's success as well as the economic development of their communities. However, the trend for leaner central office staffs, a full-time role as a Career-Technical Education Administrator was feared by many as a "luxury" a school system cannot afford (P-1, P-4, P-10, P-14). Participant 13 summed up the participant's feelings regarding their significance to a school system:

The role of an effective career-technical education administrator will always be important to an LEA. Too many LEAs, with downsizing, may tend to shift some of these responsibilities to other central office staff. To do justice to this area, that is less than desirable. But certainly, in small LEAs like mine, the career-technical education administrator must be capable of assuming other responsibilities to be of value to the superintendent and LEA.

Participant 1 continued with his prediction of the future of his role as a local career-technical education administrator:

I think we will continue to be saddled with multiple job responsibilities. This is good in one way because it creates connections with other programs and people . . . that helps to foster working relationships, cooperation, and interdependence. On the negative side, sometimes the additional responsibilities overshadow career-technical education responsibilities.

Others feared the streamlining of central office staff would result in someone other than a person with a career-technical education background taking over the administrative responsibilities of career-technical education programs within the school system. Participant 16 summed up his fears by stating:

I'm afraid if things keep going in the direction they are now, you will not see career-technical education administrators. You will instead see 'generalist' at the central office with career-technical education under their direction. This is happening in many central offices now—and career-technical education is suffering as a consequence.

There was a strong sense among nineteen of the participants that not having a career-technical education background limits the ability to advocate on behalf of career-technical education within the local school system (P-1, P-2, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8, P-9, P-11, P-13, P-15, P-16, P-17, P-18, P-20, P-22, P-23, P-24, P-26). Participant 9 summarized the concerns expressed by the majority of the participants:

It would appear that more administrators would be coming from outside the field of career-technical education and career-technical education would be an add-on responsibility . . . thereby reducing opportunity to plan, monitor, evaluate, and redirect career-technical education programs as needed.

New mandates for accountability by the federal government were cited by others as a means to reduce the significance or impact career-technical education can make in their system as well as the state. Participant 1 stated: “the No Child Left Behind legislation threatens to wag the entire education dog and could have a detrimental impact on resources and priorities within the state and local school system.”

On a more encouraging and optimistic note, some local administrators felt inspired to “fight” to make career-technical education’s contributions known by the state and local communities. Participant 9 said:

This is a very critical time in our history and we must do all we can to preserve career-technical education for future students who will benefit from our courses. We must be more politically active as we continue to tell the ‘career-technical education story’ and our worth to the economy of this state and the nation.

Summary of Major Findings

Described in this closing section of Chapter 4 is a summary of the major findings from the findings and analysis of the data presented in this chapter. The summary of major findings provides the transition to the next chapter on conclusions and recommendations.

Demographic Findings

The participants for this study were chosen for their effectiveness as local career-technical administrators. As a group, the participants chosen for this study were considered veterans in the field of education. Eighty-five percent of the group had twenty-six or more years of service in education. This finding reflected the trend occurring in all aspects of education administration from public schools, community college, and higher education. While not an earth-shattering finding, it does accentuate the need to develop the future leadership for career-technical education.

Another major finding emanated from the demographic data were that 65% of these participants had responsibility for areas other than the administration of career-technical education. Generally, the smaller the system, the more likely these individuals had other responsibilities and the greater the number of other duties these individuals performed.

Leadership Qualities

Above all, the career-technical education local administrator was seen as a good administrator. This person provided the processes, policies, monitoring, and evaluation systems for career-technical education programs within the LEA to function, as efficiently and effectively as possible with the resources at his/her disposal. The good

local administrator balanced leadership and financial management with abilities to select and develop staff and build a team.

The career-technical education local administrator was visionary and served as a change agent in the local school system. This leadership quality reflected the dynamism of the 21st century. It was having a dynamic vision, including one that can sustain responsiveness, in what is anticipated to be an ever-changing 21st century. An ongoing inclusive and mutually shared visioning process among stakeholders in the community was important in an ever-changing workplace. As a change agent, he or she provided the general direction to keep career-technical education programs moving in a positive direction towards its goals.

The career-technical education local administrator was credible among his/her central administration peers as well as the local administrators and career-technical education teachers in the system. Credibility was important to building long lasting relationships, “being straight forward and honest,” establishing trust, and delivering on what will be deliver were all mentioned as important indicators of credibility.

The career-technical education local administrator modeled the excellence he or she expects from those with which they work. The local administrators in this study cited how important it was to serve as a role model and coach for teachers and staff. The “coach” mentors and brings people along, encouraging and developing the staff and teachers for greater responsibility and stronger roles within the system.

The career-technical education local administrator was a collaborator and coalition builder. The local administrators in this study generally recognized that being part of the school system “team” assisted them in achieving their goals for career-

technical education programs. The collaborator and coalition builder compromised his or her interests or agendas in an effort to strengthen partnerships, particularly with their academic counterparts, sacrificing short term objectives for the long term accomplishments.

Finally, the career-technical education local administrator was thinking ahead to envisioned roles of the future. The participants in this study did not foresee any tremendous changes in the roles that they are to have in the future, but simply a greater intensity related to pre-existing roles and their relationship to the visions they held for the future. These local administrators related an added emphasis on interpersonal skills—communication, written and oral, perceiving, listening, and interacting with people and respecting others—were cited as being important in the future. The development and management of career-technical education programs required people skills, the ability to relate to people, and to understand what they are saying.

Professional Development

According to the participants, effective local administrators of career-technical education must be open to new ideas and innovations and must try to make change happen by fighting the status quo and to personal “comfort levels.” The participants in this study were well educated and spoke frequently of participating in professional development activities that furthered their leadership and administrative skills. For this group, professional development was important.

To be effective, the local career-technical administrator must have intellectual curiosity. By reading, networking with their counterparts in other LEAs, following good thinkers and seeking out mentors, getting feedback from various sources, and

“tapping the resources” of their Regional Coordinator, the local career-technical administrator developed currency. By sharing what one has learned or others have learned, by mentoring, by developing a strategic plan and a process for continuous improvement and innovation, the local administrator can better position career-technical education programs to adjust to the changing workplace and economic development needs of the community.

Recommendations for Developing Future Leaders in Career-Technical Education

Emanating from this study was an urgency to plan for the future leadership of Career-Technical Education in North Carolina. Given the number of this group of recognized leaders in career-technical education who are or very near retirement age, a method for identifying, recruiting, and preparing future leaders was critical.

Overwhelmingly, the participants in this study felt the current internship for new career-technical education administrators was a good start, but was not adequate for continued development and licensure. The majority felt the current requirements for licensure should be restructured and enhanced. A more rigorous internship program coupled with field-based experiences was needed for new administrators to see quality program in action. The majority of the participants felt strongly that a background in career-technical education was very important to local career-technical education administration.

These local administrators did not support a separate degree program for career-technical education administration, but felt their experiences in education administration programs did not adequately prepare them for their duties and responsibilities. There

was strong support for establishing a program similar in nature to the Principal's Executive Program for Career-Technical Education in North Carolina.

Finally, a mentoring program was mentioned as a productive way to develop new local administrators, but also to identify teachers for potential leadership roles at both the local and state levels. Several participants mentioned how important having mentors were in their development as a leader.

Challenges Ahead

The participants in this study identified five major challenges ahead for career-technical education in North Carolina. The challenges most frequently cited included the image of career-technical education, identifying and keeping qualified teachers, budget cutting and finding new funding methods, strong leadership and direction, and finally the evolving role of the career-technical education administrator.

The participants in this study stated that overcoming a poor or inferior image of career-technical education was something they worked tirelessly to dispel. They cited a constant battle to keep career-technical education programs from becoming a "dumping ground for difficult students" and being seen as a "second-class curriculum" for "second-class students." This "battle" was fought on many "fronts" from their central administration peers, principals, parents, business and industry to even career-technical education teachers themselves. The participants in this study worked diligently to see that career-technical education was seen as a contributing part of their local education system and to the community at large.

A shortage of qualified career-technical education teachers posed a major challenge for these local administrators as they worked to fill teaching positions brought

on by retirement or by adding new programs to schools. Due to a lack of graduates from teacher education programs, these local administrators resorted to lateral entry teachers to fill vacancies. Once positions have been filled, there was an added responsibility to ensure that these new or lateral entry teachers are nurtured, thereby reducing the amount of time available for their administrative duties. Another dimension to the challenge of staffing qualified career-technical education teachers was the responsibility to keep existing teachers' skills up-to-date to reflect the changes in the workplace and the economy.

Budget cutting and finding new sources of funding was cited by all local administrators in this study. All participants perceived state and federal allocations were declining and would continue to decline. Many felt they were competing for funding with the emphasis of current state and now new federal accountability measures focusing on student performance in the core areas. The participants in this study stated the scarcity of funds was forcing them to make tough choices about the programs they could offer in their local system.

Effective state leadership was mentioned by nineteen of the participants. A crisis of leadership at the state level and a continued reduction of state staff for career-technical education were seen as major challenges for career-technical education in North Carolina. The lack of presence and influence by the state's professional organization was also mentioned.

The final challenge for career-technical education in North Carolina related to the evolving role of the career-technical education administrator. Generally, the local administrators in this study had a positive outlook on their future and the future of

career-technical education. However, these local administrators expressed wariness because of the power structures existing in education. They shared a concern for a possible loss of identity as central office staffs are down-sized and duties are distributed to those not familiar with career-technical education. Those local administrator positions remaining in local school systems must contend with the responsibility of multiple duties and responsibilities thereby decreasing their effectiveness in developing a strong career-technical education system benefiting both students and the economic development of the community.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of successful and effective local administrators of career-technical education in North Carolina regarding what visions, roles, and competencies the local administrator will need to be successful in the area of career-technical education. Additionally, this study was to examine the issues the participants saw as challenges facing administrators as they work for education reform and improved student performance, workforce preparation, and economic development in North Carolina.

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations that are grounded in the analysis and synthesis of the study's findings. These conclusions and recommendations are grouped into two sections: first, those that address the purpose of the study, to better understand what visions, roles, and competencies will be needed by effective local career-technical education administrators; and second, those that address future research in the field of career and technical education. The chapter ends with some reflections regarding my practice and qualitative research.

Conclusions from the Study

The context and setting for this study included local career-technical administrators from North Carolina and therefore the recommendations are directed primarily to the public school career-technical education administrative profession. The following four conclusions regarding the visions, roles and competencies are shared below.

Conclusion 1—Quality Career-Technical Education Administration demands an individual's full-time attention.

The participants in this study were selected for their effectiveness as local career-technical education administrators. Through electronic and phone interviews, these local administrators conveyed the message that being effective means more than just being accountable. The participants related a number of characteristics and roles that are central to their effectiveness. In addition to being good administrators, study participants related the importance of being a visionary/change agent, a credible and reliable person; a role-model for excellence, and a collaborator and builder of coalitions to achieve their objectives as administrators for career-technical education.

The local career-technical education administrators in this study are committed to life-long learning and professional development. As system leaders, they saw themselves as “chief learners” and the models for higher performance. The participants exhibited a commitment to remain current with issues regarding career-technical education. Many of the participants acknowledged that “change” was the only constant during their careers in career-technical education. The participants in this study felt that the local career-technical administrator needs to be open to change and to make change happen. In order to do so, he or she needs to be learning from others and keeping up to date with the changes taking place in the community and on the latest developments in technology and the workplace.

Participants in this study felt that the building of coalitions and collaborative agreements with other administrators in their local school system and in the community will become even more important with the continued downsizing of central office

administration and ever tightening budgets. The future local career-technical administrator—the team player, a cooperative supporter of others—will be increasingly involved in expanding internal and external partnerships and collaboratives. The local career-technical education administrator will serve as a resource person, a facilitator in support of others' agendas in seeking his or her own objectives. The development of internal and external coalitions and collaboratives was seen by participants in this study as a way to strengthen career-technical education as well as the local school system in meeting the needs and demands of the communities the system serves.

Conclusion 2—It is critical to establish a formal system in North Carolina to develop future leadership for Career Technical Education.

Consistent with research on the retirement and resignation rates of administrators at all levels (Olson, 2000; Shults, 2001; Glass, 2000), the local career-technical education administrators in this study reflected that same trend. Eighty-five percent of the participants in this study had twenty-six or more years of service in education. With so many local administrators at or nearing retirement age, the infrastructure for career-technical education in North Carolina is in jeopardy of collapse.

Moss and Liang (1990) reported that career-technical education did not have the number of leaders that were urgently needed nor was there a systematic effort to develop them. At the local level, few school systems have made it a priority to identify and groom potential leaders, despite a wave of impending retirements and chronic difficulties in finding candidates (Olson, 2000).

A majority of the participants in this study cited the current internship for new local career-technical education administrators as a good start, but not adequate preparation for the many facets of the job as a local administrator. Others cited the local administrator meetings held two to three times a year were informational in nature, but did little to increase their capacity as a local administrator. Therefore, the time for developing future leaders in career-technical education is now and the situation is critical.

Conclusion 3—Local Career-Technical Education Administrators expend a great deal of time and energy addressing the lack of appreciation of Career-Technical Education.

All twenty-six participants in this study cited a poor or unfavorable image of career-technical education programs as a major challenge in their jobs as local administrators. These local administrators stated that overcoming this negative image was a constant and never-ending battle. Study participants cited the negative image held by their colleagues in the central office, principals, parents, students, and teachers as problematic or challenging. Several participants even cited career-technical education teachers holding negative beliefs about the courses and the students they teach. The most common misconceptions cited by participants included that career-technical education courses were “second-class curriculum for second-class students,” “low-level,” “dead-end,” and “not preparing students for college.”

The participants in this study have worked diligently in their respective school systems to replace an out-dated image of career-technical education programs with the focus to provide content to help students be prepared both for careers and postsecondary education. Despite their collective efforts, the change has gone largely unnoticed by

state policy-makers, central office administration, principals, parents, students, and teachers who seem to continue to focus on old outdated perceptions rather than current facts and realities.

Conclusion 4—Internet-based communication strategies can greatly facilitate the qualitative research process.

As an emerging research tool, the Internet is providing the qualitative researcher many advantages. Research (Jones, 1999, Mann & Stewart, 2000, Mertler, 2002) cites advantages and disadvantages to electronic research. The Internet provides several strategies for gathering information for study participants, such as email, chat room, and open and password protected web sites. The Internet advantages include wider geographical access, cost and time savings, transcription bias elimination, ease of data handling, conducive to easy dialogue, and a safe environment for participants to share. All these advantages proved true for me while conducting this research. In this study, participants were from all parts of North Carolina and shared candid and detailed information that they may not have been as comfortable sharing in a face to face situation. The initial email interview and subsequent follow-ups allowed participants time to reflect upon their responses before returning them at their convenience. Since the participants keyed their own responses, errors were not made in the transcription of the interviews and the information was not as likely to be subject to misinterpretation due to illegible handwriting or poor audio recordings. Male participants tended to return their responses more quickly than the female participants, but the female responses tended to be more detailed than the males. For many of the local administrators, the electronic process was convenient and contributed to the return rate.

While there were many advantages to the electronic process, I did experience some problems collecting the data. The local administrators of career-technical education in North Carolina are regularly sent email updates and announcements throughout the year from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. However, I found some were not as technologically savvy as I once thought. Several participants mailed or faxed their handwritten responses back when they were not sure of how to return their response electronically or had failed to successfully transmit their response. The lack of technological experience did provide some frustrations for participants and may have prevented a few local administrators from participating.

For this study, I found Internet-based strategies effective and very advantageous to completing this study in a timely and efficient manner. Technology did provide a few participants with some challenges. For the most part, these challenges were overcome by using other means of returning their responses. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the Internet offers new possibilities for qualitative researchers.

Recommendations from this Study

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following five general recommendations are suggested.

Recommendation 1—The North Carolina Association of Career-Technical Education should lobby the North Carolina General Assembly and the North Carolina State Board of Education to designate at least one full-time position dedicated to the administration of career-technical education in each local education agency.

All participants in this study expressed difficulty in attending to all of the various “customers” he or she serves—central office administration, principals,

teachers, students, business/industry community, and to the community at large. Even the participants in this study whose full-time job is the full-time administration of career-technical education, stated they often feel overwhelmed. The participants in this study from smaller school systems were most often the individuals with multiple assignments. While reconciled with that reality, they expressed they had to sacrifice certain career-technical education related tasks in order to attend to all of the areas under their supervision.

From its inception with the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, career-technical education has been linked to the economic development of our country. This has been one of the primary reasons the federal government has continued to financially support the development and growth of career-technical education in our nation's public school system. If this link is indeed true, it seems all the more reason for the North Carolina General Assembly to support the establishment of at least one full-time person to administer career-technical education per local education agency, especially for smaller, more rural, school systems.

Recommendation 2—Establish a leadership development program for creating future leaders in North Carolina Career-Technical Education.

Several participants in this study graduated from the Principal's Executive Program (PEP) and were highly impressed with the benefits that program provided them in seeking their career goals. Many were in favor of the idea of developing such a program for career-technical education in North Carolina using PEP as the model. Several ideas were mentioned as potential activities or experiences in the proposed leadership program including: site visits to other school systems (in-state and out-of-

state), visits to corporations and businesses, professional development conferences and seminars, and retreats.

Participants in this study related the value of learning from each other and felt that many among their ranks could serve as instructors for an internship experience or leadership development program. The proposed leadership development program could benefit from the expertise of participants in this study. Those approaching or recently retired could be selected to serve as regional instructors across the state.

Additionally, funding should be sought out to support the “tuition” for at least two representatives from each local education agency to participate in the proposed leadership development program. Assisting with the tuition of participants will help ensure that a cadre of leadership can be established for local as well as state-level leadership for career-technical education. Over time, this program can create a strong infrastructure for career-technical education in North Carolina.

Recommendation 3—Encourage North Carolina Institutions of Higher Education with education leadership/administration programs to actively recruit career-technical educators.

The local career-technical administrators in this study were highly educated. All possessed a master’s degree or higher. Specifically, 57.6% have a master’s degree, 26.9% beyond a master’s degree, and 15.3% have a doctorate. Of this group, three more are currently enrolled in doctoral programs. The participants of this study represent approximately 22% of the total local career-technical education administrative population. If this group is representative of the whole, then career-technical education

administrators value education and could be good candidates for master's and doctoral degree programs.

While the participants did not favor a degree program in career-technical education administration, a course or courses could be developed related to the administration of career-technical education. The coursework could be especially helpful for those local career-technical education administrators transitioning from the classroom into an administrative position. The coursework could be offered in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's internship experience.

Recommendation 4—Include information about career-technical education as a visible part of master's and doctoral programs in education leadership/ administration.

Current and perspective local system administrators need to be better informed as to the benefits of a quality career-technical education program for the success of a school or local system. Career-technical education teachers represent approximately one-third or more of a high school's faculty. A prospective assistant principal or principal would benefit by learning more about the courses and programs available in career-technical education to better run his or her school. This knowledge could potentially benefit the students, business and industry, and the community in which these administrators serve.

Whole school education reform initiatives, such as the Southern Region Education Board's *High Schools That Work*, stress the importance of integrating both career-technical and "core" subjects for the best education for all students. The ten key principles of the *High Schools That Work* initiative emphasize that all students need

high-level and challenging studies in the “core” areas and not just for those students planning to go to college (Bottom, G., 1992; Frome, P., 2001; SREB, 2000; SREB, 2002).

It has been my experience through eleven years of conducting technical assistance visits for various schools and school systems in North Carolina, that many school administrators do not comprehend how to integrate career-technical and “core” studies and thereby maximizing the education potential in their schools. Many courses taught in career-technical education support and extend the “core” areas through the application of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Local Career-Technical Education Administrators can and should be able to assist school-based administrative teams with the integration of “core” and career-technical studies.

Recommendation 5—Develop a public relations campaign to support the image of career-technical education as an integral and contributing part of a comprehensive education for all students.

The North Carolina Association of Career-Technical Education in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction should develop public service announcements about the benefits of career-technical education programs in North Carolina. The public service announcements could feature students from around the state and their “success stories.” The public service announcements could target students, parents, and the business/industry community. Informational pamphlets and brochures could be developed to accompany the public service announcements. A template for the informational pamphlets and brochures could be developed and shared with local administrators for use in their own school systems and communities.

Proactive steps must be taken to refute and reverse the negative image of career-technical education in order to reform and improve schools and provide a sound basic education for all children attending the Public Schools of North Carolina.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, as well as the interpretations by this author, the following research is recommended:

- Replicate this study with individuals in the position of career-technical education administrator who do not have a career-technical education background to determine their professional development needs and challenges to the future of career-technical education. Determine how they compare with the findings of this study having a majority of its participants with a career-technical education background.
- Replicate this study in other states to determine if local career-technical administrators in North Carolina have similar professional development needs, visions for the future, and challenges to career-technical education.
- Investigate new methods of determining the “success” of career-technical education in the comprehensive education of students.
- Investigate the perceptions of North Carolina central office administrators and/or principals on the value of career-technical education programs to the overall performance of their school system.
- Investigate methods used by local career-technical education administrators to garner support for their programs from the business/industry community, the local community at large, other central office administration, principals, parents,

teachers, and other important “customer” groups. This information could be very valuable in the development of new local career-technical administrators as well as “veteran” local administrators.

- Investigate or re-examine the “links” between career-technical education programs and the potential economic development of a local community. Determine the economic value of having quality career-technical programs within the schools in a local community. The findings could assist with the dispelling of myths concerning the “worth” of career-technical education in the public school system. Also, the findings could be used to lobby for more funding for career-technical education from the business sector, as well as, local, state, and federal government levels. The mere study of these links could illuminate more ways career-technical education programs can promote economic development.

Reflections for the Practice of this Researcher

The findings from this research and the research process have impacted my thinking and practice as a career-technical educator. The findings have implications for my practice as a leader of Career-Technical Education in North Carolina. Through my position with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, I have worked with some of the participants in this study for eleven years. Some of the participants I have known since I was an undergraduate at East Carolina University. Many of these individuals have been a role model for me and my professional development as a career-technical educator. Described below are some perspectives and reflections, plus a description of some decisions and activities I accomplished as a result of this research.

The perspectives are assumed to be a snapshot as my thoughts and reflections will continue and likely result in continuing changes in my perspectives and practices.

Upon the conclusion of the research, I have a new respect for the profession of local career-technical administration and for the individuals in these leadership roles. The participants in the study have accomplished a great deal. The depth of commitment to helping others, their community, their drive to meet the needs of their prospective “customers” goes so far as to have them working 60 to 70 hours a week. Their willingness to assist this me by providing their insights was just another example of their commitment to their profession and to helping another. Their visions for the future, their anticipated roles, and competencies are as equally impressive as their present ones.

For me, this study was a professional development endeavor to improve my practice as a state administrator of career-technical education. I now perceive issues and problems differently, seeking out more opinions and conversation in the discussions with my colleagues in an attempt to find solutions to long-standing problems. I have more clarity regarding my own professional development because of the finding of this study. This research does provide a vision of what career-technical administration will be like in the future, what roles career-technical administrators will have, and what competencies they will need to prepare for this vision in the early 21st century.

Also, I have a stronger appreciation and respect for those who have engaged in and completed their doctoral research. The effort and commitment needed to complete the dissertation is admirable. Although I understand this study and its findings, I also have a better understanding of how great the body of knowledge is and how little I

know. This study is a commencement of future study into the importance of local career-technical education administration. Unless you have experienced the dissertation research process, even imagining or reading about the process, would not suffice to understand its complexity.

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Appendix A

Career-Technical Education in North Carolina

Mission and Purpose

The mission of career-technical education is to help empower students for effective participation in an international economy as world-class workers and citizens.

Career-technical education fulfills this mission by:

1. Preparing students for postsecondary education in career-technical education and lifelong learning.
2. Preparing students for initial and continued employment.
3. Assisting students in making educational and career decisions.
4. Applying and reinforcing related learning from other disciplines.
5. Assisting students in developing decision-making, communication, problem-solving, leadership, and citizenship skills.
6. Preparing students to make informed consumer decisions and apply practical life skills.
7. Making appropriate provisions for students with special needs to succeed in career-technical education programs.

Program Areas

Competency-based courses are offered in following eight program areas, with each area having school-based, work-based, or community-based learning opportunities.

1. Agricultural Education
2. Business and Information Technology Education

3. Career Development
4. Family and Consumer Sciences Education
5. Health Occupations Education
6. Marketing Education
7. Technology Education
8. Trade and Industrial Education

Combined with other academic offerings, career-technical education assists all enrollees with career goals and high school graduation requirements. Students are to have a career development plan outlining academic and career-technical courses to be taken to meet a tentative career objective and obtain a high school diploma.

Goals Common Career-Technical Education

Programs in career-technical education are designed to contribute to the broad educational achievement of students. These career-technical programs contribute to students being able to:

1. Identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources—time, money, materials and facilities, and human resources.
2. Work with others by participating as a team member, serving clients/customers, negotiating, and working with diversity.
3. Acquire and use information.
4. Work with and operate effectively within social organizations and technological systems.
5. Work with a variety of technologies.

6. Contribute to the development of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and mathematical skills.
7. Contribute to the development of thinking creativity, making decisions, solving problems, and reasoning.

Career-Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)

A career-technical student organization is an integral part of each program area's curriculum. Any student enrolled in a career-technical education course is eligible for membership in the career-technical student organization associated with that program. The CTSOs in North Carolina are:

- Career Exploration Clubs of North Carolina (CECNC) for middle grades students.
- DECA: An Association for Marketing Education Students for Marketing Education.
- Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) for Business and Information Technology Education.
- FFA: The Organization for Agricultural Education Students.
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) for Family and Consumer Sciences Education.
- Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA) for Health Occupations Education.
- Technology Student Association for Technology Education (TSA) for Technology Education.
- SkillsUSA for Trade and Industrial Education.

CTSOs develop character, citizenship, technical, leadership, and teamwork skills essential for students who are preparing for the workforce and further education. They enhance student's civic awareness and provide opportunities for developing social competencies and a wholesome attitude about living and working.

CTSOs provide a unique instructional method for attaining the competency goals and objectives identified in each course. Their activities are considered a part of the instructional day when they are directly related to the components and objectives in course blueprints. (Information extracted from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Career-Technical Education, 2003)

Appendix B

North Carolina Certification Requirements

Workforce Development (Vocational) Director, 711

Introduction

This section describes the specific requirements for a workforce development (vocational) license in area 711, Workforce Development Director, at class SG or above.

Specific Provisional Licensure Requirements

Qualifying for a provisional license requires:

- Clear class VA or A licensing in a workforce development (vocational) education area or administrative/supervision licensure
- A master's degree from an approved education program
- A minimum of five years teaching, supervisory, or administrative experience within the preceding eight years (two years minimum in workforce development education programs).

Clearing Specific Provisional Requirements

Clearing the provisional status requires fifteen semester hours from the following areas:

Technical area (6 semester hours)

- Workforce development program planning and organization
- Work-based learning organizations

Professional (9 semester hours)

- Curriculum development in workforce education

- Philosophy and administration of workforce education
- Evaluation techniques

Internship sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Workforce Development Education.

Testing Requirements

The minimum acceptable score on the NTE/Praxis-Educational Leadership and
Administration and Supervision is required for licensure.

(Information extracted for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
manual—*Licensure for Public School Professionals*, 1998.)

Appendix C

NORTH CAROLINA PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Performance measures and standards have been developed for the four core indicators of performance mandated by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998. Listed below are the core indicators and the performance standards for each one.

1. Student attainment of challenging State established academic, and vocational and technical, skill proficiencies.

- Attainment of Academic Proficiencies

Performance Indicator 1: A certain percentage of career-technical concentrators will score at or above the national mean on each of the four ASSET tests: reading, writing, numerical skills, and elementary algebra.

- Attainment of Vocational and Technical Skill Proficiencies

Performance Indicator 2: A certain percentage of career-technical education enrollees will score at Level III or above on end-of-course VoCATS tests.

2. Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, or a postsecondary degree or credential.

- Attainment of Credentials

Performance Indicator 3: A certain percentage of graduating career-technical education concentrators meeting advanced requirements will have completed a Tech Prep or a combined Tech Prep/College Prep course of study.

3. Placement in, retention in, and completion of, postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment.

- Placement

Performance Indicator 4: A certain percentage of graduating career-technical education concentrators will go on to further education, work, or both the year following graduation.

4. Student participation in and completion of vocational and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment.

- Nontraditional Enrollment

Performance Indicator 5: A certain percentage of students enrolled in career-technical education courses leading to nontraditional employment and training will be from underrepresented genders.

- Nontraditional Graduation

Performance Indicator 6: A certain percentage of students completing career-technical education programs leading to nontraditional employment and training will be from underrepresented genders.

5. A seventh performance indicator has been included that goes beyond the Perkins mandates. This performance indicator is based on the belief that Career-Technical Education students need to participate in an on-going career development process with a student-centered plan focused on a course of study that will help prepare the student to pursue further education or employment after graduation from high school. This indicator firmly establishes the value placed upon all students enrolled in Career-Technical Education having a Career Development Plan.

- Career Development

Performance Indicator 7: The LEA will maintain its baseline percentage of Career-Technical Education enrollees with Career Development Plans.

Appendix D

Institutional Review Board Form

North Carolina State University is a land-grant university and a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina

**Office of Research
and Graduate Studies**

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Sponsored Programs and
Regulatory Compliance
Campus Box 7514
1 Leazar Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7514

919.515.7200
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Debra A. Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: April 4, 2003

Project Title: Local Leadership of North Carolina Career-Technical Education: Leadership Development and Future Directions

IRB#: 078-03-4

Dear Mr. Smith:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101.b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations.
For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429; the IRB Number is: IRB00000330
2. Review de novo of this proposal is necessary if any significant alterations/additions are made.

Please provide your faculty sponsor with a copy of this letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRB

Appendix E

APRIL 29, 2003

TO: SELECTED LOCAL CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

**FROM: JIMMY SMITH, GRADUATE STUDENT
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION LEADERSHIP/ADMINISTRATION**

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY ON LOCAL CTE ADMINISTRATORS

I am a graduate student in the Education Leadership program at North Carolina State University (NCSU), Raleigh. I invite you to participate in a research project about the challenges and issues regarding the administration of local Career-Technical Education Programs.

You have been selected as an effective local administrator to be included in this research study. Participation in this email study will consist of responding to a list of demographic questions in Part 1 and to several interview questions in Part 2. The interview questions will focus on your experiences as a local Career-Technical Education Administrator in completing your responsibilities and your thoughts on the future direction and challenges to education, workforce development, and economic development. In some instances, possible follow-up questions may be necessary, but will be kept to a minimum. The results of this research will be used to develop future local administrators and leaders in Career-Technical Education.

Only the completed study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the NCSU and Department of Public Instruction communities. For your protection, I will use a pseudonym for your name and for the school system you represent. Your responses and identifying information will be kept confidential. The dissertation that results from this work will be published electronically and stored at the NCSU Electronic Thesis and Dissertations Library.

I appreciate your giving time to this study which will help me learn more about the local administration of Career-Technical Education Programs and the development of future leaders. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 919-807-3874. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Kenneth H. Brinson, Jr. at 919-513-4327.

Again, thank you for your time and energy!

If you are willing to participate in this research study, please complete the information below indicating your consent. **Please complete this form, Parts 1 and 2, and return on or before Friday, May 16, 2003.**

I am willing to participate in this research study with the understanding my identity will be kept confidential.

Please key your name here:

Appendix FLocal Leadership of North Carolina Career-Technical Education:
Leadership Development and Future Directions

Demographic Information

1. Years of experience in education?

- 5 or less
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21 to 25
- 26 to 30
- 31 +

2. Years of experience as a local director of career-technical education?

- 5 or less
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21 to 25
- 26 to 30
- 31 +

3. Highest level of education:

- Doctorate
- Advanced certificate
- Masters
- Bachelors
- Associates

My degree(s) are in what areas and from what institution?

4. In terms of size, how would you describe the size of your school system?

- Small
- Medium
- Large

5. In terms of performance, schools in my LEA can be categorized as:

- Exceptional
- Average
- Meeting expected growth
- Low performing
- Chronically low performing

6. Other than career-technical education, over what areas do you have direct responsibility?
7. What were your major jobs before becoming a local director?
8. Your most valuable professional development experience is provided by:
(Check top two choices.)
- Local school system
 - Higher education institution
 - Web-based learning
 - State Department of Public Instruction
 - Local Leadership Academy
 - Professional Association
 - Independent Study
9. If you were to distribute the amount of your time by percent, total time being 100% on the job, how would you break that time down by task? Please write the percent of time (in the space provided) you spend performing tasks in the following categories (your total should equal 100%).

Task	Percent of Time
Budget/Finance	
Instructional Leadership	
Personnel Issues	
Staff Development	
Collaboration to Support Local Initiatives	
School System Planning	
Business/Industry Involvement	
State Accountability Reporting	
Others (Please describe)	

Appendix G

Local Leadership of North Carolina Career-Technical Education: Leadership Development and Future Directions

PART 2

Interview Guide: Place your cursor in the gray box and respond to the following questions giving as much detail as you would like. Examples, stories, analogies, and antidotes will aid in better understanding your work as a local CTE Administrator. *Again, your name and all identifying information will be removed from your responses.* When you have completed these items, save, attach, and **email this document to Jimmy Smith at jsmith6008@nc.rr.com by Friday, May 16, 2003.**

If you have not already, please complete Part 1 of this study also attached to your initial email. Thank You!

1. What do you see as your major responsibilities currently as a local administrator?
2. How have you learned to perform the tasks associated with your job as a local Career-Technical Education Administrator?
3. What in your background has prepared you for your job as a local administrator?
4. How have you established “credibility” as a local administrator within your school system?
5. What would you like to accomplish as a local administrator? What do you want as your legacy as a local Career-Technical Education Administrator?
6. What recommendations do you have for the professional development of local administrators for career-technical education? Should there be a “degree program” established for the local CTE administration?

7. What are the major obstacles facing you in performing your job as a local administrator?

8. If given the resources (time, money, etc.) what would you like to make happen for your school system in regards to Career-Technical Education?

9. What three major issues do you see facing North Carolina Career-Technical Education?

10. In the future, how do you see the role of the local Career-Technical Education administrator evolving in North Carolina?

11. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Appendix H

Percentage of Time on Administrative Tasks as a Group and by Participant

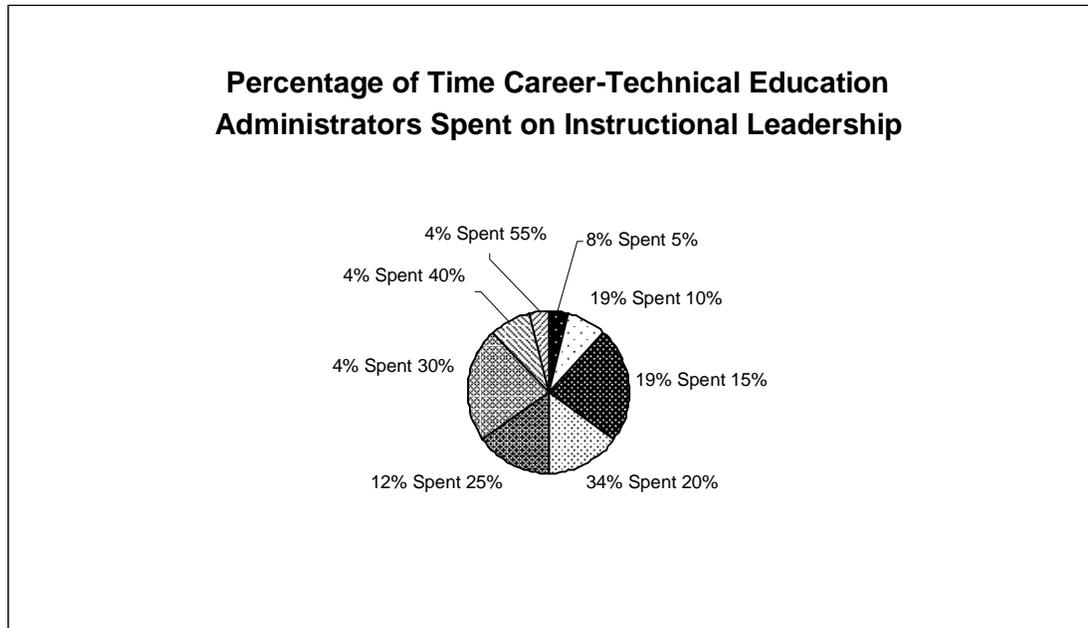


Figure H-1—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Instructional Leadership

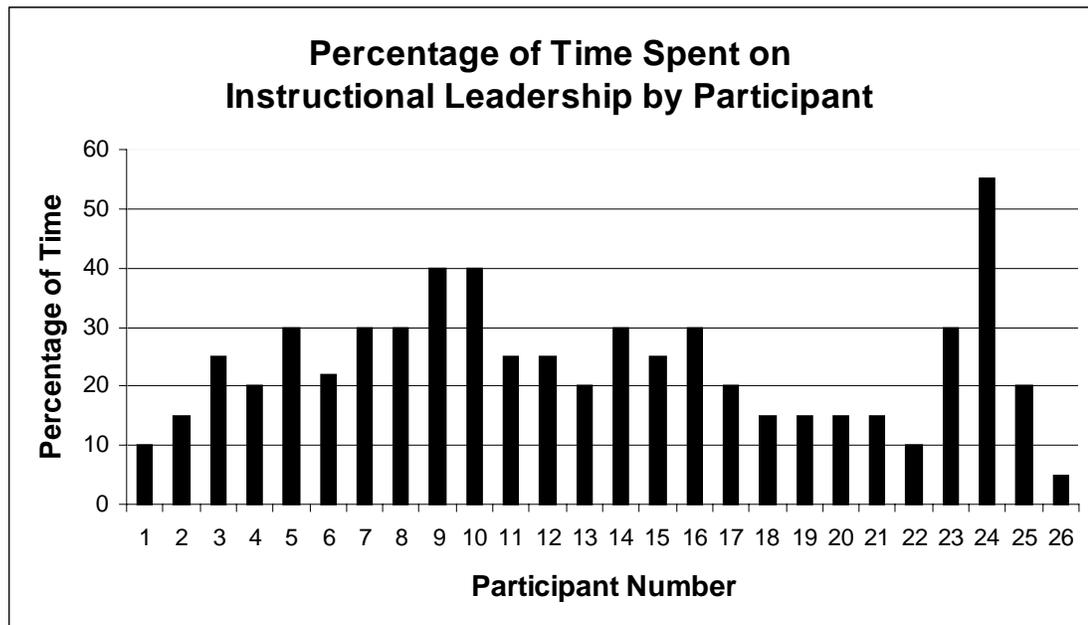


Figure H-2—Percentage of Time Spent on Instructional Leadership by Participant

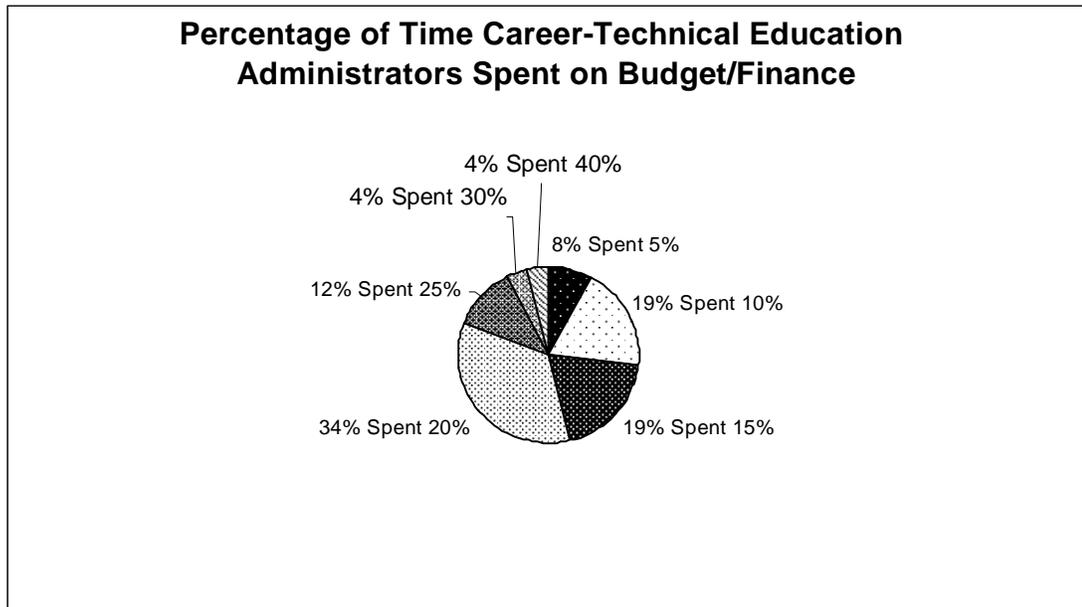


Figure H-3—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Budget/Finance

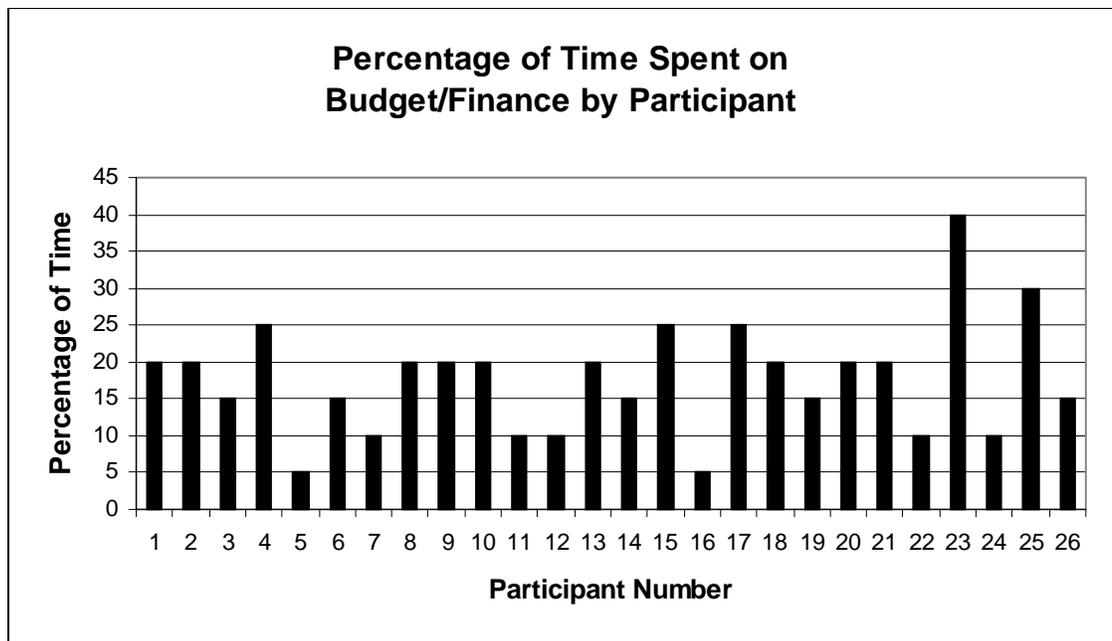


Figure H-4—Percentage of Time Spent on Budget/Finance by Participant

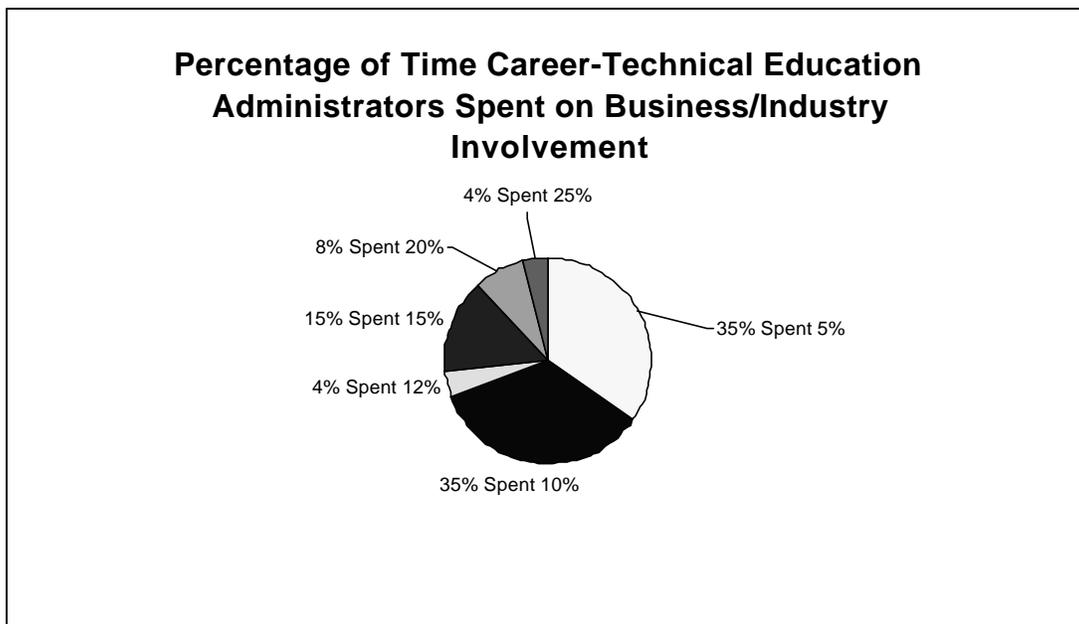


Figure H-5—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Business/Industry Involvement

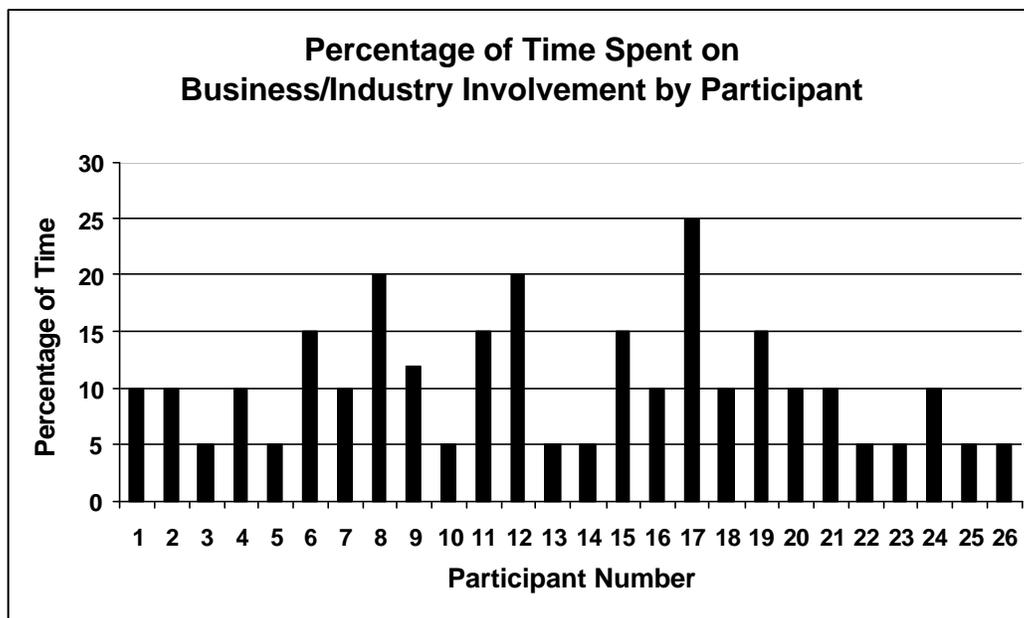


Figure H-6—Percentage of Time Spent on Business/Industry Involvement by Participant

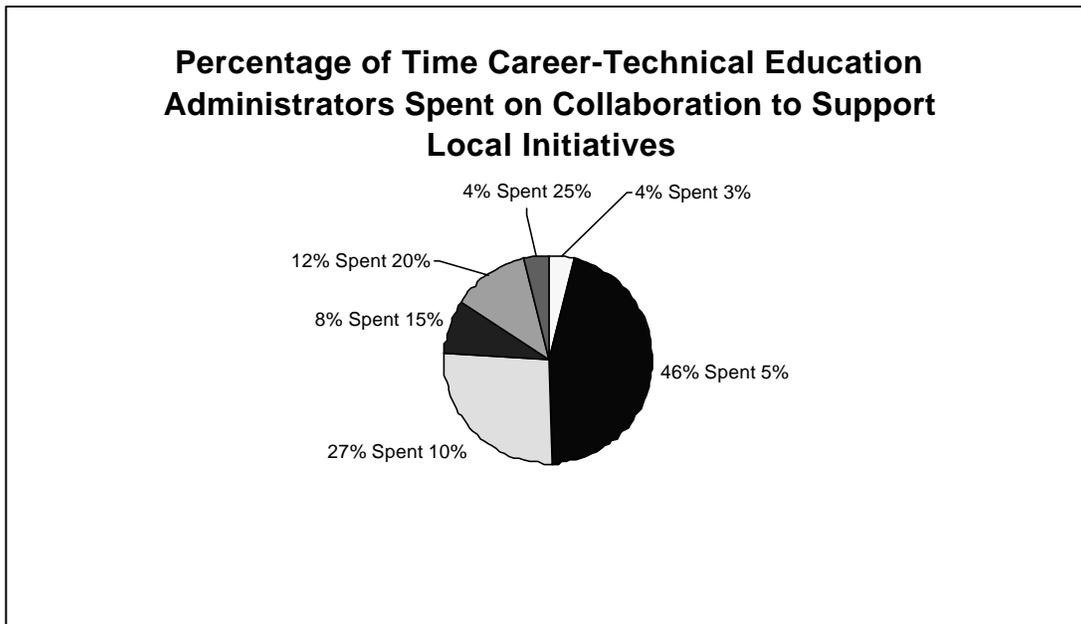


Figure H-7—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Collaboration to Support Local Initiatives

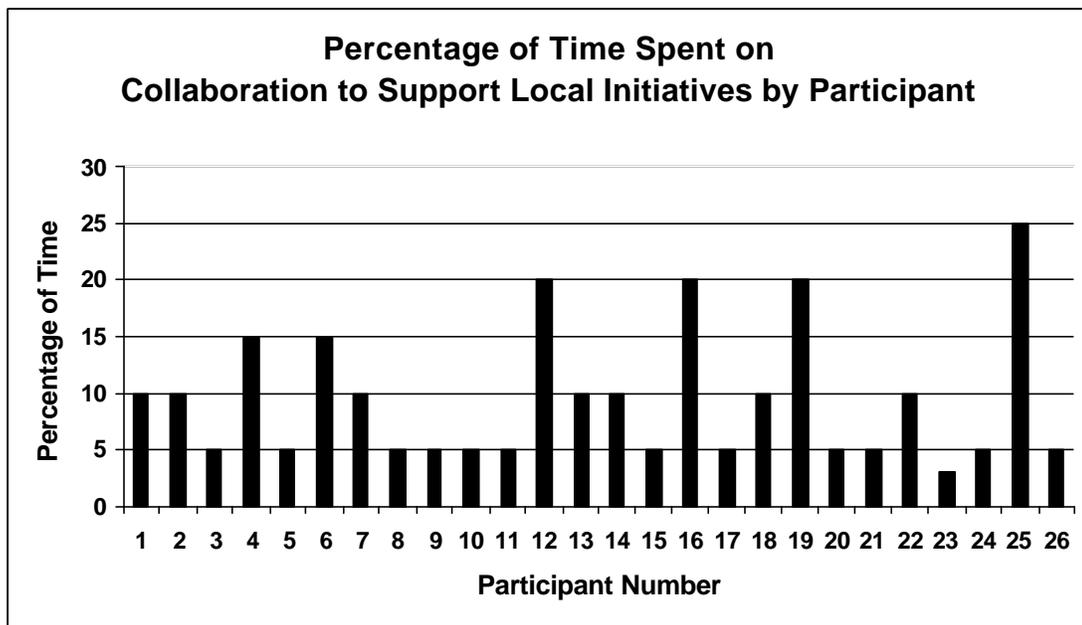


Figure H-8—Percentage of Time Spent on Collaboration to Support Local Initiatives by Participant

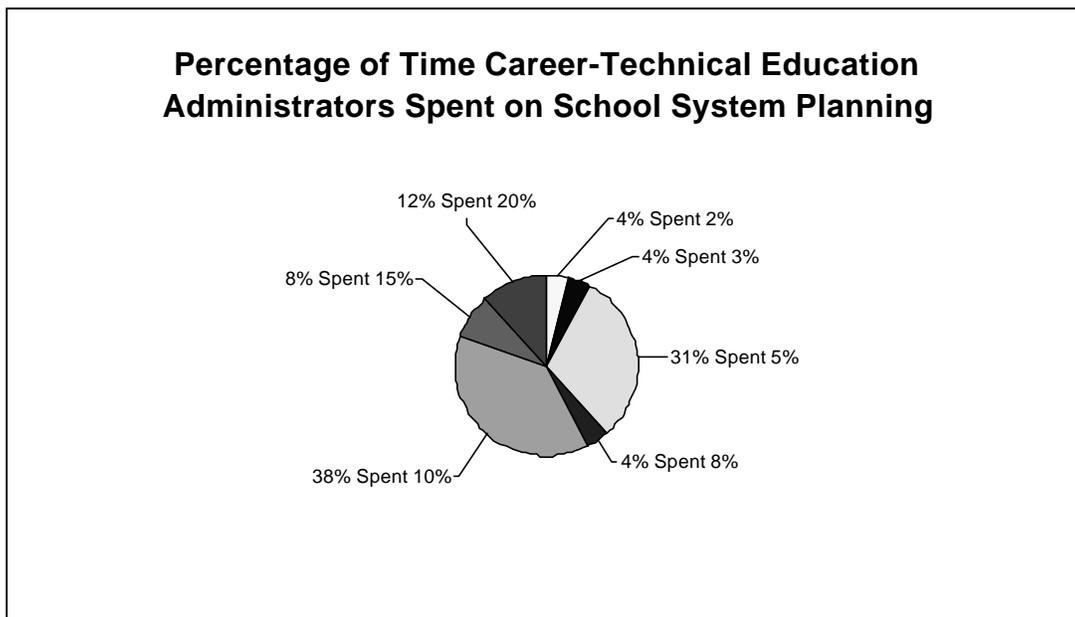


Figure H-9—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on School System Planning

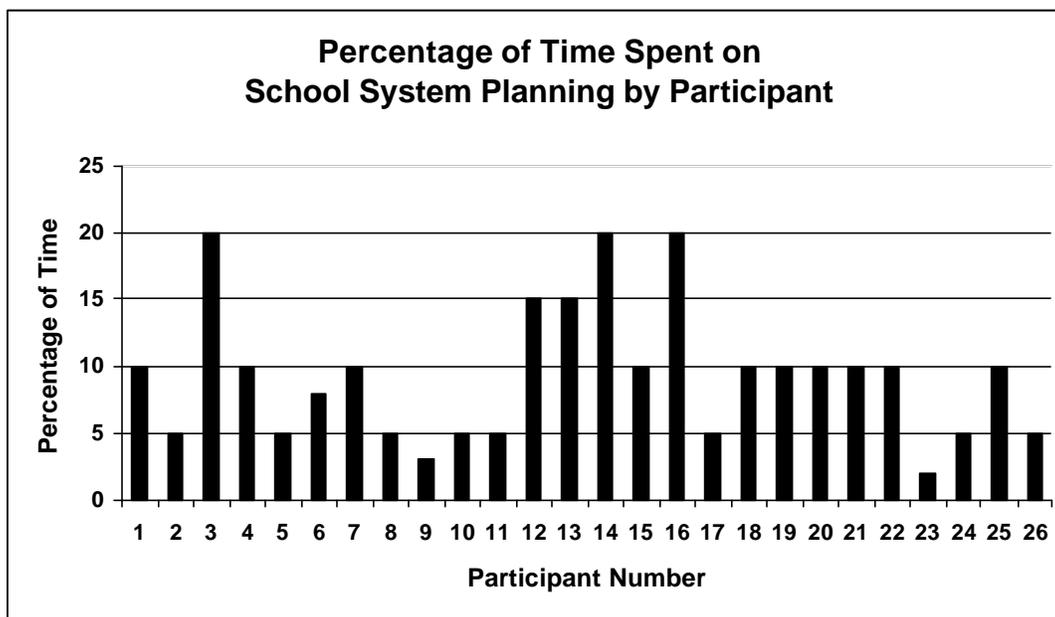


Figure H-10—Percentage of Time Spent on School System Planning by Participant

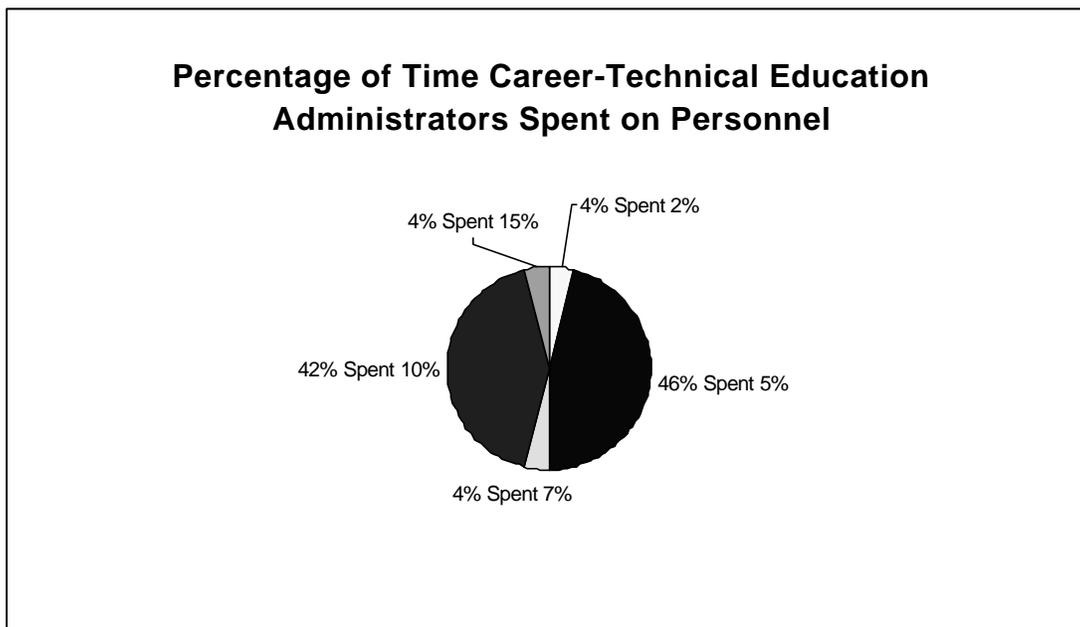


Figure H-11—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Personnel

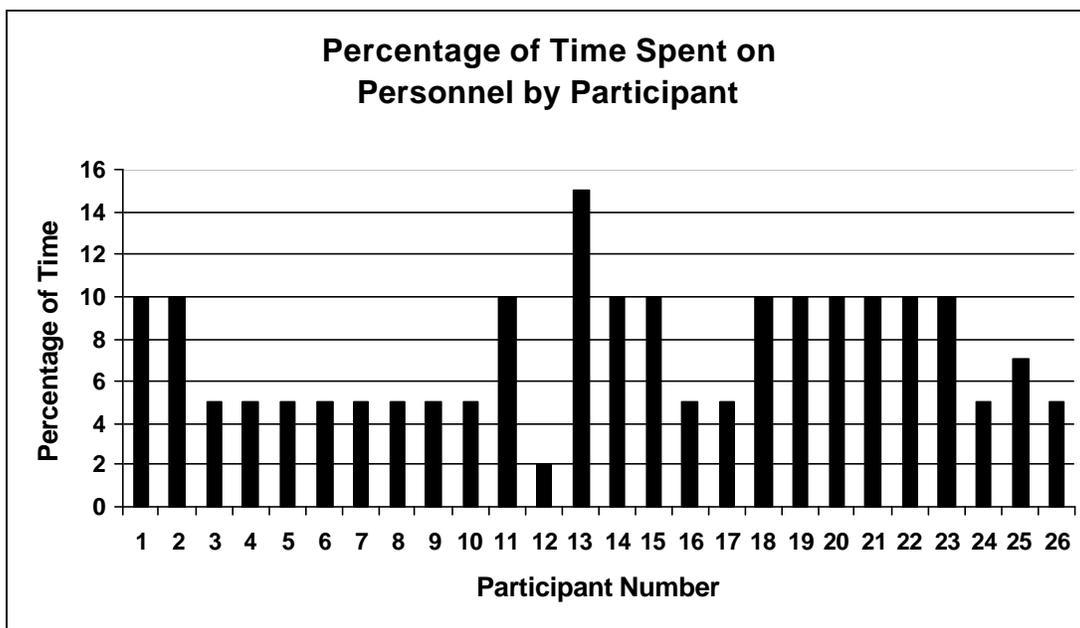


Figure H-12—Percentage of Time Spent on Personnel by Participant

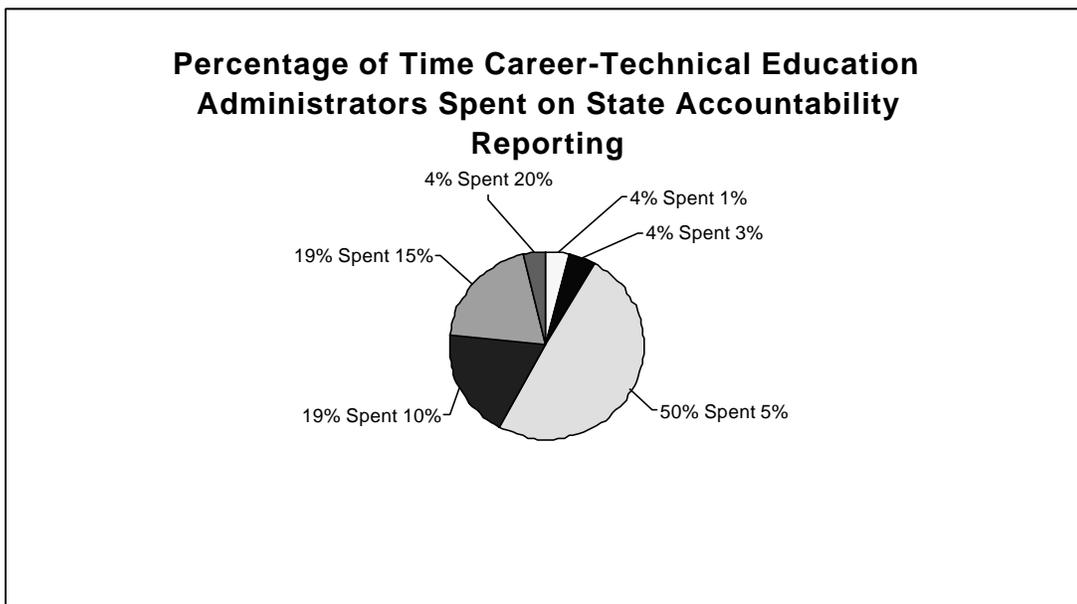


Figure H-13—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on State Accountability Reporting

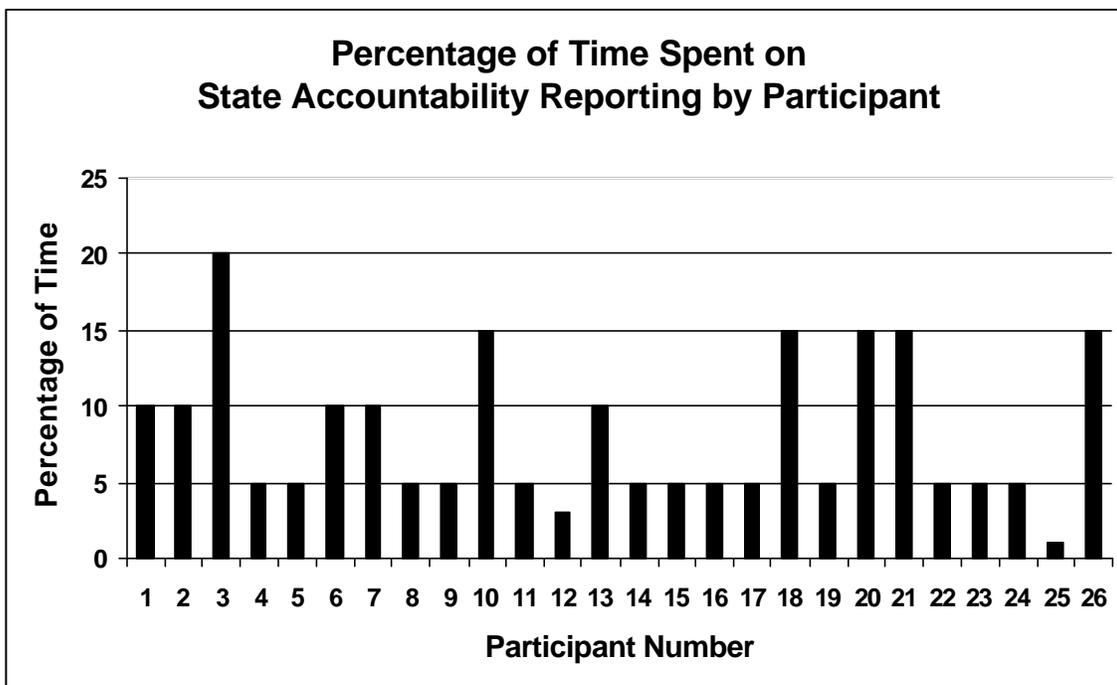


Figure H-14—Percentage of Time Spend on State Accountability Reporting by Participant

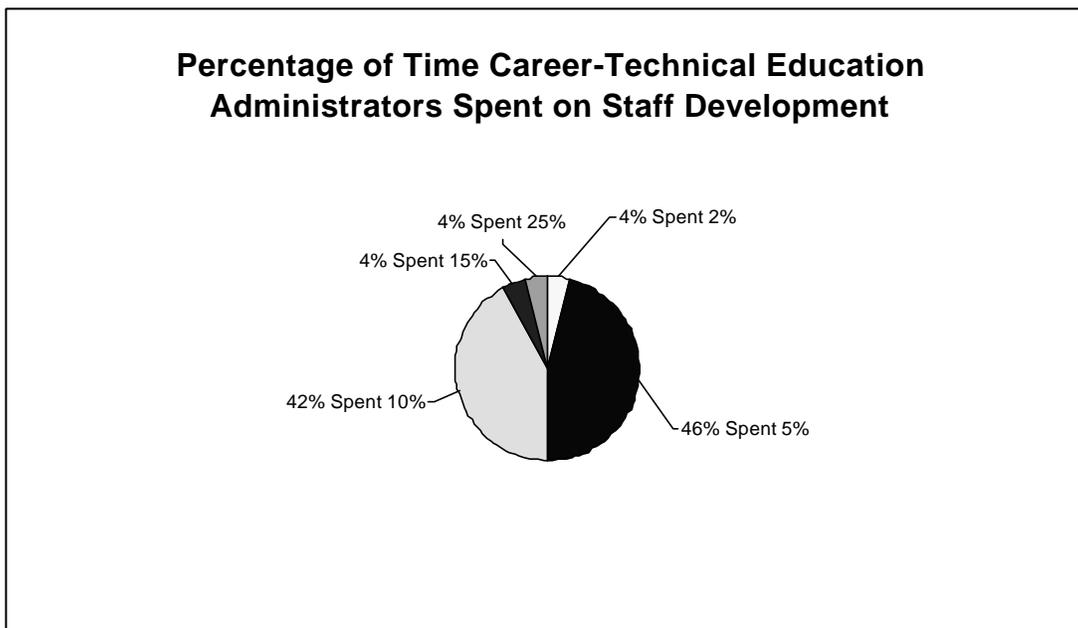


Figure H-15—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Staff Development

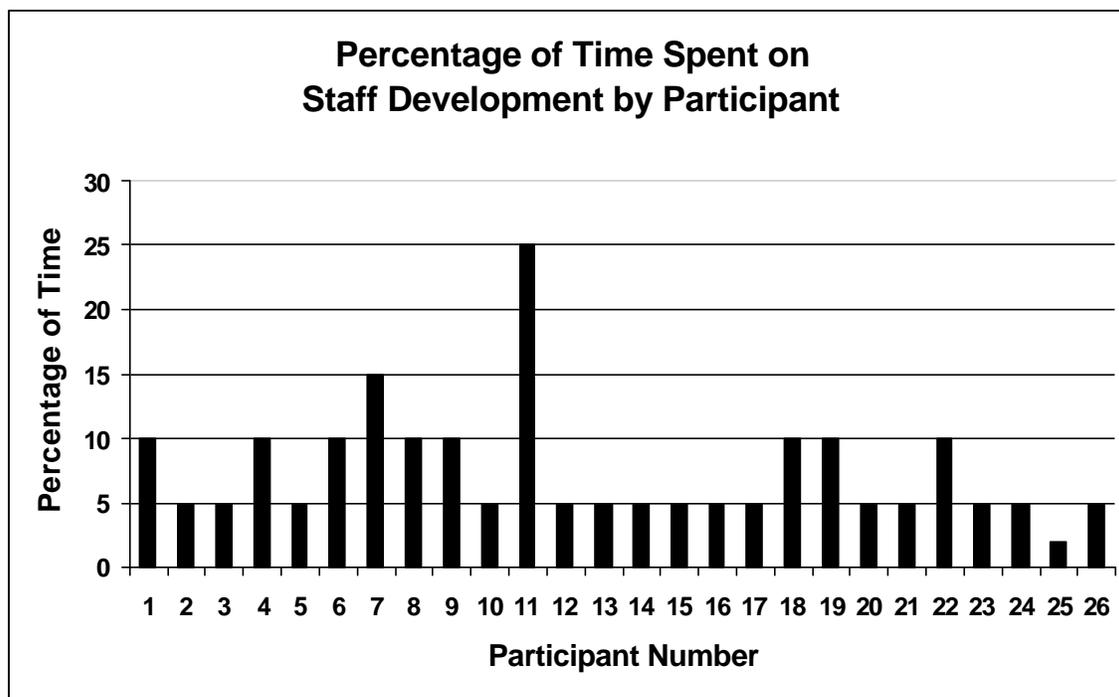


Figure H-16—Percentage of Time Spent on Staff Development by Participant

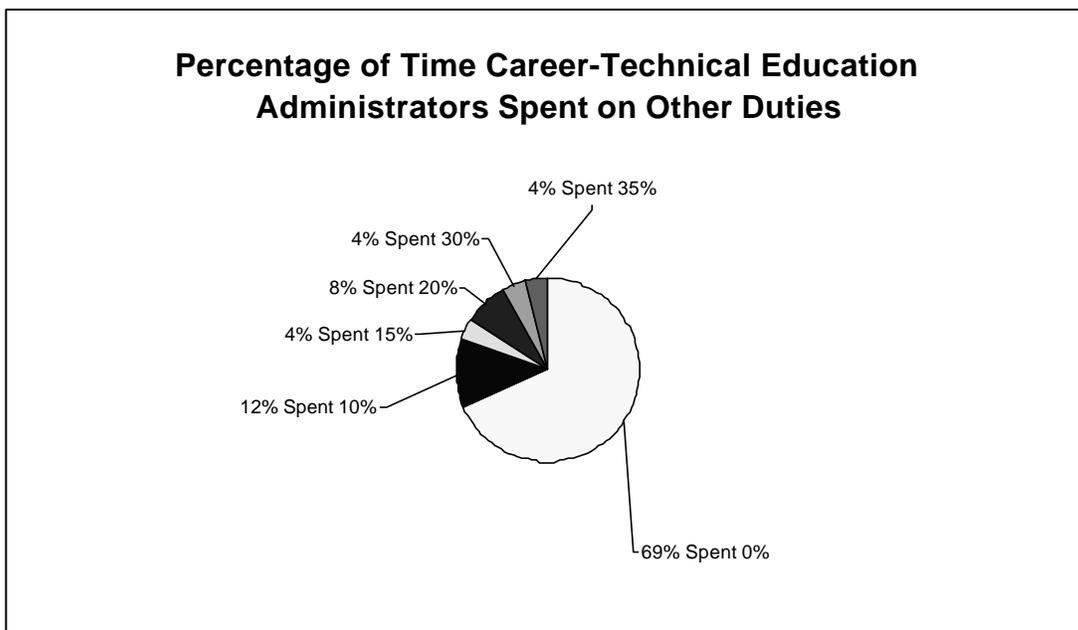


Figure H-17—Percentage of Time Career-Technical Education Administrators Spent on Other Duties

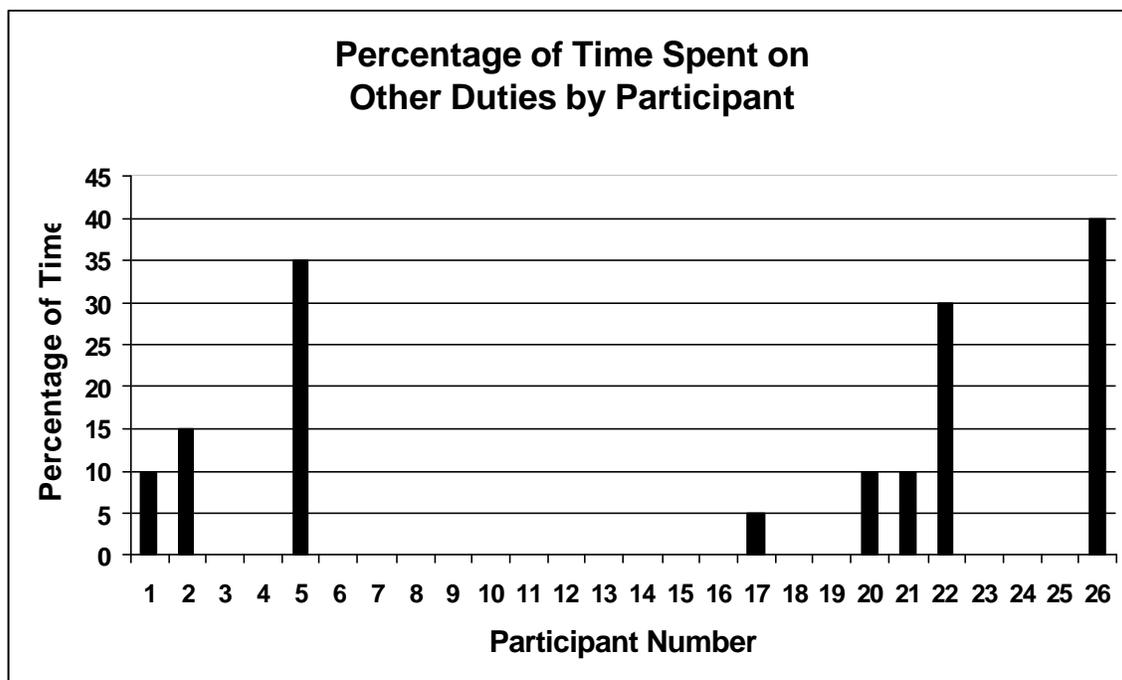


Figure H-18—Percentage of Time Spent on Other Duties by Participant