**Abstract**

THE DECISION TO PURSUE THE PRINCIPALSHIP:

WHAT MOTIVATES AND INHIBITS ORTHODOX JEWISH DAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM AND PURSUE ADMINISTRATION

By

Eitan Lipstein

Research examining the pursuit of the principalship reveals that many educators are driven by higher-level needs that make the role of principal compelling and desirable. The role of principal can be attractive to educators in that it enables one to positively affect the lives of students and teachers, and to raise one's status, thereby satisfying higher-level needs that one tends to seek (Bass et al., 2006; Harris, 2011). Themes such as diversifying career options, making a difference, encouragement from mentors, and self-actualization were found to be motivating factors (Arthur et al. , 2009). External factors, including political, communal, or the like, make the role of principal an intimidating one, mainly due to the demanding nature of the role and the time required of a principal on a daily basis (Beach, 2010; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). Yet, for Jewish teachers in Orthodox Jewish day schools, there are other complicating factors as well. Salomon (2010) researched motivations for those entering the field of Jewish education and found that many of the male subjects expressed a desire to eventually occupy an administrative role within Jewish day schools, as a way of compensating for the perceived poor salary of Jewish day school teachers. This finding leaves open the question of the role of salary in the decision to pursue the principalship in Jewish day schools; it is not uniformly found to be a significant factor in the research on public schools.

*Keywords:* principal, Jewish day school, motivators, inhibitors, pursuit

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By

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Like any profession, the successful career of an educator is fueled by passion, commitment, effort, and sacrifice. Those who pursue this career and achieve success and stability inside a classroom, are intrinsically motivated by many factors and find great satisfaction through the positive changes they are able to instill in their schools, and through the maximization of potential that they can often enable in each of their students. Yet, many teachers, even after climbing to the proverbial mountaintop and achieving successful teaching careers, choose to change course and pursue school administration. The challenges of an administrator, while intimately connected to the world of education and the school improvement process, are entirely different from the challenges and often euphoric feelings experienced by a classroom teacher. What makes an effective principal does not necessarily make a successful teacher, and the reverse applies as well. This stark shift of job description and satisfaction prompts the question of why this pursuit occurs in the first place. Ultimately, the internal and external needs of a teacher can fluctuate, whether one's job satisfaction or the fulfillment he/she may feel through teaching, or one's personal needs at home as family dynamics evolve and adjust. Particularly in Orthodox Jewish day schools, where one's lifestyle and needs vary greatly from that of a public school teacher, it is entirely possible that these needs influence one's professional career and trajectory. It is my hope that a review of the literature will better inform the reader of potential factors that lead educators to choose, or refrain from choosing, the path of administration.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## What Makes an Effective Principal?

Before determining which lead motivators and inhibitors drive the thought process of those teachers considering the shift to administration, one must first examine the responsibilities, expectations, qualifications, and effectiveness of a principal. As the leader of the school, principals bear the responsibility of ensuring that all stakeholders are cared for, considered, and given the opportunity to be successful. Such a burden is far from simple and includes tasks that can often be overlooked by parents, teachers, students, and principals themselves. Sergiovanni (2005) delineates various responsibilities with which principals are charged, some more obvious than others. These tasks include supervising, enabling, explaining, and managing, along with lesser known tasks such as motivating, modeling, maintaining harmony, institutionalizing values, and purposing, which involve moving the school community to shared visions with a moral voice that speaks compellingly to all stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2005). While on a micro level teachers are responsible for many of these tasks in their individual classrooms, achieving these tasks on a global level, where shareholders include all staff members, board members, and the community as a whole, can be a daunting and difficult responsibility.

When one examines the role of a principal and what is expected of the school leader, the list is exhaustive. Waters, Marzano et al. (2003) developed a leadership framework that describes the knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools that leaders need to make a positive impact in their schools in regard, for instance, just to student achievement. Of the many responsibilities of school leaders, the research found 21 specific leadership qualities that significantly correlated with student achievement (Waters, Marzano et al., 2003). These qualities are: culture, order,

discipline, resources, curriculum/instruction/assessment, focus, knowledge of curriculum/instruction assessment, visibility, contingent rewards, communication, outreach, input, affirmation, relationship, change agent, optimizer, ideals/beliefs, monitors/evaluates, flexibility, situational awareness, and intellectual stimulation. While these 21 qualities most strongly correlated with student achievement, it could be very telling to hear from administrators which of these qualities are a point of focus for them and if any are even considered when reflecting on their leadership effectiveness (Waters, Marzano et al., 2003).

Which of these 21 qualities are deemed necessary and/or important in the eyes of current principals? With which of these qualities did the principals enter the role? Which did they have to develop? Which qualities are most natural? Which do they struggle with most?

Holder (2009), through an investigation of the relationship between dimensions of principal personality type and student achievement, found that researchers have investigated only seven of these qualities most frequently: (a) climate and culture, (b) affirmation, (c) communication, (d) order, visibility and discipline, (e) monitors and evaluates, (f) intellectual stimulation and resources, and (g) optimizer and change agent. Each quality represents integral facets of the role of principal that largely determine the efficacy and success of his/her tenure and body of work.

The climate and culture of a school, the first of the seven aforementioned qualities, is determined by the principal yet cannot be achieved through him or her alone. While it is true that his or her actions determine the direction and vision of the school, the success and fulfillment of said vision can occur only if it reflects the overall values and goals that have been established or supported by the school stakeholders. The relationship of a principal with his/her teachers is one of quid pro quo; without each other, organizational goals cannot be fully achieved. Only

collaboration and trust, and a climate of support, can change and move schools forward (Sergiovanni, 2005).

Yet, as crucial as trust, collaboration, and support are to the climate of a school, a principal must take action and follow through with the proper next steps to ensure that all goals are achieved. For instance, to improving a school's learning climate, it is not sufficient for the principal and his/her teachers to support one another and be on the same page. Rather, the principal must determine the steps necessary to enable trust beyond his/her words of affirmation. As such, high visibility, promotion of professional development, protection of instructional time, and provision of incentives for teachers and students are vital to building and/or maintaining a culture of school learning (O'Donell and White, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2005; Waters, Marzano et al., 2003). As referenced above, the traits that are most tied to the success of a principal are specific to administration and do not contain heavy carryover from those qualities that define good classroom teaching. As such, it will be most intriguing to determine the motivation behind a classroom teacher's pursuit of the principalship and what, in many ways, amounts to a career shift.

While serving as a classroom teacher, and absorbing the elements of administration that teachers value most, there are adjustments that can yield immediate dividends if implemented correctly. One such element is the stabilization of a healthy school culture. Lindahl's (2006) research on school culture found strong connections between healthy school cultures and collaborative environments. Lindahl (2006), in synthesizing the research on school culture and its impact on school improvement, stresses the responsibility that the principal has to empower others and promote shared power through collaboration, as well as the importance of maintaining open lines of communication to demonstrate more effectively leadership to teachers and

stakeholders. Collaboration engenders trust and communicates that all opinions are valued. Communicating value for others, both teachers and students alike, is a key element to building a healthy school culture. This is why Sergiovanni (2005), as well as Waters, Marzano et al. (2003), found that delegating responsibilities and praising staff are common behaviors exhibited by effective leaders.

Particularly with regard to the trait of affirmation, one of the key leadership responsibilities identified by Waters, Marzano et al. (2003), treating teachers respectfully can have a trickle-down effect to the students and parents through this modeled behavior. Perhaps of note is that the ability to delegate, a skill seldom required of teachers, is not only key to the principalship but is also difficult to gauge or detect in applicants, as it is not necessarily modeled by teachers during their time in the classroom. This demonstrates one example of important qualities for the principalship that has no true correlation to one's success as a teacher.

Interestingly enough, the inverse of many of the above behaviors and traits are some of the more common behaviors found in researching mistreatment of teachers and the qualities of ineffective principals (Blase and Blase, 2006). Blase and Blase (2006) studied the impact of negative leadership behaviors on the culture of a school and found favoritism, lack of support and resources, lack of respect for feelings, criticism, unreasonable demands, destruction of property, threats, unfair evaluations, unwarranted reprimands and mistreatment of students as the main factors that define negative school leadership. These negative behaviors had side effects that were far-reaching even beyond the climate of the school, including, but not limited to, the quality of instruction in the classroom and the relationships between teachers and other staff members, as well as those relationships between teachers and students. It is perhaps this set of qualifications that can allow an experienced teacher to be empathetic and attentive to the needs

of teachers on staff. While there is no guarantee that a teacher holds the positive traits necessary to effect change or implement new rules or procedures to advance his/her school, perhaps the advantage a veteran teacher has when pursuing the principalship is being aware of what administrative shortcomings frustrate teachers most. Identifying these shortcomings can allow one to strategize how to adjust policies and procedures to fix potential issues that exist within a particular school culture.

In reviewing literature for "Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School Effectiveness," Hallinger and Heck (1998) examined the level of direct impact that principals have on outcomes within schools. Hallinger and Heck (1998) divided the types of effects that principals can have into three separate categories: direct effects, reciprocated effects, and mediated effects. Direct effects indicate that the principal has a direct impact on outcomes, reciprocal effects is where the principal affects teachers, which, in turn, leads to reciprocation on the part of the teacher that thereby impacts outcomes of the school. The final category, mediated effects, represents outcomes that are indirectly affected by the principal. In reviewing the impact made by the principal in each of these categories, particularly in the area of student achievement, Hallinger and Heck (1998) found the effects to be statistically significant.

In addition to the impact that principal leadership behaviors can have on school outcomes, Gentilucci and Muto (2007) found that student perception of these behaviors is also positively correlated to student achievement. Gentilucci and Muto (2007) interviewed 39 eighth grade students from three different middle schools, in three separate districts, to determine students perceptions of whether the leadership behaviors of their principals impacts student achievement in their particular school. Students were then probed to see what behaviors in particular are most impactful to the student achievement in their schools. Some of the findings

were that school leaders who are perceived by the student body as invested in the success of the students, which in turn makes the principal more approachable and caring, had a direct impact on student achievement (Gentilucci and Muto, 2007, P. 229h). Yet, when students perceive the principal as disinterested or unapproachable, students reciprocated this attitude towards their academic achievement and approached their studies with apathy (Gentilucci and Muto, 2007, p. 232). Perhaps it is in this area as well that an experienced educator will be particularly adept, given his/her knowledge of student perceptions in addition to his/her own feelings regarding principal visibility and involvement.

In looking towards the principalship in Orthodox Jewish day schools, an effective principal is defined by all of the above research as well, however there are unique variables that apply to this role. Vaisben (2018) surveyed 90 principals among religious Jewish day schools, and skills such as implementing change, managing human resources and developing a vision were identified as very important to their work. These skills certainly apply across the public and private sectors. Of note in Vaisben's (2018) survey were the skills of working with boards and committees and leading change with lay leaders. "Lay leader-principal relations are critical to the success of the school," and principals living those relationships identified this facet of their role as "very important" to their success and functionality (Vaisben, 2018).

Similarly, research conducted to examine the conditions for success in Jewish day schools identified a principal's autonomy to make decisions as a key condition to being a successful leader in a Jewish day school (Levisohn, Kidron et al., 2016). On a related note, leaders' ability to interact with the community was perceived to be important to the school as well. The other conditions of a successful leader in a Jewish day school setting, based on the surveys of 437 Jewish day school leaders, were similar to the research discussed above. In

particular, fostering strong relationships with teachers, administering effective professional development, making time for instructional leadership, closely communicating with parents, and having a strong leadership team were all conditions of successful principals in Jewish day schools (Levisohn et al., 2016). The final condition of a successful leader is germane to Jewish day schools in particular and centers around effective collaboration with other organizations in the local and global Jewish community (Levisohn et al., 2016).

## Factors That Influence Teachers to Become Administrators

The above research behind what makes an effective principal, and the exhaustive list of responsibilities that are attached to the office of the principal, are intense and somewhat dizzying. The role of principal certainly carries a great amount of responsibility that can inspire, intimidate, or deter the pursuit of this all-important position. What is it that would motivate an educator to pursue this path?

Being a position of leadership, those who occupy this role are often drawn to it due to the impact they can have on others (Pellicer, 2007; Hoffert, 2015). While there are many inhibitors to becoming a principal, Harris, Arnold et al. (2000) surveyed 151 graduate students enrolled in principal preparation courses and identified the main factors that motivate individuals to pursue the principalship, including: having a positive impact, making a difference, being personally challenged, being professionally challenged, and receiving an increased salary (Harris et al., 2000; Bass et al., 2006). Of note is the fact that most of these factors exist inside the classroom for teachers, yet are achieved on a smaller scale, as the impact is more or less limited to those students that are part of the class. Nevertheless, while a principal can technically reach a higher volume of students in a positive way, the teacher-student relationship is unrivaled in the pace with which trust can be built between both parties. The relationship forged between a principal

and his/her students can often develop at a slower rate when trying to reach individual students. The lone factor that does not tend to present itself to teachers is increased salary. This factor will be explored shortly.

Motivating factors such as the desire to have a positive impact or to make a difference contrast greatly when compared to salary or prestige, yet they all play some sort of role in motivating an individual to pursue the principalship. Herzberg, Mausner et al. (1959) would categorize motivating factors as intrinsic or extrinsic, noting the long-term satisfaction, and performance enhancement, when the central motivators that fuel an individual are intrinsic in nature. “Herzberg, Mausner et al. (1959) theorized that extrinsic motivators such as company policy, supervision, work conditions, interpersonal relationships with co-workers, salary, job security, and personal life were hygiene factors only capable of producing short-term changes in job attitudes, behaviors and performance” (Bass et al., 2006). However, intrinsic motivators such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth were indicators of strong long-term performance and satisfaction (Bass et al., 2006; Harris, 2011).

This speaks directly to studies that have examined the pursuit of the principalship, as many educators are most driven by the intrinsic motivators that make the role of principal compelling and desirable. These motivators allow those who serve as principal the opportunity to meet higher-level needs. Herzberg, Mausner et al. (1959) theory relies on higher-level needs, such as achievement and advancement, to motivate and satisfy in ways that lower-level needs (e.g. physiological needs, social needs) simply cannot. The role of principal enables one to positively impact the lives of students and teachers alike, thereby satisfying the higher-level needs that one tends to strive for (Bass, 2006; Harris, 2011). The ability to fulfill said higher-level needs seem to serve a major role in determining one’s decision to shift towards

administration. In surveying students enrolled in administration degree programs, Hancock, Black et al. (2006) also identified the desire to have a positive impact on others, as well as the desire to experience professional and personal challenges, as very influential factors for pursuing the principalship (Harris, Arnold et al., 2000). While said motivators exist to some degree as strictly classroom teachers, the ceiling to fulfill these intrinsic motivators is far higher when serving as principal.

Towards this end, Bass et al. (2006) found that graduate students aspiring to be principals were mainly motivated to enter the principalship by these same types of intrinsic motivators: their desire to make a difference, positively affect schools and students, and have the opportunity to initiate change. Students recognized the personal and professional challenges that the job affords one who pursues this role and is motivated to achieve in these areas. In particular, students identify professional development, improving school culture, and staff hiring as areas that can have a directly positive effect on both students and teachers (Newman & Wehlage, 1995; Bass et al., 2006; Cranston, 2007; Harris, 2011).

With so many differences that exist between the job of teacher and the role of principal, one could expect a wide range of factors that push or pull an educator towards the principalship. Embarking on said career change has extensive ramifications on one's role within the building. Yet, it is telling that a large majority of educators who consider the career path of principal do so with altruistic goals in mind. Pounder and Merrill (2001) surveyed a combination of 170 middle school principals and high school assistant principals in an effort to gauge the attractiveness of the principalship. They too found that "the desire to achieve and influence education" motivated aspiring principals more than all other factors and made the principalship most enticing.

Similarly, after examining 245 educators considering the principalship and determining what factors serve to motivate and inhibit their pursuit, Moore and Ditzhazy (1999) identified three main motivations for pursuing the principalship, all of which are intrinsically rewarding as well. Moore and Ditzhazy (1999) found that the desire to make a difference, to initiate change, and to have a positive impact on the school community were what primarily pushed aspiring principals to pursue the role (Harris, 2011). The last of these motivations, the desire to have a positive impact on the school community, is a motive that cannot be satisfied in a direct manner through staying in the classroom. It is this intrinsic factor that seemingly stands above all other intrinsic motivators when examining the transition from the classroom to the principal's office. It is perhaps this innate desire, to lead on a macro level, which may be driving the decision for teachers to pursue the principalship.

In considering this desire to lead and initiate change and progress, Beach (2010) unearthed an interesting discovery in identifying that "factors related to the legacy goal were most significant." Namely, the ability to achieve success in the role of principal, through the successful systems or framework created by the principal, outlasts the principal's tenure (Beach, 2010). This factor points to the accountability that is commonly associated with the role of principal and the desire to lead that intrinsically motivates many who seek or fill this role (Beach, 2010; Harris, Arnold et al., 2000).

Other factors that positively influenced those interested in the principalship, albeit in a more modest and inconsequential manner, were salary and benefits, a professional support network, the school context, management tasks, and fiscal management (Pounder & Merrill, 2001). Harris (2011) identified the desire to broaden one's career options, using the position as a stepping stone for higher jobs, the desire to work with diverse groups, and status and prestige as

other influential factors, albeit insignificant when compared to motivators more intrinsic in nature (Harris, 2011). Bass (2004) also found these insignificant motivators to be positive influences and motivate many to pursue the principalship, in addition to a small minority who cited increased freedom in daily routine, the desire to leave the classroom, and influence over staffing as factors in their decision to pursue the role of principal.

In considering what jumpstarts educators to begin considering the principalship, Pounder and Merrill (2001) also identified that one's expectation of being perceived as a viable candidate would influence one's job attraction and job intentions as far as pursuing the high school principalship. This finding speaks to the power of encouragement, as well as identifying leadership abilities within educators, within any school culture. It is also consistent with expectancy theory, which ventures that one's motivation to seek a job greatly decreases if his or her expectation of receiving such a position is not high (Vroom, 1964; Pounder & Merrill, 2001).

While salary was in fact a positive influence for aspiring principals (Harris et al., 2000; Hoffert, 2015), it was not a major factor in the study conducted by Pounder and Merrill (2001). Similarly, Beach (2010) found salary was not a significant incentive or motivator for aspiring principals either. Beach (2010) surveyed 81 aspiring administrators who were enrolled as students in a master's degree program, with 36 males and 45 females participating. These 81 participants were surveyed via the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM), a self-administered questionnaire that is quantitative in nature, which gauged educational administration candidates' views about the principalship. The AIM measured each of the responses submitted by the participants in three dimensions: a career dimension, a reputation dimension, and a legacy dimension. Each of these dimensions consisted of items with which candidates had to gauge their degree of agreeability. The career dimension contained items related to job expectations, the

reputation dimension consisted of items connected to prestige such as salary and status, and the legacy dimension included items related to job satisfaction and “making a difference” (Beach, 2010).

However, this data directly contradicts Cooley and Shen (1999) and Cusick (2003) who both “found that those aspiring to the principalship identified salary as a high priority motivator” (Beach, 2010). These findings can perhaps be attributed to the enigmatic nature of money, as it is seemingly a factor that does not necessarily give one positive satisfaction yet, if insufficient, can diminish one’s level of contentment (Harris, 2011; Herzberg, Mausner et al., 1959). With educators yearning to meet higher-level needs, salary is a factor that many may recognize will fall short of providing long-term satisfaction, but is a necessary facet of feeling validated and valuable.

Yet, once joining the ranks of administration, and becoming accustomed to the increased salary, one’s viewpoint of compensation can certainly change. Bass (2004), in surveying professors who teach principal preparation courses, found that those professors with previous principalship experience viewed the increased salary of the position as a greater motivating factor than those professors lacking principalship experience. Bass (2004) attributes this to the enhanced understanding of those with principalship experience, as those individuals have a more intimate grasp of just how much time and effort is required of the position.

This contrasts with the viewpoint of aspiring principals, who have yet to experience the role and its accompanying intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Arthur et al. (2009) surveyed those individuals pursuing leadership certification but have yet to serve in an administrative position. They “discovered four major themes that emerged from the data: (a) the desire to diversify career options, (b) the drive to make a difference in the profession, (c) encouragement from mentors,

and (d) self-actualization" (as cited in Harris, 2011, p. 43). These findings represent motivators unique to the pursuit of the principalship and could perhaps be very telling through further research of this topic.

However, in a study examining those considering seeking promotion to the principalship within their schools, Cranston (2007) found that the four main factors that influence one to seek the role of principal in a positive manner are: the capacity to achieve work-life balance, school location acceptable to the family, good work conditions, and good remuneration. Each of these factors are rewards that are more extrinsically motivated, a finding that is not all that common in similar studies. Yet, while status and prestige were found to be some of the least important factors in findings by Harris, Arnold et al., (2000), they were found to be positive motivators nonetheless (Harris, 2011). There is a great disparity in benefits offered in public versus private school; therefore, further identifying the role that extrinsic motivators play in the decision to pursue administration is an important finding that may provide additional clarity on the process that goes into making this decision.

## Inhibitors to Pursue the Principalship

While some pursue the principalship for the intrinsic rewards and extrinsic benefits associated with the role, many who are fully capable of succeeding as principals can sometimes be deterred from accepting or pursuing the position (Cusick, 2003). Which elements of the role are least attractive to those considering the principalship? Cranston (2007) surveyed deputy principals in state and primary schools to determine their view of the principalship and concluded that were the role to be more definitive in nature, and not hold principals accountable for almost everything that happens in the school (as per the view of those surveyed), many would be considerably less deterred than they are currently (Cranston, 2007). However, "the principal is

ultimately responsible for the success or the failure of the school" (Blanton, 2013; Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). To what degree potential candidates connect to this sentiment could be a very telling facet of what gives aspiring administrators pause in their pursuit of the principalship.

While the managerial and political aspects of the job are expected by most, principals of lower, middle, and secondary education who were surveyed by Winter and Morgenthal (2002) state that the job is more challenging than ever before due to the principal acting as instructional leader and his or her responsibility to improve student achievement (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002; Beach, 2010). Eckman (2004) found that principal candidates perceive success in the role to be nearly unachievable in many respects, especially given the complexity of the tasks at hand, the time demands involved with the job, and the accountability for results (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002; Beach, 2010). Furthermore, "teachers do not often lose their jobs over low accountability ratings-principals do" (Beach, 2010; Hill & Banta, 2008).

One of the central inhibitors to pursuing the principalship is the demanding nature of the role, particularly as it pertains to the time required of a principal on a daily basis (Beach, 2010; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). Principals work 50-60 more days a year than teachers and put in 12-hour days, almost double that of many teachers (Beach, 2010). Additionally, principals are expected to be at any and all types of extracurricular events and activities, whether they take place during school hours or not (Hinton & Kastner, 2000; Beach, 2010; Moore & Ditzhazy, 1999).

As such, the compensation received for the job is perceived as insufficient when considering the volume of responsibilities and demands that the principal faces (Hinton & Kastner, 2000; Beach, 2010). "Some veteran teachers make as much or close to principals, making the salary unattractive" (Blanton, 2013; Viadero, 2009). Cusick (2003), in researching

the relationship salary has to the Michigan principal shortage, identified salary to be a major factor in the decision to not pursue the principalship. Those raising children did not deem the added salary as commensurate to the deteriorated quality of life that they will experience in having to fulfill the immense amount of demands, or sacrifice of time, that is often necessary to properly fulfill the various responsibilities required of principals. These factors of low salary increase and increased time commitments, as well as the loss of tenure and overwhelming bureaucracy, make the transition from teacher to principal very unappealing to many who are qualified and considering the principalship (Harris, 2011; Hancock, Black et al., 2006). It is perhaps the perception that principals are underpaid that helped shape the data mentioned above regarding the increase in salary failing to be a main motivating factor when deciding to transition to administration.

Yet, even with the seemingly unfair compensation, salary was not the main reason identified by Cusick (2003) for the decline in qualified principal candidates. Instead, the expectations of the job and the constant changes being made to the responsibilities of the principal were cited most often. These responsibilities make for a very heavy workload and take a toll on the quality of family life of the principal. In fact, research by Pijanowski, Hewitt et al. (2009) that examines the salary trajectory of teachers as they move up the career ladder into leadership positions suggest that even if salaries for principals were to increase, it would not be sufficient to compensate for the sheer volume of stress and difficult working conditions that accompany the job (Harris, 2011; Hoffert, 2015).

Howley, Andrianaivo et al. (2005) found that this workload even affected the physical and psychological health of many who accept the role, a disturbing consequence of having “to address multiple contradictory expectations with limited resources” (Beach, 2010). Whether it is

legislated expectations, increased parental demands, or the growing number of expectations identified surrounding items such as student safety, mission statements, or gender and equity issues, the demands of the job have made the position of principal far less attractive than it once was (Cusick, 2003; Beach, 2010; Shen, Cooley et al., 2004).

In surveying aspiring principals in principal preparation courses, Bass et al. (2006) identified increased stress, increased time commitment, and pressures from standardized test scores as the main inhibitors for those considering the pursuit of the principalship. Other inhibitors cited by those surveyed included potential litigation, political pressure influencing one's actions, the lack of tenure and/or job security, the distance from students, and the need to handle discipline problems (Bass et al., 2006). Similarly, Pounder and Merrill (2001) found that the kinds of problems and dilemmas that one can be faced with as principal, such as student behavior problems, ethical dilemmas, union grievances, and terminating unfit employees, play a major role in deterring many who are considering their pursuit of the principalship. These findings can perhaps shed further light on the hesitancy felt by educators to leave the classroom, especially given that seldom do any of the above factors arise within the walls of a classroom or the daily responsibilities of an educator mainly confined to a classroom.

The added potential for unpredictable stressors and confrontation can sour those currently serving as principals as well as those on the outside looking in. Harris (2011) surveyed 600 certified principal candidates who do not currently hold positions within the principalship, and also identified the highly stressful nature of the job as the lead deterrent to seeking an administrative position. Harris (2011) studied what factors were lead motivators for aspiring principals, as well as what facets of the job represented major deterrents, and found that the large time commitments, as well as the accountability for achievement, were the second and third most

often mentioned inhibitors, with paperwork also being cited as a key inhibitor (Harris, 2011). Behind these factors were insufficient compensation and too much responsibility. Factors such as societal problems or the negative effect the role can have on family life, as well as negative parents and lack of district support, were indicated as having less of an impact than the previously mentioned deterrents (Harris, 2011).

Through examining what factors are discouraging educators from applying for the principalship, The Educational Research Service (2000) identified five main themes: compensation is not commensurate to the workload, stress is too great, too much time is required of the principal, parents are becoming increasingly difficult, and societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction (Harris, 2011). Yet, overall, as noted by Harris (2011), "the literature points toward a dominance of extrinsic factors, such as the work environment, workload or impact on personal life as being deterrents to the application for the principalship" (Harris et al., 2000; Shen, Cooley et al., 2004). An interesting finding by Mitchell (2009) showed that the elementary principalship is more desirable than the high school principalship, as many of the aforementioned complexities of the position are not relevant to the younger grades, or perhaps not to the same extent as they are in the older grades.

Yet, even with the bevy of changes that occur in one's role within the school building, Howley, Andrianaivo et al. (2005) found that teachers most frequently pointed to the negative effects that the principalship has on one's quality of life. Whether they had an administrative license or not, teachers were most inhibited by the lack of time available to them and the effect this would have on their ability to spend time with family and friends. The stress of having to engage in politics, the ever-increasing responsibilities being handed down by local, state, and federal powers, and the accountability for so many factors that are beyond their control were

disincentives that teachers mentioned slightly less frequently. Teachers also pointed to being wary of how the principalship would distance them from being able to work with children directly, a central motivator for being an educator in the first place (Howley, Andrianaivo et al., 2005).

In combing through the research of lead inhibitors that are most closely tied to the pursuit of the office of the principal, the high levels of pressure and expectations are central factors that shape the decision-making process. Yet, what seems to weigh heaviest is that the expectations are at times unreasonable, and the compensation does not accurately account for the pressure and sacrifice felt by those occupying the role of principal. And while many are motivated by the intrinsic values attached to the principalship, if they do not feel properly supported or respected in their mission to achieve school-wide success, the inhibitors may in fact outweigh the motivating factors.

## Women In Educational Leadership

According to the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics in 2004, 84% of all elementary and middle school teachers were female, with that number rising to 98% for teachers at the primary level (Planty, Provasnik et al., 2007). Yet, female administrators are not nearly as prevalent due to administrative positions often being considered "male" and seen as positions of power and authority (Biklen, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1999). The explanation for this disparity can be attributed to a variety of factors, many of which are due to the perceptions of the role of a teacher and administrator and how distant from reality these perceptions are.

While women have unequivocally dominated the profession, many view this dominance as a result of the role of teacher carrying many "feminine" qualities, and attribute women's

willingness to fill the subordinate position of teacher within the school hierarchy as a central factor of this dominance (Hoffman, 2003; Podjasek, 2009; Weiler, 1989). Unfortunately, the negative attitude that the public has towards teaching has penetrated the minds of many and has influenced and irked teachers for ages, particularly due to the hard work that teachers do in their quest to excel and be viewed and trusted as legitimate professionals (Biklen, 1995). In Biklen's (1995) study, women expressed great frustration with the lack of proper value given to the teaching profession from those not involved in the world of education.

The women interviewed for Biklen's (1995) research lamented the lack of empathy that many non-teachers express when failing to realize the emotional and physical endurance required to be a successful and effective teacher. Lay people tend to focus on the shorter work hours and lower salaries that the job of teacher commonly offers. Biklen (1995) identified among the women interviewed a burning desire to be recognized for the diligence with which they approach their jobs and the challenges that teaching presents. These teachers felt that such understanding would raise their status among the greater public and lend a sense of legitimate professionalism to their careers, a sentiment that is sorely lacking and deserved. What was perhaps the most interesting takeaway from Biklen's (1995) study was that women's desire for being perceived as professionals was fueled more by the internal rewards that such recognition would yield than by such external rewards as salary and prestige.

These findings don't paint a picture of dissatisfaction or lack of fulfillment felt by women educators; rather, the frustration felt when their fulfilling work is not only misunderstood by the public but undervalued is what is most unsatisfying. While in most workplaces there is a constant yearning to climb the ranks and be promoted, this is not nearly as apparent in education or among women educators (Biklen, 1995). As pointed out by Danielson (2006), becoming an

administrator means giving up teaching and creating separation between oneself and the students, something many are hesitant to do. While Biklen (1995) and Danielson (2006) both point out that the framework of schools create a dearth of opportunities for authority and promotion, many teachers prefer career growth in the form of professional development and honing their practice and technique.

Yet, what's perhaps most concerning from Biklen's (1995) study is the hesitant and timid approach that many women have towards teaching, which is a byproduct of the devaluation that the public places on the teaching profession. Furthermore, within the construct of schools, many female teachers feel that they lack autonomy and a voice of influence (Miller, 1990). This reluctance that women feel as it pertains to representing themselves, and feeling supported to do so, is even apparent in women teachers who have received the appropriate training and education to be school administrators (Adams & Hambright, 2004). It is perhaps this failure to appropriately support female educators, to collaborate and give them an equal voice, that plays a major role in dissuading women from pursuing administrative positions within the realm of education. According to the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2007), 49.7% of school principals K-12 were female. This statistic would seem encouraging in a vacuum; however, 74.8% of K-12 teachers are, in fact, female, an overwhelming majority, as mentioned earlier, and one that would seemingly call for more female principals.

Failing to support female educators and recognize them properly has directly affected women's pursuit of leadership positions in schools and perpetuated the stigma that men are more suited for leadership positions (Shakeshaft, 1999; Podjasek, 2009). As a result, women are underrepresented in this role and, to make matters worse, many of the women who take on less

formal leadership roles in schools are often overshadowed by the males who occupy more formal administrative positions (Shakeshaft, 1999; Podjasek, 2009). Furthermore, the disproportionate number of female administrators has deprived many female educators of potential female mentors with whom they may connect more successfully than male mentors, given the disparity of leadership styles of males versus females (Shakeshaft, Nowell et al., 2000; Podjasek, 2009). Additionally, due to the diminished support that women receive in their pursuit of the principalship, the stereotype that women administrators are too focused on curriculum and instruction, or are less successful at managing student behavior and the day-to-day operations of the school, took far too long to be refuted (Blount, 1998; Shakeshaft, 1999; Podjasek, 2009).

With so many stereotypes to battle, and unfair stigmas attached to both the profession and the traits required to be an effective principal, it is fair to wonder how many qualified female administrators have decided against the pursuit of the principalship due to the difficulties that they can often unfairly encounter. Conversely, it is intriguing to identify what motivated those women currently in principalships to push past these unfair perceptions. Bascia and Young (2001) found that many who persevered and pursued the principalship pointed to the encouragement that they received from colleagues, which enabled them to feel confident in being able to be a successful principal. The subjects of this study (Bascia & Young, 2001), all of whom took on leadership positions beyond the scope of their classroom, attributed their confidence to apply and occupy positions of leadership to both formal and informal conversations that took place with colleagues, mentors, and supporters within their schools. To exemplify just how powerful even the mildest support can be to a woman considering the pursuit of the principalship, one can consider the findings of Shakeshaft, Nowell et al. (2000) who found that male administrators often deprive women teachers of helpful feedback. Receiving said feedback

would certainly help develop their practice or introduce skills that could prove helpful were these women to take on leadership positions (Podjasek, 2009). In fact, Shakeshaft, Nowell et al. (2000) found that neutral feedback from male administrators was more commonplace than constructive criticism (Podjasek, 2009).

Yet, it is fair to wonder how many women, who are capable of leading as principals, refrained from pursuing the role due to a lack of performance feedback. By that same token, the above research indicates the possibility that many female educators who are content and satisfied in their role felt a pressure to pursue the principalship, as it is the only obvious avenue of promotion and leadership available to these educators. Do female aspiring principals begrudgingly pursue the principalship due to the unjust devaluation communicated by their superiors as it pertains to teacher leadership, thereby removing them from their preferred role of teacher and classroom educator? And do males in any way share this sentiment?

**Working in Jewish Day Schools and Balancing the Cost of Living as an Orthodox Jew**

There are many different motivations for wanting to choose a career in education, and a significant variable can sometimes be religion, as teachers often feel a deep connection between their identity as a teacher and their religion (Tamir, Watzke et al., 2007). Ezzeldine (2004) found that teachers who work in religious schools, particularly when the school is homogeneous in its observance level and overall approach, tend to be attracted to the unified culture and sense of community found within the school, an element that retains staff as well. Pomson (2005) studied job satisfaction in Jewish day schools and delineated various elements that make the environment unique. Particularly to those teachers of Jewish descent and observance, working in a Jewish day school can provide rare features and benefits to those who teach in it. Pomson (2005) distilled these elements to four central categories: collegiality, culture, language and

family. Pomson (2005) found that these four categories were the greatest source of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, for teachers in Jewish day schools.

The unique collegiality that Jewish day schools provide, due to the dual curriculum of Jewish and general studies, unites teachers of both disciplines in dealing with difficult students, or those students enduring particular challenges at any given time. Secondly, Jewish day school culture is centered around the Jewish calendar and its routines, thereby injecting an intentional sense of Jewish identity through programming and enabling Jewish teachers to more conveniently navigate their personal calendars and preparation for holidays and the like. Thirdly, with Hebrew language being the native tongue for the Torah and the Jewish people, teaching via the Hebrew language, or being immersed in an environment where classes are taught in Hebrew, lends a special significance to being in a Jewish day school and positively impacts a Jewish person's motivation to teach there. Lastly, those Jewish teachers who are also parents are afforded the opportunity to align their personal and professional identities in their quest to advance as a teacher and parent. With teachers caring for the growth of young Jewish students, as well as the growth of their Jewish children, they find that their careers and personal lives often complement and influence one another in a very positive manner (Pomson, 2005).

Yet, even with these unique aspects, working in Jewish day schools present many challenges and disadvantages as well. Pomson (2005) found that the dual curriculum, while promoting collegiality, also intensifies workloads due to the volume of students teachers see during general studies periods and time blocks, making demands more strenuous on Jewish day school teachers. Furthermore, teachers tend to earn less than those teaching at public schools and are generally not afforded worthwhile health insurance or benefit plans, if at all (Gamoran, Goldring, Tammivaara et al., 1998).

A 1993 study carried out by the Council for Jewish Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE), which surveyed 77 educational leaders and 982 teachers, researched levels of satisfaction within Jewish day schools and the benefits provided to employees. Research showed that 48% of full-time teachers reported access to health benefits, with only 45% reporting access to pension benefits. While such a low number partly stems from the failure of many schools to provide benefits to full-time teachers, it is also a byproduct of teachers piecing together schedules and earnings to be able to work full-time as a teacher in Jewish education, many combining multiple part-time positions in different schools (Gamoran, Goldring, Robinson, Rich et al., 1999).

While benefits are indeed an extrinsic motivator, failure to adequately provide benefits makes the difficulties of a dual curriculum tougher to withstand and can negatively affect teacher satisfaction or retention. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in its survey that researched teacher attrition and mobility in 2003-2004, found that 14% of private school teachers left their positions, almost double the 8% of public school teachers who left the profession that year (Marvel, Lyter et al., 2007). Within this study, 75% of those teachers who left cited poor salaries as one of the three main reasons for their departure. Additionally, 51% of those teachers who left private schools identified workload as a central cause for leaving, maintaining that the expectations and workload at their new public school positions were more reasonable than the expectations of their previous positions at their private schools (Marvel et al., 2007).

Furthermore, in researching recruitment and retention issues in Jewish day schools, the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), found that teachers were concerned about their poor salaries. In fact, 58% of those surveyed felt that increased salary would improve their job as teachers in Jewish day schools, and 70% pointed to low salary as the primary concern they would harbor should one of their children choose the path of Jewish education (Goodman &

Schaap, 2001, as cited in Salomon, 2010). These findings lend credence to the thought that remaining a teacher in Jewish education, without an additional job outside of school, or in-school promotion, is a concern for many in the field.

Salomon (2010) researched motivations for those entering the field of Jewish education, and found among Orthodox male teachers that their perception of the teaching career and the status in salary and prestige is especially low and a cause for concern. Of the male correspondents within the 129 Orthodox pre-service and beginning teachers, the decision to pursue Jewish education centered mainly around religious and altruistic motives. Yet, many of those surveyed expressed a desire to eventually occupy an administrative role within Jewish day schools, mainly as a way of compensating for the poor prestige and salary attributed to Jewish day school educators. While these findings indicate the poor perception of salary in Jewish day schools, Salomon (2010) notes that it did not dissuade those Orthodox day school teachers whom she interviewed and is consistent with Bradley and Loadman's (2005) findings in their interviews with teachers in the public sector. Yet, while these findings speak to the powerful altruistic motives that fuel so many teachers, Salomon (2010) does note the findings of Liu, Kardos et al. (2000), who note that poor teaching salaries do drive many educators to leave the field once they've entered it.

While teachers are motivated to pursue their passion to teach, the pressure to earn a workable salary impacts their decisions in determining if remaining a classroom teacher is a viable financial option. As Salomon (2010) points out, nearly all male subjects in her study mentioned the possibility of leaving the profession, or accepting additional employment opportunities, to compensate for the poor salaries, which "compare favorably with those of teachers in other private schools, but they are far below the typical public-school teaching

salary" (Gamoran et al., 1999). However, when comparing the salaries of principals in Jewish day schools to typical public-school principal salaries, the gap is far smaller (Gamoran et al., 1999).

This suggests a difficult choice that many inspired Jewish educators have to face when determining how to best support their families, while also feeding their teaching passion. Filling a role within administration appears to satisfy both at the outset. However, the promotion to administration is unique when compared with career advancement opportunities in other professions. This is mainly due to the job description: Administrators do not always require extensive classroom teaching experience, the very ability that tends to initiate the promotion; it is instead centered around leadership behind the desk. Ellis and Bernhardt (1992) astutely suggest, in their report on teacher retention and satisfaction, that a model is needed within education that provides "adequate opportunities for challenge and advancement to satisfy the achievement motive of those with high growth needs." Ellis and Bernhardt (1992) acknowledge recognition and responsibility as the "prescription" for teacher satisfaction yet push back on the notion that a classroom teacher needs to move into administration to feel properly recognized, or worse, to change careers in pursuit of this validation.

The pressure attached to salary and earnings stem chiefly from the steep expense of child-rearing, a goal for most but an integral part of Jewish family life. Having children is an expensive endeavor and, in his study on the economics of contemporary American Jewish Life, Chiswick (2008) explains that "the extended education and investments associated with launching a high-wage career raise the cost of starting a family at a young age, often making it more efficient to establish career before family, rather than the reverse" (p.72). According to Chiswick (2008), these expenses have led to a pattern of later marriages, whereby Jewish

Americans extend their single life until accumulating higher wages, while simultaneously resulting in fewer children per family.

Chief among these expenses, perhaps ironically, is the cost of Jewish day school tuition. According to Wertheimer (2010), most schools charge between $15,000 and $20,000 a year, a "cost many parents believe they must bear if their children are to retain their heritage." Yet, even with tuition costs soaring, teacher salaries have mostly remained stagnant. And while some schools provide tuition discounts to those teachers who send their children to their school of employment, the cost of living as an Orthodox Jew goes far beyond tuition.

Wertheimer (2010) cites synagogue memberships and kosher food as other steep costs that families must bear. Bubis (2002) cites pressure to visit the land of Israel and Jewish camping experiences as luxuries that Orthodox families strive for. Yet, even on a more basic level, raising large families, along with related costs, hike up the cost of living even further. Bubis (2002) estimates that 25 to 35 percent of one's household income is allocated for Jewish living alone. However, this estimate varies greatly on one's observance level and personal Jewish values.

With such intense financial pressures attached to an Orthodox lifestyle, teachers face a serious conundrum as they attempt to balance their passion to teach and inspire Jewish youth with their personal and spiritual aspirations that often require more funds than their compensation provides. Whether raising a large family, upholding the strictest standards of kosher food and Jewish modesty, or even donating money to Jewish causes and charities, teachers of Jewish day schools may be reluctant to quit any of the aforementioned goals, or their jobs as teachers, and instead look to add any income possible without having to relent on their professional dreams.

## Principal Job Satisfaction

With so many factors playing a role in one's decision to pursue the principalship, hesitancies are bound to exist, regardless of one's passion in his/her pursuit. Inevitably, these doubts can reappear during one's tenure as principal and instigate internal struggles within the principal about whether the transition to administration was warranted or wise. In fact, to even consider assuming the role of principal has become more novel than it was in the past, as fewer teachers are aspiring for the principalship due to the high demands of the role and all that the job entails (Moos, 1999). The perception of the role of principal is a life of being overstressed and overworked, spending far too much time with details that do not concern education and being underpaid to be doing so (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Moos, 1999). As a result, the position has become unattractive to many, even those qualified for the role, as many potential applicants seek roles that have higher pay and do not have the long hours and immense stress associated with the principalship (Rayfield & Diamantes, 2003).

With the perception of the principalship often being so negative, one must wonder not only what leads one to pursue the principalship, which was discussed above, but what satisfies those who occupy the office of the principal currently. What aspects of the principalship are crucial to the support and well-being of those who pursued this path and their job satisfaction? And, perhaps more importantly, what elements of the role lead to dissatisfaction?

In studying principal job satisfaction at the high school level, Eckman (2004) identified significant differences between male and female principals and the factors that lead to their respective job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Male high school principals had significantly higher monetary concerns than did women, a potential implication that men are sooner to leave the classroom than are women, as they have a stronger pull towards the potential salary raise that

occupying the principalship will afford them. Additionally, this dovetailed with Eckman's (2004) finding that male high school principals assume their positions at an earlier age than women, more hastily sacrificing teaching experience for salary increase when given the opportunity.

There is a difference in age for those women who assume the principalship, as they tend to be older and have more years of teaching experience than men do when assuming the same role (Eckman, 2004; Paddock, 1981). Eckman (2004) attributes this discrepancy to women waiting until their children are grown and out of the house before pursuing the principalship. This explanation would align with the notion that women experience higher levels of role conflict over household management, fearing the great difficulty in balancing motherhood and household goals while attempting to achieve their professional goals as principals at the same time (Hochschild & Machung, 1989).

These findings seem to suggest that male principals will have increased role conflict when feeling underpaid, or immense pressure in earning appropriate salary, while women will be most conflicted when feeling that their job is taking too great of a toll on their personal lives and their work-home balance. Eckman (2004) found that role conflict affects principals' job satisfaction in a significant manner and greatly influences their perception of the principalship. However, there are other predictors of job satisfaction that have implications on principals' perceptions of their roles within schools.

Vadella and Willower (1990) identified work overload as a particularly strong indicator of one's satisfaction with the principalship, with a majority of principals affirming that their commitment to their roles as principals takes a major toll on their families and personal lives. Those high school principals surveyed by Vadella and Willower (1990) pointed to the excessive time demands that the role calls for as one of the most dissatisfying aspects of the position. The

role conflict that ensues from such work overload weighs particularly heavily on male principals, as they tend to enter the principalship earlier than women due to financial pressures and the concern of women who fear such role conflict and the impact it will have on their personal lives (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). This may lend further explanation to Paddock's (1981) findings in her national study of educational administrators that reported female high school principals were generally satisfied with their positions and would choose the same career if given the ability to change career paths.

With work overload, role conflict, and insufficient salary acting as determinants of dissatisfaction with the principalship, it seems obvious that a school should work to combat these elements to improve job satisfaction and retain principals. Yet, in Fraser and Brock's (2006) study of Catholic-school principal job satisfaction, other elements were identified as well, with some being germane to Catholic schools and others relevant to all educational institutions. Among those factors that indicated job satisfaction were stability of leadership and school vision; however, other aspects cited speak positively to the role of principal in and of itself. Specifically, those surveyed often pointed to the new experiences and challenges that come across their desks on a consistent basis. The evolving challenges of the role prevent complacency and boredom and keep leadership skills sharp while enabling a feeling of contribution and purpose (Fraser & Brock, 2006).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In determining the factors that motivate individuals to pursue the principalship, as well as the elements that prevent others from this professional pursuit, Herzberg, Mausner et al. (1959) theory of motivation seems relevant. Herzberg, Mausner et al., (1959) categorize motivating factors as intrinsic or extrinsic, noting that when one is intrinsically motivated, he/she derives

pleasure and satisfaction from the performance of this action or work. However, when one's motivation is extrinsic, the actions are not supported by authentic interest but are instead fueled by a specific consequence.

The nature of motivation as a whole per the definition of Ryan and Deci (2000), who studied motivation in great depth, is centered around energy, direction, persistence, and equifinality. Each of these attributes are important facets of activation and intention, key elements to productivity. As noted by Herzberg, Mausner et al. (1959), motivation can be fueled by internal feelings, which are genuine and authentic, or can be externally controlled and compromise the pure inner desire that contributes the persistence often needed to achieve success (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Per Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation reflects the positive potential of human nature in a unique manner, as it catapults human beings "to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (p.70). Yet, one can find motivation through external means as well, and achieve success through this extrinsic motivation. However, with a separable outcome being the external source driving this motivation, Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguish the likelihood of sustainable success when motivation is extrinsic in nature.

The reasoning behind the difference in long-term sustainability of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation is illustrated in Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) refers to a person's ability to make choices and exert control over his/her own life. Self-determination theory suggests that people are motivated to grow and change by innate psychological needs. The theory identifies three key psychological needs believed to be both innate and universal: the need for competence, the need for relatedness, and

the need for autonomy. When one is motivated by a separable outcome, his/her motivation is often lacking autonomy, as it is perhaps driven by the fear of consequence or failing to achieve the desired separable outcome that hangs in the balance. It is only through these three needs being in place (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) that a person can achieve intrinsic motivation, pursue his/her interests, and achieve sustainable success.

For many aspiring principals, it is SDT that fuels their drive to pursue the principalship. Firstly, teachers who have achieved success within schools are able to operate with a sense of competence and trust their ability to perform as a teacher. The confidence that this competence breeds is the first step towards wanting to pursue the principalship. Secondly, aspiring principals are often plugged in to the pulse of the building and school climate. Caring for, and acknowledging, the various shareholders at play directly raises one's sense of relatedness towards the school and the role of principal. Lastly, with principals primarily serving as school leaders, autonomy is a large part of the job description and responsibility of a principal. Knowing the extent to which one can be a change agent through his/her decision-making is significant in one's motivation to serve as principal.

# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

1. What are the main motivations for teachers in Orthodox Jewish day schools to leave the classroom and pursue the principalship?

The research literature described above has shown that teachers mostly leave the classroom in pursuit of the principalship for intrinsic motivations such as having a positive impact, making a difference, and being personally and professionally challenged (Harris, Arnold et al., 2000). Additionally, the role of principal enables one to positively affect the lives of

students and teachers alike, thereby satisfying the higher-level needs for which one strives (Bass et al., 2006; Harris, 2011). Encouragement from mentors can often be a strong source of motivation for teachers to pursue the principalship as well (Arthur et al., 2009).

As found by Salomon (2010), the primary motivation for teachers who enter Jewish education is to instill a love for the Jewish religion, which would seem to serve as a strong intrinsic motivator for teachers in Jewish day schools looking to transition to the principalship. With an eye on the betterment of the Jewish community, and a vested interest in the spiritual success of Jewish children, the motivation to make a difference would seem to only amplify for teachers in Jewish day schools. In fact, the third greatest motivator identified by Salomon (2010) was the ability to shape children. Similarly, the desire to broaden one's impact on teachers, and not solely students, may resonate even more deeply for those in Jewish education. With the knowledge that facilitating teacher growth can impact future generations of Jewish children, it is reasonable to believe that the intrinsic desire to support educators in Jewish day schools would be magnified as well.

This research suggests that a main motivator for interviewees to pursue the principalship may be a heightened ability to shape future generations of Jewish children. Through occupying the office of the principal, and being empowered with decision-making that can best situate students and teachers to grow and thrive, it is possible that the position of principal represents a confluence of intrinsic motivators that simultaneously satisfies various higher-level needs. Through broadening one's impact on Jewish education and being capable of making a difference in an immediate way, interviewees may reveal that the opportunity that the principalship represents was a main motivator to leave the classroom.

2. Are there aspects of administration that inhibit the pursuit of the principalship?

Politics, parents, pressure, work-life balance, and spending less time in the classroom serve as central inhibitors towards the pursuit of the principalship, with many citing the seismic shift of job responsibilities that occur in transitioning from teacher to administrator (Howley, Andrianaivo et al., 2005). Howley, Andrianaivo et al. (2005) found that teachers most frequently pointed to the negative effects that the principalship has on one's quality of life.

The inhibitors cited above are in no way specific to public education. In fact, one can posit that with so many teachers living in the same cities as they work, or in surrounding cities to the location of their respective schools, the chances to escape the politics facing those in the principalship is a difficult task. With the potential of seeing parents on weekends and discussing relevant issues with various shareholders in the school community, the quality of life of an administrator in a Jewish day school may vary greatly from that of a public school administrator. Furthermore, with such a premium placed on family life within Judaism, due to the volume of Jewish holidays and the weekly Sabbath, sacrificing one's family time for school-related discourse can serve as an even greater inhibitor. Additionally, with so many teachers in Jewish education motivated by the potential to instill a love for religion, one can feel less empowered to do so via the principalship, with meaningful relationships more prevalent between teachers and students, as opposed to principals and students.

Due to these various factors, interviewees may cite the insular nature of many Jewish communities, and therefore the difficulty to turn off the job, as a central inhibitor to pursuing the principalship. It is possible that interviewees will point towards the constant political and parental pressure, which principals must be attuned to, as a main inhibitor. While this inhibitor is

certainly a factor for any individual pursuing administration, these inhibitions may prove to be exacerbated due to the community figure that a principal tends to be within Jewish day schools.

3. Is it the case that gender, age, qualifications, and level of school (i.e. primary, middle, secondary) affect one's decision to join administration?

The research has suggested that there are fewer female administrators than male administrators, due to administrative positions often being considered “male” and seen as positions of power and authority (Biklen, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1999). Females considering the principalship can be more inhibited to do so, particularly those who have children, due to the centrality of the role of the mother, especially in Jewish homes. Women experience higher levels of role conflict over household management, fearing the great difficulty in balancing motherhood and household goals while attempting to strive for their professional goals as principals at the same time (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Additionally, as pointed out by Danielson (2006), becoming an administrator means giving up teaching and creating separation between themselves and the students, something many are hesitant to do.

Eckman (2004) found that male high school principals assume their positions at an earlier age than women, more hastily sacrificing teaching experience for salary increase when given the opportunity. With the extensive expenses for Orthodox Jews, there may be an urgency to pursue the principalship before the age of 35-40.

While formal principal training tends to be a required qualification for public schools, before assuming the role of principal, private schools do not operate within the same framework of standards. As such, the number of trained and qualified interviewees may be low.

Mitchell (2009) found that the elementary principalship is more desirable than the high school principalship, as many of the aforementioned complexities of the position do not avail themselves in the younger grades, or perhaps not to the same extent as they do in the older grades of middle school and/or high school. Yet with high school tuition being far more expensive than elementary school tuition in Jewish day schools, interviewees may show a greater desire to pursue the principalship at the secondary level, as compensation tends to be far greater for those employed at the high school level.

In the Orthodox context, these factors may play out as follows: firstly, there is a great emphasis on the nurturing mother in Judaism. As such, many Jewish women intrigued by the principalship may feel internal or external pressure to be abundantly present in their respective homes and, as such, be hesitant to pursue a role that may threaten their availability to their families. Secondly, these feelings would seem to only be exacerbated when one's children are of a young age, thereby postponing any real consideration of a pursuit of the principalship. Thirdly, with so many variables factoring into the decision to pursue the principalship as an Orthodox Jew, and especially Orthodox Jewish mothers, Jewish day schools may be hesitant to require any formal training or certification for applicants considering the office of the principal. Such a requirement may only serve to inhibit those considering the principalship further, due to the commitment of one's time and money that such certifications and degrees would inevitably require, luxuries that are hard to come by for anyone, let alone a practicing Orthodox Jew. Lastly, while many may gravitate to elementary level leadership, as found by Mitchell (2009), teachers in Jewish education may in fact be more intrigued by the principalship within secondary education. Many may gravitate to the lengthy linear nature of elementary schools, and the potential for impact that such an extended time frame contains, yet the salary and prestige

correlated with high school administration may prove to be more attractive than the principalship of the elementary level.

As a result of these findings and factors, interviews may reveal a greater hesitation from women leaders in their respective pursuits of the principalship. Interviewees may also identify the financial pressures associated with living an orthodox lifestyle as a factor in their respective pursuits of the principalship. It is possible that said pressures are also factors in preventing the pursuit of a higher degree of certification program, as well as a motivator that interviewees may cite in considering high school leadership before that of elementary school leadership.

4. Do extrinsic factors, such as the desire to be promoted and receive the salary attached to the role, affect one's decision to pursue the principalship?

The reasoning behind becoming principal can frequently be driven by the lack of a next step for a successful teacher. Particularly in the world of Orthodox Jewish day schools, promotion can be difficult to execute without the changing of title or role. In addition, salary has been shown to play a significant role in the decision of many to pursue administration, with those Orthodox Jews employed in Jewish day schools recognizing the financial difficulties that living a life of Orthodoxy presents while remaining in day schools (Wertheimer, 2010). This is mainly due to the insufficient salaries of Jewish day school educators and the compensation afforded to those employed in day schools by and large (Gamoran et al., 1999). Yet, it was not a major factor in the study conducted by Pounder and Merrill (2001). Similarly, Beach (2010) found salary was not a significant incentive or motivator for aspiring principals either. The suggestions and findings of Ellis and Bernhardt (1992) that a model is needed within education that provides "adequate opportunities for challenge and advancement to satisfy the achievement motive of

those with high growth needs" seem to indicate a greater need for advancement in salary; yet do not point to a lack of job satisfaction for classroom teachers. While prestige, esteem, or recognition are factors that motivate the pursuit of the principalship (Harris, 2011), this is not a finding that is mentioned throughout the research.

The findings of Ellis and Bernhardt (1992) would seem to be highly applicable to Jewish day schools, particularly when adding in the financial pressures that maintaining the lifestyle of an Orthodox Jew entails. In addition, teachers pursuing the principalship within Jewish education would not seem to be an exception the findings of Harris (2011) regarding prestige or recognition. Motivators to transition to administration are sure to be mainly intrinsic, yet with the insular nature of the Jewish community, esteem and prestige would seem to be added benefits to those willing to pursue the office of the principal.

As a result, it is possible that salary may be cited as an important factor for teachers to stretch their respective comfort zones and pursue administration. Through the intrinsic motivators of making a difference in the Jewish community and impacting the future generations of the Jewish people, as well as the aforementioned financial pressures, interviewees may point to the principalship as the most direct opportunity to fill the extrinsic and intrinsic needs that many leaders face within the Orthodox community. Through simultaneously satisfying financial pressures, impacting the betterment of Jewish children and their families, and filling the higher-level needs of feeling fully recognized and valued, the role of principal may be cited by many subjects as an ability to satisfy various needs and goals in one fell swoop.

*Operational Definitions:*

"Intrinsic motivation" refers to doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction, namely leading a school, supporting teachers and students, and making an overall difference, rather than for a separable consequence such as earning requisite salary.

"Extrinsic motivation" refers to action driven by rewards that exist outside of the individual, such as the recognition, salary, or power that is often associated with leadership, or, in this case, the principalship.

"Principal" refers to an individual who is part of the school leadership team and is responsible for daily instructional leadership and managerial operations within the school building.

# CHAPTER IV

# METHODOLOGY

The research design is qualitative in nature, where subjects were interviewed anonymously. Doing so allowed for exploratory research and to identify specific rationales behind the interviewees' responses, as opposed to limiting the subjects to manufactured answers or reasons. Interviewees were current principals or assistant principals in Orthodox Jewish day schools who were previously classroom teachers for at least three years, and served as mainly Judaic Studies teachers, but they did not have to be teaching currently. Additionally, interviewees required a minimum of three years of experience as an acting principal or assistant principal. The study examined 21 principals, assistant principals and heads of school, including six female subjects, and varied based on school level (primary, middle and secondary). Furthermore, interviewees spanned eight states, 14 cities and 15 different institutions, albeit while preserving anonymity, and were not limited to an age-range.

Interviewees were asked a variety of questions, with female interviewees being asked an additional six questions pertaining to their pursuit of the principalship as a woman (to recognize this variable). Participants were recruited via personal networking within Orthodox Jewish day school circles, as well as via emails, phone calls and collaborative efforts with fellow principals. A public invitation to participate was posted on educational forums (i.e. Azrieli, Lookstein) (see Appendix A).

Each principal interview was conducted via Zoom, and the identities of each interviewee have been withheld from those reading the interview or research. Principals were guaranteed anonymity and all interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. Interviewees were asked uniform questions, with specific questions centered around variables addressed to those whom it is applicable (e.g. gender). All interview questions were developed based on the research that was explored within the literature review and the sections found within it. The questions mainly centered around the exploration of motivators and inhibitors that affect an educator's pursuit of the principalship, as well as the satisfaction that the interviewees feel with their decision to occupy the role of principal. Additionally, specific questions that probed for potential motivators such as salary and leadership qualities, were an area of focus as well (see Appendix B).

The findings of all interviewees were analyzed by placing value on the particular choice of words chosen by the interviewees, which allowed for key phrases to be compared and contrasted between subjects. Each interview was fully transcribed and imported into a spreadsheet, where it was given its own page. In coding the interviews, content expressed by the interviewee was assigned a code/label, as well as assigned a color code. If the code/label was anticipated within the hypotheses expressed above, or was tied to research found within the literature, the code was placed in the Existing Theories column. However, if a finding in the

interview was largely unanticipated, or emerged from the interviewee data, it was placed in the Grounded Theories column.

Once each interview was parsed and examined, all codes were reexamined and revisited. Each code/label was then assigned one of four colors which corresponded to the four main research questions being studied. While some codes were clearly connected to one of the four colors/research questions (i.e. motivators, inhibitors, gender, salary etc.), others were assigned a color based on logic and context of the data being analyzed. To ensure reliability, codes and labels were reviewed by a peer who conducted similar methods of coding in her own qualitative study. Upon meeting and finding identical coding patterns of the interviews that were looked over, each code was solidified and all data found in each interview was then cross-referenced with the other twenty interviews conducted. Interviews were once again reviewed, and each code/label found was sorted into a new spreadsheet, where each column represented a separate code. Each interviewee was assigned a row within the spreadsheet, and the codes found within his/her interview were placed in the appropriate column. After repeating this exercise for each interviewee, each column varied in the volume of codes found within it. In order to glean higher quality data from each of common codes found between interviews, context of the portion of data that was labeled was then compared and contrasted between each interview that shared a particular code. Coding strategies were derived based on the recommendations provided by Hatch (2002) in his work centered around conducting qualitative research in education settings.

# CHAPTER V

# RESULTS

Results from 21 interviewees shed light on the decision to pursue the principalship in Jewish day schools. The purpose of each interview was to identify what motivates and inhibits educators in Jewish day schools to pursue the role of principal in particular, and for interviewees to reflect on their particular story and the journey towards their eventual acceptance of the role. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for the purpose of identifying themes and commonalities between interviewees, as well as determining the relevancy of the hypotheses stated above.

Interviewees were recruited via advertisement on Lookstein's bulletin board, or via the Azrieli Spotlight email blast, as well as those who I have worked with, collaborated with or been mentored by. Each interviewee joined on the condition of anonymity and are not identifiable via the results being shared, or by the pseudonym being assigned to each subject. Of the 21 interviewees, six identified as female and 15 identified as male. The interviewees span a total of eight states in the U.S., and 14 different cities (figure 1). The 21 interviewees were comprised of three subjects between the age of 30-40, 13 subjects between the age of 41-50, three subjects between the age of 51-59, and two subjects between the age of 60-65 (figure 2).

The 21 administrators interviewed each filled diverse roles within the principalship: seven interviewees were high school principals (one of which was titled as such but is considered the Head of School), four were middle school principals (sixth grade through eighth grade), three served on the lower school level (first grade through fifth grade) and three others served as assistant principals (one in lower school, one in middle school and one across the entire K-8 school). Additionally, the four other interviewees served as Head of School, two of which served at K-8 schools, one at a high school, and another at a K-12 school (figure 1).

All interviewees required a minimum of three years' experience as a principal. A total of five interviewees had three to five years of experience, six interviewees had served as an administrator for six to nine years, six interviewees had 10-13 years of experience and four others served in the principalship for 23-31 years (figure 3). Prior to beginning their stints in the principalship, subjects were required to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the classroom. Six of the interviewees began as assistant principals or principals after four to five years of classroom teaching, nine were teachers for six to ten years, five interviewees were classroom teachers for 11-17 years and one spent over 20 years as classroom teachers (figure 4). (Of note, as a basis of comparison, Schick's (2007) survey of Jewish day school principals showed that principals with classroom experience ascended to the administration with five years of experience or less).

**Figure 1**

*Pertinent Demographic Information of Principals Interviewed*

| Type of Principalship | Gender | Location |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Head of School | 15 Male Interviewees | 14 U.S. Cities |
| 7 High School Principals | 6 Female Interviewees | 8 U.S. States |
| 3 Assistant Principals | | |
| 4 Middle School Principals | | |
| 3 Lower School Principals | | |

**Figure 2**

*Ages of Principals Interviewed*

| Age | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| 30-40 years old | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 41-50 years old | 13 |
| 51-59 years old | 3 |
| 60-65 years old | 2 |

**Figure 3**

*Years of Experience as a Principal among Interviewees*

| Number of Years | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| 3-5 years | 5 |
| 6-9 years | 6 |
| 10-14 years | 6 |
| 23-31 years | 4 |

**Figure 4**

*Years of Teaching Experience among Interviewees*

| Number of Years | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| 4-5 years | 6 |
| 6-10 years | 9 |
| 11-17 years | 5 |
| 20+ years | 1 |

**Results Based on Age**

In examining the data below, there are several fascinating takeaways and correlations that emerge. As one looks at the common motivators and inhibitors based on age of interviewee (figures 5, 9 and 10), it is of note that those interviewees between the age of 30 and 40 attribute motivation to their pursuit of the principalship to the encouragement and positive words of peers and other close acquaintances. The interviewees in this age group are certainly on the younger end of principal candidates, but the belief of others played a factor in their own self-confidence

to pursue the principalship. Towards that end, it is noteworthy that these same interviewees pointed to turnover, as well as the role of principal being a 'natural next step', which perhaps sheds light on the revolving door of school administration. Given that a professional in this age bracket can become a candidate for the principalship while being quite young for the job, it would seem that the role becomes vacant relatively often, and that there are few seasoned teachers available, suitable or interested in taking on the role.

Another wrinkle of data that was found based on the age of interviewee, revolved around those participants ages 41-50. The overwhelming majority of interviewees emanated from this age bracket. With each of these interviewees having been in education for a minimum of twenty years, two specific motivators revealed a facet of their vast experience. The motivation to pursue the principalship due to the example set by others, is a motivator that was delineated within this age bracket that corresponds to the experiences these interviewees have had within the world of education. Knowing full well what leadership in Jewish day schools consists of, and seeing an individual execute those leadership traits, is certainly a source of inspiration and is perhaps less appreciated by those in the 30-40 years of age bracket. Similarly, with a wealth of experience in the classroom, it is logical that a central inhibitor for these interviewees was in fact leaving the classroom. Doing something for twenty years or more, and being considered for a promotion of sorts, often dictates a certain level of mastery of one's job. With such hesitation to leave the classroom, it is apparent that the love of teaching is difficult to tear away from after committing decades of one's professional career to the art and craft of teaching. The interviewees in the 41-50 years age bracket also highlighted a specific desire to lead via the principalship, perhaps indicating a specific decisiveness and conviction that can come with a wealth of experience, and

inevitably being subject to a bevy of successes and failures descending from the office of the principal.

**Results Based on Gender**

While reflecting on the data born from the responses of males versus females, there was a common thread in the main responses of each gender. The 15 male responses orbited around the motivation to have more accountability, to lead via the principalship, to implement one's educational vision, and to take the natural next step (figures 6 and 11). Each of these motivators seems to have roots in an alpha-male type of behavior pattern. Females also pointed to a desire to lead, exemplifying their assertive qualities in pursuing the principalship, while also displaying a nuanced level of reflection by harnessing motivation from the example set by predecessors and/or role models. Yet, when examining common inhibitors (figures 6 and 12), both males and females were significantly inhibited by the possibility of leaving the classroom, a bond that adjoins both genders, with males also noting school politics as a significant inhibitor.

**Results Based on Years as Teacher**

When examining the commonalities in responses based on years of experience in the classroom, it is noteworthy that the interviewees who spent 4-5 years as a teacher before pursuing the principalship pointed to encouragement from others, a desire to have a broad influence on the school, and the confidence they received from other leadership opportunities, as central motivators for their pursuit of the principalship (figures 7 and 13). 4-5 years as a teacher is not a very long amount of time, which could indicate the assertive nature of these interviewees in wanting to impact all facets of the school at such an early juncture in one's career. Such a desire, and a confidence to be able to do so, would seemingly emanate from the encouragement of others, and previous experiences that forecasted success or job satisfaction as a leader, both of

which were mentioned as common motivators for this particular bracket of teachers. It would also stand to reason that the common inhibitor amongst these group of interviewees (figures 7 and 14), the large time commitment that the principalship entails, would be a fear, given their unfamiliarity with the scope of the job in its entirety.

Those participants in the next bracket, with 6-10 years of teaching experienced prior to their respective pursuits of the principalship, identified several motivators that logically stem from being a teacher for 6-10 years (figures 7 and 13). In addition to citing other modalities of leadership, like the less seasoned 4-5 year group, these interviewees were motivated by the new challenge of leading via the principalship, and saw the pursuit as a natural next step of sorts, both logical sentiments given the significant time frame of 6-10 years as a teacher. These interviewees also mentioned their specific schools as a main source of motivation to pursue the principalship, perhaps due to the investment of time he/she may have committed to the school as well as his/her comfort with the school and any success experienced within it. Yet, with this significant teaching experience in tow, leaving the classroom served as a true inhibitor towards the pursuit of the principalship (figures 7 and 14), as these interviewees are more established in the classroom than the 4-5 years of experience interviewees.

The interviewees with 11-17 years of teaching experience communicated two common motivators: the desire to have a broad influence and teacher mentorship (figures 7 and 13). With 11-17 years of teaching experience, it would be fair to surmise that such an individual has mastered many levels of classroom teaching and is more than ready to share his/her knowledge and play the role of mentor. Additionally, wanting to influence his/her school beyond the walls of one's classroom is certainly understandable after 11-17 years of operating in one specific light. Yet, in examining the common inhibitors (figures 7 and 14), these seasoned veterans were

fully aware and cognizant of the difficulties that the job of principal entails, citing politics and stress as central inhibitors to their respective pursuits of the principalship.

**Results Based on Years as Principal**

A quick glance at the common inhibitors found within groups of interviewees who have occupied the office of the principal for similar amounts of time, reveals one main inhibitor: leaving the classroom (figures 8 and 16). Participants with 3-5 years of experience, 6-9 years of experience, and 10-14 years of principal experience, all noted leaving the classroom as a common inhibitor, highlighting the identity crisis and/or diffusion of passion that is forced on a teacher making the transition to principal. Only the concern with quality of life was found to be an additional inhibitor, and only within the bracket of 6-9 years of principal experience.

Of note within the data of central motivators based on principalship experience (figures 8 and 15), is the role that encouragement from others served for the two least experienced brackets. Both participants in the 3-5 years of principal experience bracket, as well as those in the 6-9 years of experience bracket, cited encouragement as a central motivator. With these participants pursuing the principalship at a young age, it stands to reason that encouragement looms large in instilling confidence in less seasoned educators.

While the desire to have a broader influence was a significant motivator overall, it is noteworthy that only within the youngest/least experienced bracket was it found to be common, perhaps signaling a passion and fervor that burns brighter within younger or more naïve educators. Of additional note is the commonly cited motivator found within the 23-31 years of principal experience bracket: motivated by the success of previous leaders. For someone to aggregate 23-31 years of experience as a principal, he/she is likely a master administrator who has achieved various levels of success within the world of education. Yet, to be able to reflect

that far back, and conjure the feelings of inspiration that led one to the pursuit of the principalship, was a sight to behold. These participants displayed clear reverence for the role of principal, and were undoubtedly swayed by the admiration for others who preceded them and paved the way.

**Figure 5**

*Common Motivators and Inhibitors Based on Age*

| **AGE** | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Age Group*** | **Most Common Motivators** | **Most Common Inhibitors** |
| **30-40 years old (Three Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Motivated by the new challenge/desire to lead**<br>• **Motivated to mentor and support teachers**<br>• **Yearned for more accountability and wanted to impact educational vision/philosophy**<br>• **Influenced by the opportunity available due to turnover**<br>• **Felt the principalship was the natural next step** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Teacher skills translated well to the principalship**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Specifically want to lead via the principalship** |
| **41-50 years old (13 Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Teacher skills translated well to the principalship**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Specifically want to lead via the principalship** | • **Inhibited by the inevitable difficult conversations that are required**<br>• **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |
| **51-59 years old (Three Interviewees)** | • **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Motivated by the new challenge/desire to lead** | • **Inhibited by quality of life**<br>• **Inhibited by school politics**<br>• **Specifically mentioned pitfalls of** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | **Head of School versus Principal** |
| **60-65 years old (Two Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others** | • **Inhibited by impact it would have on role as parent**<br>• **Inhibited by stress associated with the job** |

**Figure 6**

*Common Motivators and Inhibitors Based on Gender*

| **GENDER** | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Gender*** | **Most Common Motivators** | **Most Common Inhibitors** |
| **Male (15 Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Teacher skills translated well to the principalship**<br>• **Specifically want to lead via the principalship**<br>• **Yearned for more accountability and to act as a change agent**<br>• **Yearned for more accountability and wanted to impact educational vision/philosophy**<br>• **Felt the principalship was the natural next step**<br>• **Specifically want to lead via the principalship in his/her school, and not due to the field**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Motivated to mentor and support teachers** | • **Inhibited by stress associated with the job**<br>• **Inhibited by school politics**<br>• **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |
| **Female (Six Interviewees)** | • **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Motivated by the new** | • **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **challenge/desire to lead**<br>• **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Motivated by the confidence received from previous leadership experiences and opportunities** | • **Inhibited by time commitment** |

**Figure 7**

*Common Motivators and Inhibitors Based on Years of Experience As Teacher*

| **YEARS AS TEACHER PRIOR TO ACCEPTING PRINCIPALSHIP** | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Years As Teacher*** | **Most Common Motivators** | **Most Common Inhibitors** |
| **4-5 years (Six Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Yearned for more accountability and wanted to impact educational vision/philosophy**<br>• **Motivated by the confidence received from previous leadership experiences and opportunities** | • **Inhibited by stress associated with the job**<br>• **Inhibited by quality of life**<br>• **Inhibited by time commitment**<br>• **Specifically mentioned pitfalls of Head of School versus Principal** |
| **6-10 years (Nine Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Motivated by the new challenge/desire to lead**<br>• **Motivated by the confidence received from previous leadership experiences and opportunities**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Felt the principalship was the natural next step**<br>• **Yearned for more accountability and to act as a change agent**<br>• **Motivated to lead as principal in his/her school, as opposed to field** | • **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom**<br>• **Inhibited by quality of life** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **at large** | |
| **11-17 years (Five Interviewees)** | • **Motivated to mentor and support teachers**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence** | • **Inhibited by stress associated with the job**<br>• **Inhibited by school politics** |
| **20+ years (One Interviewee)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Motivated by the confidence received from previous leadership experiences and opportunities** | • **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |

**Figure 8**

*Common Motivators and Inhibitors Based on Years Of Experience As Principal*

| **YEARS AS PRINCIPAL** | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Years of Experience*** | **Most Common Motivators** | **Most Common Inhibitors** |
| **3-5 years (Five Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence** | • **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |
| **6-9 years (Six Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Influenced by the opportunity available due to turnover** | • **Inhibited by quality of life**<br>• **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |
| **10-14 years (Six Interviewees)** | • **Felt the principalship was the natural next step**<br>• **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others** | • **Inhibited by prospect of leaving the classroom** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • **Motivated to lead as principal in his/her school, as opposed to field at large** | |
| **23-31 years (Four Interviewees)** | • **Encouragement from peers/Influence of others**<br>• **Influenced by the success and example of others**<br>• **Motivated to mentor and support teachers**<br>• **Strong desire to have a broader influence**<br>• **Motivated by the confidence received from previous leadership experiences and opportunities** | • **Inhibited by quality of life**<br>• **Inhibited by impact it would have on role as parent**<br>• **Inhibited by stress associated with the job** |

**Figure 9**

*Most Common Motivators Based on Age of Interviewee*

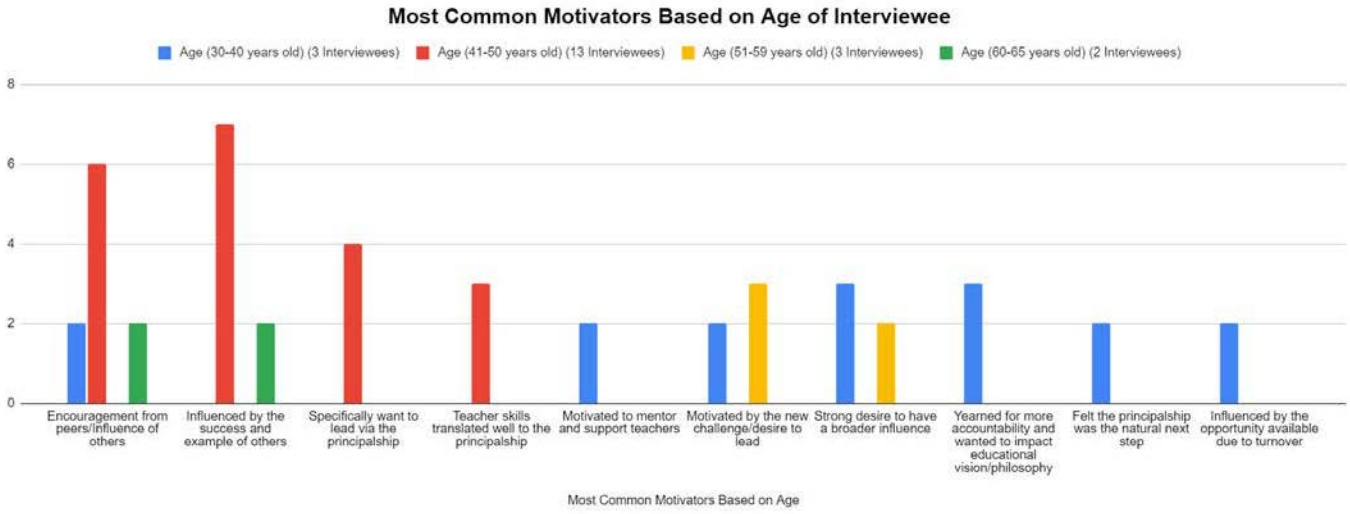



**Figure 10**

*Most Common Inhibitors Based on Age of Interviewee*

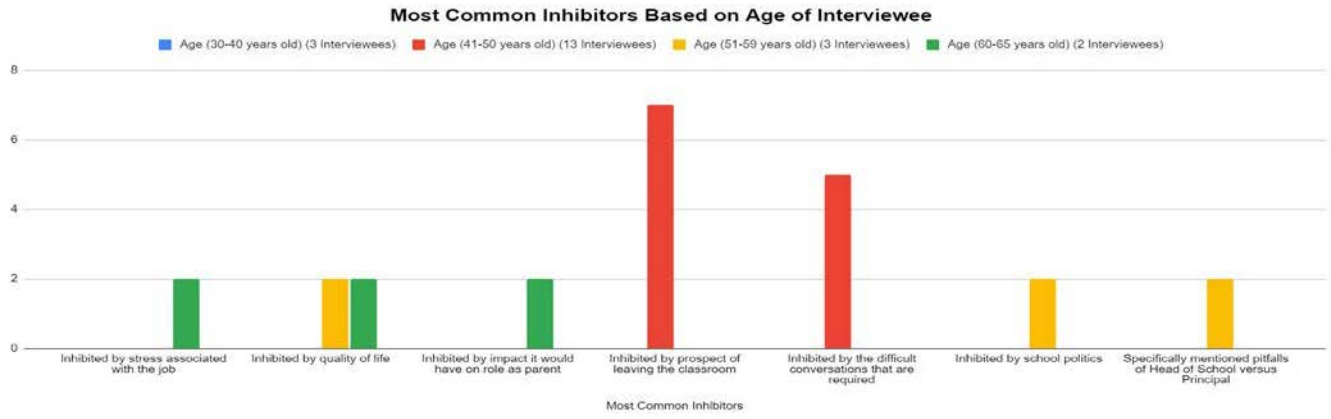


**Figure 11**

*Most Common Motivators Based on Gender*

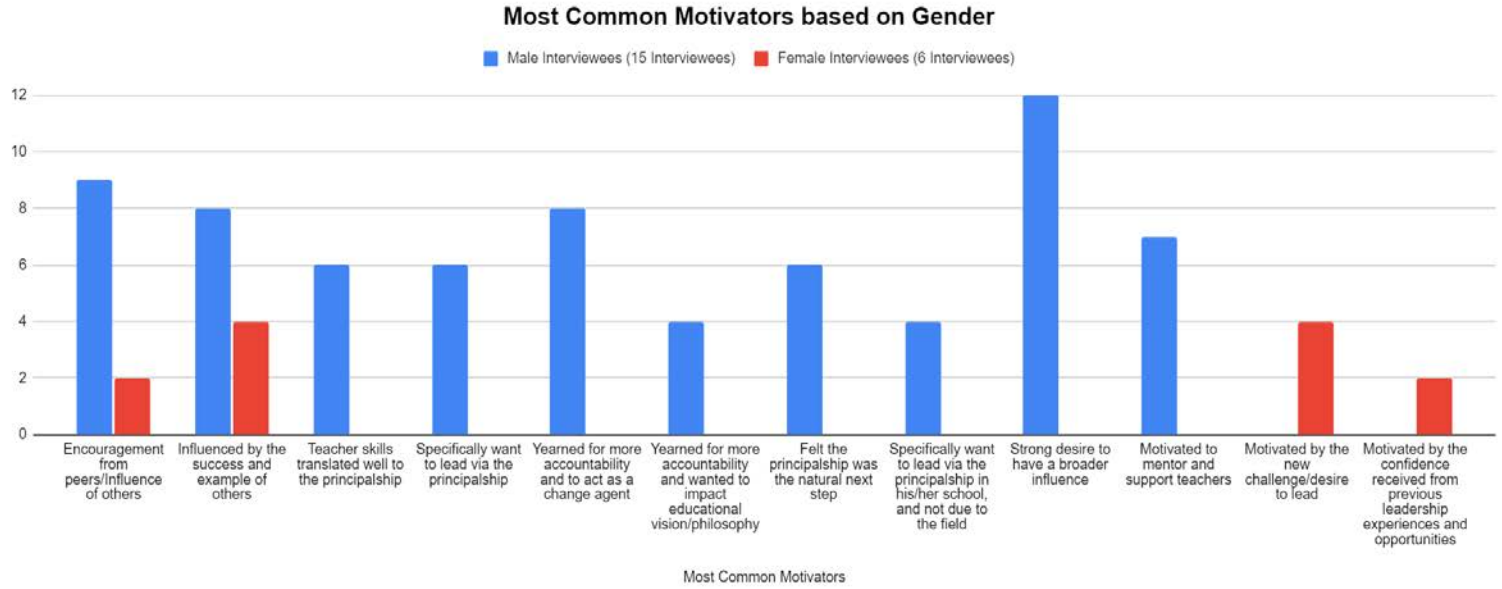



**Figure 12**

*Most Common Inhibitors Based on Gender*

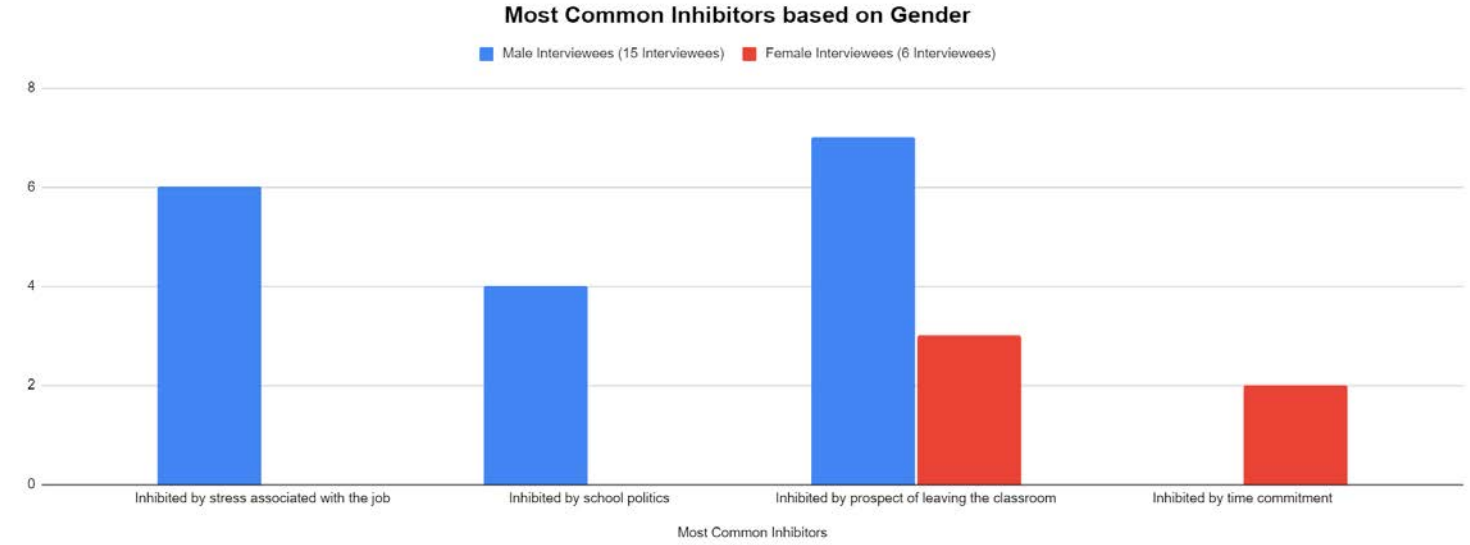


**Figure 13**

*Most Common Motivators Based on Teaching Experience Prior to Principalship*

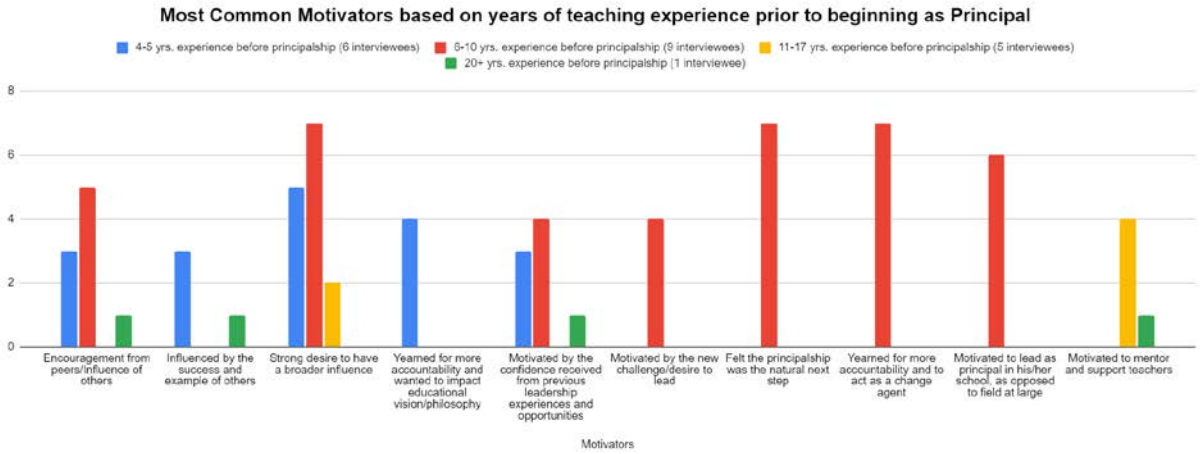



**Figure 14**

*Most Common Inhibitors Based on Teaching Experience Prior to Principalship*

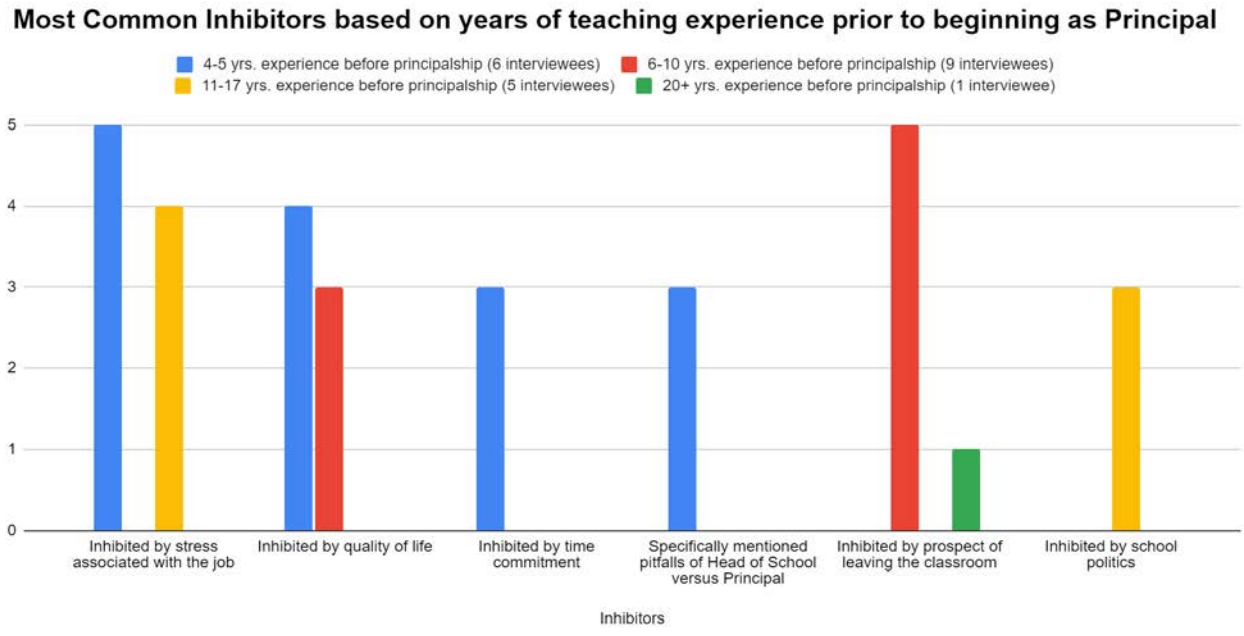


**Figure 15**

*Most Common Motivators Based on Years in Principalship*

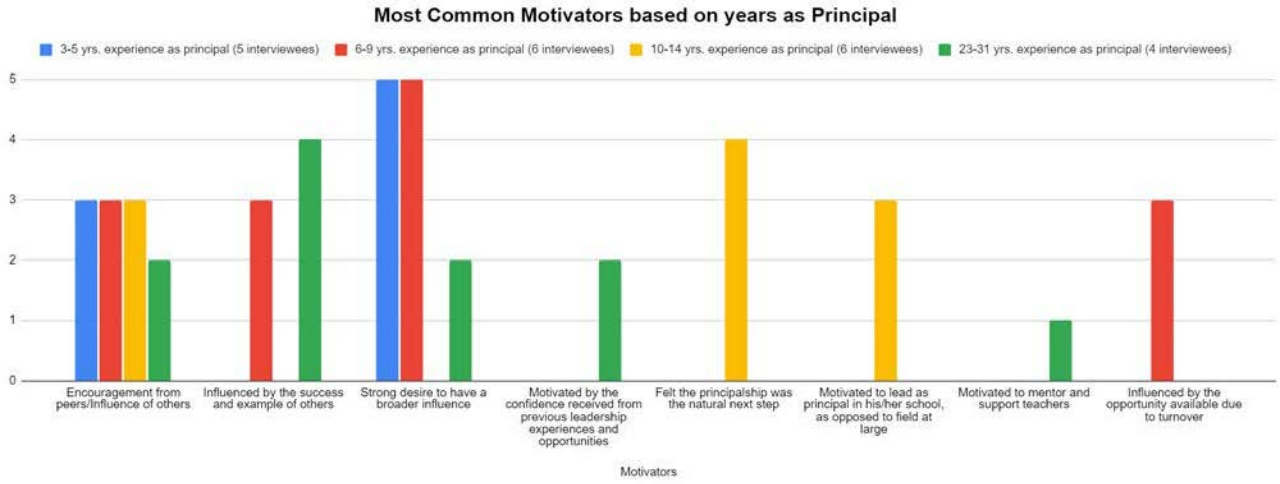
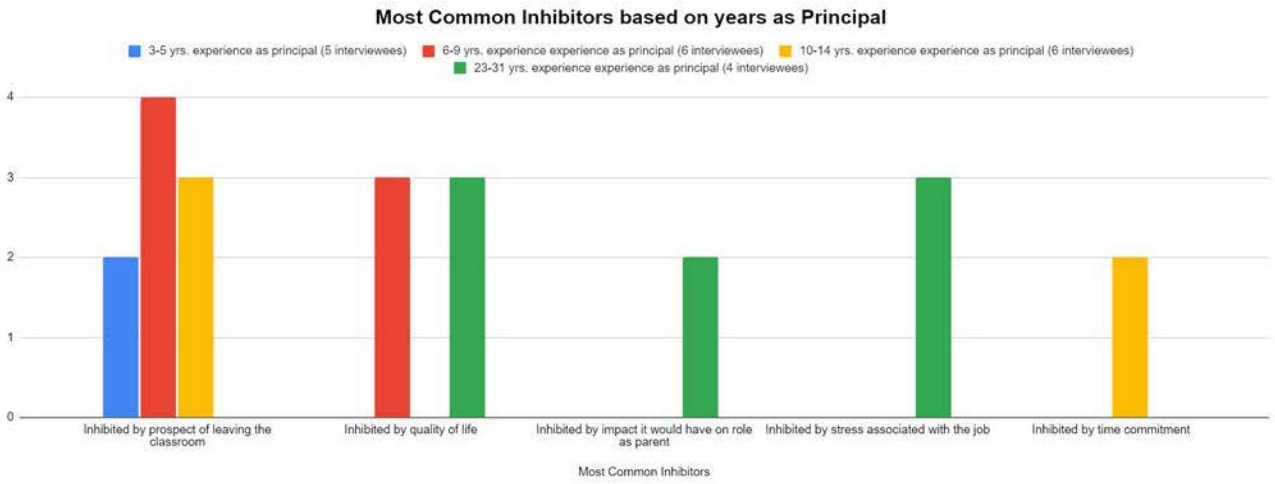



**Figure 16**

*Most Common Inhibitors Based on Year in Principalship*



## MOTIVATORS TO PURSUE THE PRINCIPALSHIP

The first research question probed into the main motivations for teachers in Orthodox Jewish day schools to leave the classroom and pursue the principalship. Interviewees identified a variety of motivations for pursuing the principalship, with the most frequently mentioned motivation being the desire to have a broader influence on the school and the overall education of its students. The two most frequently cited areas beyond the desire for broader influence were: influence and inspiration from principals that interviewees have observed (some being family, and others via mentorship), as well influence and encouragement from peers and family. In addition to the aforementioned motivators, interviewees popularly referenced the passion to mentor teachers as a motivation, as well as the intrinsic motivation to take on a leadership role within a team setting. This also corresponds with the nearly 10 interviewees who found motivation in wanting to fix or improve issues that were outstanding at their respective schools, and being willing to spearhead those missions for change. In fact, six of the interviewed principals cited their particular school as the driver behind the decision to pursue the role of principal, rather than the field at large.

A particular area of intrigue was the connection interviewees made between good teachers translating to good principals. With nearly half of the interviewees pointing to the added responsibilities that they took on in other roles prior to becoming principal, as well as the confidence to lead that said roles provided, a third of the interviewees point to specific teacher traits that qualified them to be named principals. This dovetailed with the eight interviewees who felt that pursuing the principalship was the “natural next step” at that point in their respective careers. Perhaps this contrasts well with the seven interviewees who did not pursue the role of

principal, yet acquired the role through circumstance, or being in the “right place, at the right time.”

In reviewing the various motivators cited by the principals interviewed, most of the factors mentioned were intrinsic in nature, motivations that stemmed from wanting to have a meaningful impact on various stakeholders within the school. However, various factors were more extrinsically motivated, propelled by the inspiration or influence of others. This division of category is delineated accordingly, with the intrinsically motivating factors being identified first (figure 17).

**Figure 17**

*Leading Motivators to Pursue the Principalship Among Interviewees*

- An innate motivation to be a leader
- A desire to have a broader influence on the school
- Wanting to be part of educational strategy and decision-making
- Teacher mentorship
- Motivated by classroom success/Success as a teacher
- Encouragement from others
- Inspiration from mentors and/or predecessors
- Motivated by success within current leadership role
- Wanting to be a change agent
- Motivation from being pursued by other schools
- Wanting to make more of an impact and have more accountability

**Innate Motivation to Lead**

Through looking to identify what motivates leadership, perhaps it’s best to start with the natural desire to lead that some expressed. Eight interviewees cited feeling a sense of an innate desire to lead. Natan, a high school principal for 14 years, ascribed this innate motivation to the personality he has had from a young age, and his comfort with leadership: “Personality-wise, I was naturally, even as a kid, I was the guy who was a little more of the leader kind of guy. And so it ended up feeling like a natural role to play.” Shira, a high school principal for five years,

described the fascination of pursuing a new challenge and role based on her intrinsic needs as well, and how it motivates her:

> I wanted to always challenge myself to learn new skills, not only ones in my discipline, and that once I have felt like I had mastered that level, it's like a game. I'm like, "Okay, I want to go to the next level," and like, "Okay, I get it, I see the mastery here. I see what I need to do here. Okay, what's the next level?"

**Desire to Have a Broader Influence on the School**

Towards a similar end, research found that the role of principal enables one to positively affect the lives of students and teachers alike, thereby satisfying the higher-level needs for which one strives (Bass et al., 2006; Harris, 2011). This was hypothesized to manifest itself in the Jewish day school realm as well, as the third greatest motivator identified by Salomon (2010) in her examination of the motivation to teach in Jewish day schools was the ability to shape future children. Similarly, the desire to broaden one's impact on teachers, and not solely students, may resonate even more deeply for those in Jewish education. Through occupying the office of the principal, and being empowered with decision-making that can best situate students and teachers to grow and thrive, the position of principal represents a confluence of intrinsic motivators that simultaneously satisfy various higher-level needs. Through broadening one's impact on Jewish education and being able to making a difference in an immediate way, interviewees may reveal that the opportunity that the principalship represents was a main motivator to leave the classroom.

This was, in fact, a central motivator in the decision to pursue the principalship. 16 of 21 interviewees cited wanting to have a broader influence as a motivation behind the decision to

leave the classroom for the office of the principal. Simcha, a principal for over 25 years, articulated this sentiment: “When I thought about it, about overall impact, if my whole goal as a teacher is to change the lives of kids and have impact, then I saw that the role of administrator can have just that much bigger impact.” Eliezer, who has over 25 years of administrative experience as well, felt more responsibility and motivation from a spiritual perspective, expressing a desire to create a strong foundation of Judaism that would carry the students towards the next steps of their lives. His goal as an administrator was to “have an influence on their career to continue on Jewish education...to get them whatever level of success they could have, marry Jews...And try and make them feel good about it and love it.”

**Desire to be Involved in Educational Decision-Making**

In a very similar vein, four subjects were specific in their desire for influence and impact, and the particulars of why having influence was so exciting for them, as noted by Simcha: “I was going to be involved, and was, in education and educational decisions. It was going to be a partnership between me and the principal where there are real educational issues to decide and grapple with, that I'm at the core of it. I'm right there with him.” Moshe, too, pointed to “the idea of being the part of the educational vision” as a central motivator.

These motives and desires stemmed from a place of wanting to influence change and maximize one’s impact. Ten interviewees cited wanting to be more accountable in his/her school or implementing his/her educational philosophy beyond those students whom they taught within the confines of their classroom. Moshe, a principal for the last eight years, related that thinking about the bigger picture and visioning the future was particularly intriguing to him: “The idea of being part of the educational vision. A lot of schools, either you're really tasked with that or

you're really doing that in partnership with the Head of School...I liked thinking about the bigger picture."

**Motivation to Support and Mentor Teachers**

To impact said change, and to implement a particular educational vision, many understand the crucial nature of teacher buy-in, support, and training. Nine interviewees cited teacher support and mentorship as an attractive facet of the principalship as it pertains to one's ability to broaden the impact that can be made at a school. In fact, it is an aspect of the role that many enjoy even beyond what it represents. As Yosef, principal for six years, aptly explained:

> I feel there is something that's appealing to me about being a teacher of teachers. It does connect a lot with having that greater impact. Obviously, when you're a principal, you don't go into the classrooms of the 400 kids and teach the kids directly, you teach them through the vehicle of teaching their teachers.

A similar point was made by Yochanan, a principal for the last six years as well, who stated: "If you're able to train teachers, you'd be able to deliver a message to a larger group. You'd be able to create a culture or help influence a culture so that it feels like a yeshiva." Yet, even beyond the impact it makes, interviewees mentioned the satisfaction and reward they feel in the teacher mentorship process. After all, there are many similarities in the process as it requires supporting a learner and helping another reach his/her potential. And if it is being done with the ability to affect myriad students, the satisfaction only multiplies. Avraham, an administrator for nine years, explained this sentiment:

> Working with teachers I find to be very, very rewarding...they have fantastic ideas and not just that, "Oh, here I have an idea, go and do it." It's, "Let's work something out. Let's

see what you're thinking, what your colleagues are thinking. Let's see what's our overall goal that we're trying to accomplish?"

**Motivation to Lead Due to Classroom Success**

Nevertheless, being able to recognize a good teacher does not always coincide with recognizing a promising principal. While the teacher mentorship and support mentioned above is a vital aspect of the role, and therefore requires a proven and knowledgeable teacher to fill that need, very few other pieces of the role of principal dovetail with the talent that a classroom teacher offers. With that in mind, it was noteworthy that one third of the interviewees (seven in total) made mention of classroom qualities that translated to their ability to lead as principal and/or being considered for a promotion. Traits such as flexibility, adaptability, and goal-setting and organizational skills were most often cited, along with the ability to build trust through relationships. This was not an expected outcome nor was it hypothesized in any way.

**Motivation to Specifically Occupy the Office of the Principal**

While there are numerous school leaders in any institution, with each staff member a leader in his own right, interviewees pointed to leading via the principalship as the platform that is most desirable. Seven interviewees made particular mention of wanting to lead via the principalship, regardless of other avenues that could potentially allow for meaningful leadership within the school. As Akiva, a middle school principal for seven years, succinctly expressed this idea: “Having the role of administrator, being able to share two things: a vision, an academic vision, but also work on culture. I think that the broader the scope and the reach of the administrator, the broader the culture can adjust.”

Three other interviewees were detailed in their desire to lead as a principal, and the strategic thought process they entertained to achieve this goal. Tzvi, a principal at the high school and elementary school levels for the last 10 years, was vocal in advocating for himself to serve as an assistant principal at his school. He identified a lack of curriculum oversight and other glaring voids that he could contribute towards, especially given the fact that there was no assistant principal at the time. Tzvi's motivation to fill this role was mainly due to the title of principal and the gravitas he felt came attached to the title, as well as the impact he felt could only be achieved via the principalship, which was the "best way of having that impact."

For Rachel, a high school principal for the last 10 years, the position of principal was one she held in high regard, due to her mother serving in the role for many years, but not a title she was fixated on. Yet, once she became principal and accepted the offer made to her, she noticed a change in the way she was perceived by others: "Once I was a principal, other leadership opportunities, which gives you a certain kind of profile and public face, other kinds of leadership became available." Had she not been pursued by a neighboring school, and eventually offered the role within her current school, Rachel may not have come to realize the speaking opportunities and public influence she now obtained through her leadership role.

Zahava, a middle school principal for four years, was attracted to the title of principal and serving in this role. Like Rachel and Tzvi, the title of principal held the key to new leadership abilities that other leadership roles did not contain. While she had been a teacher mentor for the two plus decades she had been teaching, the lack of formal title affected her mentorship capabilities and the credence being lent to her by mentees. Anecdotally, she pointed to the following incident:

> There was a teacher...I tried to guide her a little bit...she said to me, "You're just another teacher, you're not my principal." She said to me, "You're not the administrator," or something like that, and that stuck in my head as she needs what I have to offer but she won't take it because I'm just a colleague.

**Motivation that Stemmed from Previous School Leadership Roles**

To simply enter or pursue the role of principal is not a path afforded to most. There is training that is required, experience that can be valuable, and leadership qualities that must be put to the test. Towards that end, nearly half of the interviewees (10 in total) indicated that the leadership roles and positions that they had occupied prior to pursuing the office of the principal were significant factors in their decision to commit to the pursuit of the principalship. For some, it opened their eyes to the systems and decisions that are strategized behind closed doors, or certainly outside of the four walls of one's classroom. For four others who pointed to the value of taking on a position of leadership, being able to step into this leadership role instilled a confidence in his/her ability to lead effectively.

Perhaps equally as fascinating is the terminology used by eight interviewees who discussed the transition from teacher leader, or junior administrator, to the office of the principal. Eight interviewees saw the pursuit of the principalship as the "natural next step" after occupying their respective leadership roles. Some interviewees transitioned from being Student Activities Coordinator, others from Education Technology Director, and some coordinated their school curriculum. While these leadership positions are essential and have many overlapping leadership qualities, none include teacher evaluation, student discipline, parent relationships, or other facets specifically germane to the principalship. Why, then, did a significant group of interviewees feel that pursuing the principalship was the natural next step?

The natural component of moving towards the principalship seems to be connected to the particular situation that the interviewee found himself/herself in and the school leadership structure that existed at the time of the initial acceptance of the role of principal. Six interviewees cited the school they were in, or the particular role being offered, as the motivation for becoming principal, as opposed to the field at large. These interviewees were not determined to become principals at any cost, but instead only saw it as a potential opportunity for success given the specific opportunity that was presented to them.

For many educators, being involved in the right place, school, and team that fits their personal passions and skillset is important. Of note, four of the interviewees pointed to the fact that they were promoted within the school as a reason for accepting the role. Having pre-existing relationships, and the trust of colleagues, made the role seem that much less daunting. Natan commented on his own experience that "growing into an administrative position from the Director of Student Life is much easier to do because people trust you." (While one may assume promotion within one's school to be the more common route to the principalship, Schick's (2007) survey of 380 Jewish day school principals identified but one-third that were promoted in this fashion).

**Wanting to Have an Accountable Role and to Impact Change**

Ultimately, the interviewees are teachers who were interested in the role of principal because it gave them the opportunity to effect change in a direct way. In fact, nearly half of those interviewed (ten in total) pointed to specifics within the educational model of the school and their ability to aid the school's progress and achievement. The intrinsic leader that resides in everyone, in one capacity or another, is prompted by seeing a void, or an area where contributions can be helpful, and pursuing that avenue becomes difficult to deny. Rachel's foray

into administration was not built on classroom curriculum or instruction, but on a desire to help address a disciplinary issue within the religious observance of the male students in the school: “My students weren't wearing *tzitzis*....Seeing holes that needed to be filled...And coming to feel like I should be in a position to be able to address these things, not just to backseat drive and offer my opinion.”

**Intrigue of Leading via the Principalship in a Brand-New School**

On a similar note, five interviewees discussed the advantages, and unique nature, of beginning in a brand-new school and imprinting one’s policies, passions, and projects from scratch. Akiva was passionate about the culture that can be set at that juncture due to the staff hiring process and their power to shape the culture of a school: “Being offered to start your own school entirely from scratch...one thing that you definitely do have an advantage with is that you start your staff from scratch...You don't have to inherit part of the staff.”

However, in the case of Avi, a principal for the last 13 years, the benefits of joining a new school perfectly dovetailed with his lack of experience as a young principal and the needs of his family. Finding a school with which one is religiously aligned allows the possibility of becoming a parent in the school as well as the principal. In turn, tuition discounts that may be offered to staff become a facet of the decision-making process, as Avi explains:

> That opportunity, it seemed just right for me in a number of ways...it was the kind of school where my wife and I could see our kids going...that tuition benefit weighs heavily in terms of professional decision making and placements. It was appealing to me in that starting, creating something new, felt to me both more exciting and less daunting than walking into a pre-existing scenario.

**Motivation Derived via Encouragement from Others**

The remaining factors are extrinsically motivated, powered by words of affirmation from others, or via inspiration through watching predecessors and mentors successfully fulfill the role of principal. Research shows that encouragement from mentors can often be a strong source of motivation for teachers to pursue the principalship as well (Arthur et al., 2009). Of these 21 administrators interviewed, 10 felt that outside influence, and the words and support of others, brought this idea into the realm of possibility. Zev, a middle school principal for the last three years, noted how this encouragement is what sprouted the idea in his own mind:

> I think family played a part. Colleagues played a part. People told me, "You should really be the one." After it was announced that the principal was leaving, they said, "If anyone's going to do it, you should be this." Although I wasn't pursuing it and going for it myself and didn't even necessarily have that in my mindset, I was pushed a lot by those around me saying, "You absolutely should do this."

Simcha felt flattered, and an injection of confidence, through the words of well-respected individuals within the community vouching for his candidacy, saying: “I think you should do this. We want you to do this. I had board members and, as well basically people were expressing their confidence in me. So I felt flattered, to be honest.” Moshe was given confidence by the words of his superior as well, especially given the tight-lipped nature of his superior and the dearth of feedback he’d often receive:

> He had a lot of confidence in me that I didn't necessarily have in myself...It wasn't like we had long fireside chats at all. He held things close to the vest. It was very hard to read him. I didn't know if I was doing a good job or not doing a good job, but there were a few times when he actually did say something, he said, "Yeah, you can do this."

Akiva was influenced by lay leaders in the school and fellow colleagues to consider pursuing the principal vacancy. With administrative turnover an all too common possibility within Jewish day schools, various interviewees cited the opportunity that arose due to the chaos that can often ensue when the office of the principal is vacated, both expectedly and unexpectedly. In fact, a third of the interviewees (seven in total) specifically made mention of the opportunity that stemmed from turnover as a catalyst for the pursuit of the principalship.

Yosef, through winning a prestigious educator's award, felt a renewed sense of self-efficacy and confidence. While he did not receive words of encouragement about filling the role of principal itself, his self-worth was recalibrated. Yet, perhaps what was even more important was the confidence that his superiors now had in him through his being recognized so prestigiously: "That was what I guess allowed them to see that I wasn't just a teacher, and activity coordinator, that I had a bigger vision and I had the ability to create a curriculum."

**Pursuit that Stems from Being Pursued by Others**

For various interviewees, confidence in their abilities stemmed from the approval of others, similar to Yosef's situation after winning a prestigious award. The process of considering whether to transition from teacher to principal was precipitated by being recruited by others. Five interviewees cited feelings of motivation through receiving offers from outside institutions. For Zahava, this instilled a great amount of confidence in her leadership ability and her feelings of self-efficacy. When contacted by a recruiter within the Jewish day school world, her self-perception began to change: "She calls me and says, 'I don't know who you are but your name has come across my desk a zillion times already...I don't know you but I'm told I have to make you a principal.'"

**Motivation Derived from Inspiring Predecessors and/or Mentors**

In a similar vein, outside influence impacted many of the interviewees via inspiration and modeling effective practice. Twelve of the principals interviewed were inspired or influenced by principals they had witnessed or worked with previously. In fact, four of the twelve interviewees who cited such influence were specific in mentioning the impact that their own parent had while occupying the role of principal. Being the child of a principal brought the idea to the surface, as the position was held in high esteem in their minds and was a position of regality. Seeing the work ethic of those in the position and influence that one can have through effective leadership served as a motivator to pursue the principalship for twelve of the subjects.

## INHIBITORS TO PURSUE THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Research on what inhibits the pursuit of the principalship pointed to various deterrents. Politics, parents, pressure, work-life balance, and spending less time in the classroom were identified as central inhibitors towards the pursuit of the principalship, with many citing the seismic shift of job responsibilities that occurs in transitioning from teacher to administrator (Howley, Andrianaivo, et al., 2005). These inhibitors were all cited by the subjects of this study.

The leading inhibitor towards the pursuit of the principalship was having to leave the classroom and the role of teacher. While half of those who cited this inhibitor made a point to continue teaching in a part-time capacity in order to accept the role of principal, the others lamented not being able to continue as teachers, the driving passion for entering the field of education for many. Beyond this particular inhibitor, the results of the interviews conducted are quite varied. The increased stress level and time commitment were the next most popular inhibitors to the principalship, even with seven interviewees articulating that the schedule of an administrator did not represent a seismic change in the approach and time commitments that

they'd already undertaken in their respective school leadership roles. Additionally, school politics, difficult conversations with parents, and the weight of responsibility that falls on the shoulders of a principal all proved to be commonly cited inhibitors among the interviewees. Lastly, the shift in quality of life, with specific mention of its impact on parental goals, is an area that made various interviewees hesitant to pursue administration. To shed some light on the various inhibitors cited by interviewees, and why they affected the decision to pursue the principalship in a specific way, the most common inhibitors are detailed below, along with supporting quotes to lend insight into the nature of the inhibiting factor at hand.

**School Politics and Parental Pressure**

Politics was mentioned by five interviewees, with two principals focused on the specific politics generated via the board of directors and lay leadership. Most teachers do not have official interaction with the board of directors and instead know board members as parent leaders. However, the concept of interacting with the board in an official capacity, such as meetings and presentations, is new for most and can be intimidating to many. While the school board can act as a supporting team for some, it can be a difficult facet of the job to navigate for others (Rosenblum, 1993). Yosef described his particular fear as follows:

> Every school has that board. Some schools, the board is more scary or dangerous than others, and I know that the board can make or break your career. If you have a bad board, it can really just...You can be awesome and you can be wonderful and if you say the wrong thing to the wrong board member, you could be gone in a minute. Putting yourself out there, it's a risk. But of course without risk, there's no reward.

For other interviewees, the inhibitor of politics was more closely related to parental politics, and the difficult situations that can often arise through various interactions that are

centered around high emotions. Shira felt a particular servitude to the parents and the entitlement many feel in contacting principals at all hours of the day, about any issue. As a parent herself, this aspect of the job gave her pause:

> I didn't like the way the parents feel like that they can control you and it felt like they just call nonstop with complaints and it never ends, and the owning of you made me wary because, especially as a mother, I was like, "How's that going work? I can't do this. This is like a 24/7. I don't want to talk to parents all the time."

For Yaakov, a high school principal for 23 years, parental politics was cited as an inhibitor and difficulty as well. Yet, as Yaakov explained, it is just one piece of the pie and one section where difficult conversations are required. The difficulty for Yaakov is managing the aggressive sentiments shared by parents, and all stakeholders, without compromising the education and the integrity of the school:

> Nobody likes the politics...sometimes people pressure you into doing things that you don't really want to do. Sometimes people have a lot of agendas. Parents have agendas. They want the kids to get good grades. They don't necessarily want their kids to work. Sometimes kids have their own agenda. They don't really want to work sometimes. Some parents have agendas, and faculty has their agendas. They want to make money and not necessarily do what's best for the kids in all cases. Again, those are the challenges.

**Difficult Conversations**

Managing these difficult conversations can be difficult, taxing, and uncomfortable. In fact, among the interviewees, five principals specifically pointed to difficult conversations as a direct inhibitor of pursuing the principalship. Difficult conversations with teachers can be increasingly complicated, especially given the relationship and working dynamic that connects

teacher and supervisor. Akiva describes the feelings communicated by teachers as “a lack of trust when it comes to administration.” Beyond the support that principals must provide for their teachers, there is an evaluative piece that looms large over teacher-principal interactions for many. This facet of the relationship can potentially serve as a blockade and derail trust if misunderstood or misused by either party, in a variety of ways. While teachers are wary of any threat to job security, many principals find great displeasure in having to execute this particular facet of the role. Teachers pursuing the principalship understand that occupying the role of principal tends to include this uncomfortable part of the job. Perhaps it was Natan who best expressed this particular inhibitor and the challenge of fulfilling responsibilities related to firing:

> There's no normal person who enjoys or who doesn't mind firing somebody. The worst part of the job is having to let people go. Did I want to do that? No, that's a terrible thing. I'd much rather be the good guy than the bad guy...You have to psych yourself up just to what you're doing is you're caring for communal Jewish funds and parents' tuition dollars and trying to make the best use of their money.

While there is much truth to Natan’s words, it can be difficult for teachers to gain such a perspective without being in the role. For teachers, it is not a simple task to appreciate the position that a principal may find himself/herself in when having to terminate the contract of an employee. This can serve as a palpable partition between faculty and administration. In fact, communicating assurance that the organization wishes to maintain the future employment of the employee is a strong indication of perceived organizational support (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). For teachers who pursue the principalship, the transition from being strictly a colleague to a colleague who evaluates teacher performance can be a stark one. Cooner et al. (2008) found that teachers may view teachers who join the ranks of principal as turncoats of sorts, someone in

search of more power or not up to the task of handling his/her classroom duties. Avi eloquently expressed this realization as follows:

> Once you enter administration you can't enter the teachers' room in the same way. And I loved being part of Team Teacher. There's great camaraderie, there's good fun kibitzing, and just a relaxed sense of, "We're all in this together"...I remember walking into the teachers' room looking to just put down my lunch and hang out, and conversations just stopped. Whatever they were talking about, I'm sure it wasn't ... well, I don't know if it was, about me, but whatever it was it wasn't something that they felt like they wanted to continue in my presence.

**Hesitancy and Inhibition to Leave the Classroom**

This change can be jarring for many who serve as passionate and committed teachers in the field, just as it was for various interviewees who articulated the identity crisis that principals can face. Each interviewee was required to have taught three years in the classroom at minimum in order to be eligible for this study. In fact, 16 of the 21 interviewees served as a classroom teacher for over six years. To all of a sudden be perceived differently can be difficult to accept. Orli, an elementary school principal for 26 years, communicated this sentiment directly: “I also always think of myself still as a teacher. If somebody asks me what I do, I say I'm a teacher. I still say that, and I really still think of myself that way.” Simcha too shared the same feeling as Orli: “To this day I love teaching. If you were to ask me who am I? What's my *mahut* (Hebrew word for essence)? Teacher. It's not principal, it's not head of school. It's teacher. *Melamed dardeke* (Aramaic term for teacher of children), that's how I define my essence, is teacher, not principal.”

These quotes give meaning and support to why just about half of the interviewees (10 in total) identified the necessity of leaving the classroom (on a full-time basis) as the chief inhibitor of pursuing the principalship. To successfully teach, and do so with passion, can be extremely satisfying to one's soul and difficult to give up. David, a high school principal for 13 years, expressed this inhibitor as one that he still grapples with until this day, and one that he anticipates grappling with for the rest of his career:

> The biggest *cheshbon hanefesh* (accounting of the soul) I'll ever have in my life is: "did I do the right thing, leaving the classroom as a classroom rebbe [Hebrew term for "my rabbi"] on a day in day out basis?" Because I thought I was pretty good at it. I've built lifelong relationships in the classroom. And as a principal, you're looked at a little differently.

So difficult is leaving the classroom for teachers at heart that eight of the 10 interviewees who cited this as a central inhibitor still teach to this day. Beyond the love and passion that they each have for the art and science of teaching is the message it communicates to the staff. Akiva expressed that maintaining a classroom presence is important for the purposes of "keeping your feet on the ground and staying in the front lines." Additionally, the effectiveness with which principals can relate to students is greatly affected by the interactions that are fostered within the four walls of a classroom. Rachel feels strongly that "staying in the classroom as an administrator is a way to make sure you still know what's going on in kids' lives." While finding the time to teach as an administrator is challenging, Rachel and her fellow administrators deem it a non-negotiable priority, as nothing can mimic the bond between teacher and student:

> I don't care how many lunch and learns with the principal you do, if you're not spending a lot of time with the kids in the classroom...It's very hard. And we're all very busy and we all have a lot to do and we all have a lot on our plate.

**Time Commitment as an Inhibitor to Pursue the Principalship**

The schedule of a teacher is a busy one and is a job that many have no choice but to take home with them. It is a full-blown commitment on emotional and financial levels, and a large commitment of one's time. For those in the principalship, this time commitment multiplies, both within the school building and out. This is a facet of the job not lost on most, and for five of the interviewees, time commitment represented a significant inhibitor to the principalship. One facet that contributes to the schedule of an administrator is the relationship with the school board and the schedule of the school's lay leaders. Simcha addressed the difficulty of the conflict in schedule and expectation that can arise between principal and lay leadership:

> Their volunteerism is in the evenings. So, by not making yourself available and making it easy and convenient for them can sometimes be perceived as not being willing to give enough. It's hard to strike that balance when you have these competing demands on your time. It's so easy to have it eaten up, for this job to be all consuming.

**Work-life Balance/Quality of Life**

While accepting this time commitment can be inhibiting to some, for others it's a matter of being able to balance work with life that requires constant evaluation. In fact, seven interviewees distinctly mentioned that their personality and approach to work has always been one of rigor and that balancing work and life has always required a conscientious effort. As such,

moving into the role of principal did not accompany wholesale changes to their already busy schedules.

Yet, being able to adopt such a work schedule and put in exorbitant amounts of time and effort into the school has a reaction in one's home and personal life. Those with parental responsibilities can often struggle to contribute consistently, depending on the latest happenings at school. As such, six interviewees explicitly credited their spouses with their ability to accept the role of principal and operate the way that they do, even when work and life can often be unbalanced.

However, the time commitment is only one piece of the puzzle, as the all-encompassing nature of the role can creep into the crevices of one's home at all times of the day and night. Five interviewees cited quality of life as an inhibitor to the principalship, as well as an element that they struggle with currently in the role. Several interviewees spoke about the clear boundaries that they've created to curb such struggles, while others have not been as successful in this endeavor.

This can be particularly challenging for those administrators who live in the communities which they serve, as it is difficult for school parents to identify them as someone other than the principal at all times and in any location. While there are positives to such a situation, mainly in terms of the impact one can have and the quality of the relationships that can be built, it can certainly be overwhelming at times. Moshe expressed this dichotomy directly:

> It's very public in that there's a positive side to that where you feel like you're really being recognized and you're really doing something for your community. That helps to balance out some of the negative where it's more complicated and you feel it's so public and not

> privacy. Or at a shul when I have to talk to all the parents at that school and I'm like, "Guys, I just want to daven."

Yochanan, a middle school principal, enjoyed stretching his boundaries as a teacher and connecting with students in his free time. However, upon becoming an administrator, he had many more obligatory attendances that were expected of him, such as bar and bat mitzvahs. Losing the ability to dictate when and where to assign free time to students was difficult for Yochanan, and has been compounded by the duties and expectations of an administrator in this day and age:

> Part of the reason I was successful is, I initiated learning with kids during lunch. I invited kids to my house for Shabbos...but when I'm wasting hundreds of hours going to bar mitzvahs and having certain discussions and meetings and even if I'm not in school...I'll sit in front of my computer. It's like I can't avoid it.

Eliezer struggled greatly with creating boundaries as well, even on Saturday, where Orthodox Jews observe *Shabbos*, a day of rest. Being able to divorce one's self from work, amidst pursuits of pleasure, can be complicated when the geographical proximity between parents and principal is quite close. Eliezer expressed how taxing it had become "to live within a mile of them and go to shul with them." He said: "The balance is very hard. Shabbos kiddush (a social gathering after prayers) was a nightmare."

The toll of not being able to obtain anonymity can be daunting for most, and impacts one's entire family as well. Children crave the attention of their parents and yearn for their time, something that is at a premium for principals. Orli exclaimed that her work and schedule as a principal and the adjustment to said lifestyle, "was very, very hard for me. I felt very guilty leaving my children."

One's family can often be charged with adapting to new schools, or places of living, if/when a principal is relocated. Such a situation most certainly engenders familial anxiety and impacts family relationships. In reflecting on his 26 years as a principal, Simcha lamented, "There's no question that I was an absentee father, all this moving around, those were huge factors that impacted on my family." In describing the toll it took on his children and spouse, Simcha elaborated: "They had to uproot, they had to reestablish friends...They were always the new kids. That was hard on them...Let alone for my wife...She had to reestablish herself each time."

**Added Stress as an Inhibitor**

Perhaps the collateral damage of pursuing the principalship would be more palatable for aspiring administrators were the role to entail a more inviting lifestyle. Yet, not only is that not the case, or realistic, it is actually accompanied by a significant increase in stress for some. Interviewees were split on the impact that stress had on their decision to pursue the principalship. While seven interviewees did not feel inhibited by the stresses of the principalship, some admittedly due to naiveté and ignorance, six others were positively inhibited by the increased stress that they expected to be incorporated within the role of principal.

Yehoshua, an elementary school principal for five years, attributed much of the stress to the expectations of school stakeholders. The pressure of having to acquiesce to the demands of parents or lay leaders can be overwhelming. This can become even more difficult when said stakeholders misallocate the time it takes to achieve various goals in a successful manner, or appreciate the situation at hand in its entirety:

> People expect you [to be] available 24/7. They expect things immediately, things that take weeks, and they have no clue what goes into it but they want it now…And if you,

> God forbid, put your family first, they're going to look at you and say, “You don't have a good work ethic.”

Perhaps if the source of stress merely came from the parent body, it would be more manageable. Yet, there are multiple factions of stakeholders that need to be appeased and cared for, and whose demands vary. Orli articulated that she has seen a seismic shift in the main source of her stress, as during the beginning years it was mainly parent-based and is now managing the faculty in her institution. She exclaimed: “I could have never, in a million years... No *binah* [Hhebrew term for deep understanding] in the world could have prepared me for the level of stress that I have been under over the past 10 years in this position.” She doubled down and communicated that “nothing I will say will be exaggerated about the stress issue...There are some difficult parents, but somehow... I'm not saying it's not stressful, but if I had to tell you which was the most stressful, it's the teachers.”

Simcha, the most seasoned and experienced of the interviewees, even went as far as to express a level of regret for shifting to the office of the principalship. The stress of the position has been a major factor, even through his success and longevity, and the toll it has taken on him has been palpable. Simcha articulated his feelings, in retrospect, as follows:

> I didn't understand going into it what those pressures would be. I don't know if I had a silver ball and could have looked into the future to see just how stressful the role is, would I have done it or maintained full-time teaching and figured out other ways to be able to make *parnasa* [Hebrew term for financial viability]? I'm not sure I would go into it because burnout is very, very high.

The third central set of stakeholders, the students, can also cause stress as well. With most principals responsible for student discipline, one can be inhibited by the unpleasant nature

of such a task. In fact, three interviewees cited student discipline as an inhibitor to their pursuit of the role. Yochanan explained, “I don't enjoy the fact that when I walk into a room, everybody behaves differently.” Students are hyper-aware of the whereabouts of a principal, assuming the presence of the principal commands a healthy respect, and for many teachers that is a difficult image to conjure up in their mind’s eye. Simcha articulated this fear as follows: “I didn't want to be that guy walking around with a clipboard, making sure the kids are on time, disciplining....you go from being the cool teacher to being the jerky guy that is getting the kids in trouble.”

**Weight of Responsibility**

There are aspiring principals who are not intimidated by any particular stressors, or aggressive stakeholders within the institution, yet still feel inhibited to pursue the role due to the weight of responsibility that befalls the principal. As the axiom goes, “it’s lonely at the top,” and for some aspiring school leaders this is an anxiety that inhibits pursuit of the position. Ultimately, principals are judged more publicly and receive more credit and blame than deserved, and this facet of the role is uncomfortable for some. Five interviewees raised this inhibitor as a factor in their consideration of the role. Yehoshua communicated the weight he feels in his role as such: “You have 150 people and their *parnasa* weighing on your mind every night. You have people constantly judging you...So you have that weight, and even if everything's going well, you're so stressed just from that weight of that position.”

Perhaps this weight can be attributed to the requirement of a principal to address and answer any issue that arises, regardless of where the issue emanated from. This obligation is not a familiar one to teachers, as they can lean on principals for support upon making mistakes. Being in the leadership position of principal does not afford one such a luxury. Four interviewees mentioned the incessant accountability that a principal faces as a central inhibitor to the office of

the principal. Eliezer explained that “teachers can always pass it upstairs.” Principals are expected to answer for all that occurs within the four walls of the building, as well as be knowledgeable enough to have solutions to problems of all shapes and sizes, and to do so quickly. Avi expressed his frustration with this expectation as follows:

> These systemic, long lingering issues that whether a parent complains about it or not you know it's there..."Yeah, I'm going to work on it, and work, and hopefully make incremental change, and we can hopefully continue to grow and advance in it, but this is not going to be a quick fix and it's exhausting, it's taxing.

Shira was greatly inhibited by the perception of having to know it all as well, and this was an aversion towards her pursuit of the principalship earlier in her career. She explained, “I was intimidated by some of the things that I didn't know and felt that I had to learn, and so that kept me from that position for a while.” For many young educators, even those with established success in the classroom, this inhibition can linger. Yet some may look past it, and suppress the fear, and are suddenly face to face with these expectations and nowhere to turn. Four interviewees referenced their rapid rise or promotion, and the difficulties that came about as a result of their being overwhelmed and not feeling permitted to ask questions or admit to not knowing something. Moshe communicated this sentiment directly: “I was totally overwhelmed, there was so much to do...I really felt like, ‘No, this is my job and I have to do it. If I'm struggling with it, that's my issue.’”

**Job Security**

With the discrepancy in salaries between teachers and administrators, and the constant shuffling of board members in many schools, an inhibitor to the principalship is the lack of stability as it pertains to job security. While the role of teacher can be deemed secure to some,

and insecure to others, the job security of a principal is governed by an entirely different set of standards. The scrutiny of the public eye and the constant evaluation of job performance by parents and teachers can lend an unsettling feeling to some. Yosef communicated his hesitancy:

> When you're a solid teacher and you have a reputation as a solid teacher, there's very little that you worry about. Once you're in a school for four or five years, you're not worrying so much about keeping your job from year to year, I guess. The first year or two you are, but once you're a household name in the school or in the community, you don't really worry as much but of course when you're in a higher profile position, you worry. Am I going to do enough to make the board want to keep me around? To make the Head of School want to keep me around? Are you living up to your expectations?

**Specific Circumstances that Inhibit Pursuit of the Principalship**

For some considering the principalship, there is a motivation to fill the role in one's current school. This can be due to one's connection to the school, familiarity with its operations, or its geographical location, among myriad factors. Yet three interviewees expressed inhibition to pursue the principalship in the school in which they were faculty members. Shira elaborated her inhibitions and discomfort as follows:

> I felt like, "Why do I deserve that over them?"...I was so loyal to that level in X that I felt like, "No, I don't even want to do it there"...I don't want to do it to them. I don't want to have that power over them. Even if I don't feel like I'll misuse it.

Other interviewees expressed inhibition about a particular role within the principalship, often known as Head of School, and the perceived discrepancy that exists between being a head of school and their preference for the role of principal. Many private schools have an administrative structure that allows for a principal role, as well as the role of Head of School.

The head of school is the chief administrator on staff, usually the one who has final say on all decisions pertaining to the school. When there is a head of school, the role of principal tends to be much more education focused, with roots in curriculum, teacher evaluation, and student support. As such, the chief responsibilities of the head of school can be primarily focused on finances, school budgets, fundraising, staff contracts, and community-relations. With a clear separation from the natural and classic pedagogical process, many aspiring principals, who are teachers at heart, are hesitant to accept being promoted to such a role. In fact, five interviewees made a point to share that sentiment of their own volition. Simcha, who has served as both an assistant principal and principal, and now as a head of school, was contrite about his acceptance of the role and how it has evolved, as he has gone further away from the crux of education with each promotion:

> Certainly in the role of head of school, most of my day is not dealing with education. It really isn't. I worry a lot about finances, enormous amount about finances and raising money and dealing with donors or would be donors and building maintenance. Is the sprinkler system working? How come our grass is turning brown when it should be green and we're paying people to take care of a lawn? There're so many non-educational areas that are critical to the running of a school, but they're not educational per se. Those were my fears, walking around with a clipboard. I wasn't thinking about the lawn when I went to become an assistant principal.

Eliezer has had a nearly identical career arc as Simcha, serving as an assistant principal before eventually becoming a head of school. He, too, expressed regret for his decision to move into the office of the head of school. He stated: “I regret most not going from teacher to vice-

principal, that I'm perfectly content with. I do regret running to become a head of school, it's a bit of fool's gold." When asked to elaborate on that comment, Eliezer explained:

> You can't hide, you can't have as much influence, you become a glorified fundraiser. You get blamed for things you didn't do. You get credit for a few things you didn't do but mainly blame for things you didn't do and you're where the buck stops. And I was too naive to realize that life was pretty good as an assistant principal. So I didn't make 20% more than I did as a rabbi, I only made 10% more but I got 50% less headaches than I had when I moved to the principalship.

## THE EFFECT OF GENDER, AGE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND LEVEL OF SCHOOL

In interviewing each of the 21 principals that participated in this study, determined central goal of each interview was to identify various circumstantial facets to each person's journey towards the principalship. Firstly, I wanted to identify the effect that one's age had on his/her decision to pursue the principalship. Secondly, I wanted to determine the level of training and qualifications of each interviewee to occupy the role of principal. Thirdly, I wanted to explore if and how the level of schooling (i.e., primary, middle, or high-school-aged students) affected the interviewee's decision. And finally, I wanted to determine the effect of gender on one's decision to pursue the principalship, and identify the viewpoints of female principals in their pursuit of administration. Those who entered the principalship under the age of 35 identified feelings of mistrust or doubt, while those above the age of 35 expressed feeling particularly qualified or did not mention age as any type of factor in their transition to becoming principal. The overwhelming majority of interviewees lacked formal degrees to be principals, as hypothesized, and the level of schooling of one's prospective principalship was, by and large, not a factor in the decision-making to become principal. Lastly, female interviewees cited various

anecdotes about gender inequality in obtaining various positions, as well as a lack of financial equity in comparison to male principals in Jewish day schools.

**Age**

The ages of the 21 interviewees vary as to when each assumed the role of principal. Five interviewees ascended to the principalship from 26-30 years old, eight became principals from 31-35 years old, five assumed the role from 36-40 years old and three interviewees joined their respective administrations from 42-45 years old. Interviewees were questioned if, and in what ways, the age at which they assumed the role affected their pursuit of the principalship. Approximately half of the 21 interviewees (11 participants) did not feel that their age at the time had any ramifications on their decision or transition to the role. However, the other 10 participants cited age as a factor, for a variety of reasons. Various interviewees who moved into the role of principal at 35 and under felt untrusted, doubted, or under-qualified. Orli, who became a principal at 35 years old, was one of two interviewees who cited feeling unqualified due to age. She explained: “You know what the imposter syndrome is?...So I felt very much that that was me...even though maybe on paper, I look qualified, but like, Oh, this is a joke. I felt very under-qualified.”

Two other interviewees, one who became principal at 26 and the other at 36, cited feeling doubted by faculty as a result of the age at which they assumed the role. This was in large part due to the teachers on staff who were older than these incoming principals. Akiva, who was 36 at the time, described the doubt that the older staff felt towards him as such: “I feel that the older the staff member, the more that you want someone of experience because they feel time equates to experience and experience equates to effectiveness.”

In addition to these four interviewees who cited feeling unqualified and/or doubted, three others (ages, 29, 30, 30) shared feeling untrusted. All three cited the difficulty of garnering the respect of faculty who were older than these principals, just as those interviewees cited above. Yet, Avi noted that his young age (he started as principal at 29 years old) affected the respect he received from parents, and the insecurity he felt due to his youth. He described this sentiment as follows: “Each time I would have to get up there and speak...I felt my own youngness just beaming off of my face, reading into the faces of people in the crowd of like, ‘Can you believe this guy?’"

What is interesting to note is the difference in feeling that those above the age of 40 felt in comparison to those interviewees who assumed the role at a younger age. Three separate participants in the study, ages 42, 44 and 45, cited feeling particularly trusted due to their age. Yochanan, who cited feeling trusted due to his age of 45 when becoming principal, felt the opposite of what Avi described above. He explained that parents had more trust in him due to his age, and assumed life experience, and the fact that he is older than many, if not most, of them. Zahava, who became a principal at 42, after 23 years in the classroom, attributed valuable experience to years in education rather than years in the office of the principal. She continued: “I do think many people are becoming principals too young...without the experience. I don't mean experience as a principal...but to have enough experiences with enough different types of kids, teachers, administrators, and parents.”

**Qualifications**

The level of training and qualifications varied amongst each of the 21 principals interviewed. Four interviewees do not hold any advanced degrees beyond their undergraduate degree. Nine of the principals interviewed hold Master’s degrees and other certificates within

education, but no degree geared towards administration. Four participants studied for administrative doctoral degrees and completed all coursework towards the degree, but have not been conferred a doctorate due to a lack of a dissertation. Finally, the last four interviewees hold doctorates, three of which in educational leadership and the other in studies unrelated to education. In fact, most of the participants who have earned degrees and certificates geared towards administration, only did so after their acceptance of the principalship, making the overwhelming majority of the interviewees under-trained by degree standards.

When asked whether the degrees or certifications they'd received were helpful, effective, or practical, even to those whose highest degree is a Master's degree, only 13 of the 21 participants felt that to be the case. This can perhaps lend some basis for why so few pursue an advanced degree in anticipation of, or upon accepting, the role of principal. Participants favored on-the-job training, and most prominently mentioned the invaluable mentorship and/or coaching they'd received, and how it has enabled them to lead effectively. Eight interviewees cited training via coaching as effective and having an impact, as well as another participant who was extremely regretful in not being able to receive said coaching in her inaugural years as principal.

**Level of Schooling**

In determining what role, if any, the level of school played in the decision to pursue the principalship, nine interviewees noted a positive correlation between the age of the students and the position they took, while all other interviewees did not identify the level of schooling as a factor in their decision. Two of the nine participants who were particular in their desired level of schooling, and the ages/grades they prefer to work with, were specific about wanting to avoid primary school, namely grades one through five. However, the other seven interviewees who identified the level of schooling as a factor in the decision-making process were only interested

in a specific age group. Four participants only considered high school, two were fixated on middle school, and one participant was adamant about occupying the principalship on the K-8 level, with each interviewee expressing rationales such as familiarity and expertise as it pertains to the particular level of preference.

**Gender**

In an effort to research what role, if any, gender has on the decision to pursue the principalship, six female principals were interviewed and agreed to participate in this research study. Of these six women, four entered the principalship between the ages of 33-36, while the other two women were 42 and 44 years of age. Interviewees were asked what role, if any, parental goals factored into the decision-making process to pursue the principalship. While two women articulated their intentional delay to pursue administration, due to their parenting goals, four interviewees discussed the complications of simultaneously fulfilling their goals as a parent while serving as school principal. Orli, who did not delay her work goals despite her demands at home, talked about the difficulty of not doing so and how much that decision still comes up in her mind: “I felt very guilty leaving my children...I was always going in and out of that baby stage. And I had to leave them with people that I... It was very hard for me.”

Yet, beyond the decisions that each of these women made based on the personal needs of their families, determining to what degree gender bias affected the pursuit of each of these principals, as well as any potential disadvantages that they felt due to their gender, was certainly of interest. Four interviewees cited feelings, or situations, of gender bias and inopportunity as a result of being women. Each of these four women attributed the gender bias to being a product of how they are perceived as women in the Orthodox Jewish world, much more so than the

perception of women in the world of education at large. Both Orli and Rachel pointed to the legitimacy given to rabbinical ordination in the Orthodox world, which Orthodox women cannot receive, and how ordination, otherwise known as *semicha*, unfairly propels men ahead of women financially and professionally. Orli exclaimed:

> I'm not a feminist by any stretch of the imagination, like on the contrary, but I will say this, as somebody who has had to be a working person and has a career...I do think there's discrimination against women in the *frum* world, as far as *chinuch* goes. I don't think that with regard to general things, but I definitely feel it in chinuch...I'm sure I get paid less because of it.

Rachel shared similar sentiments, and went as far to say that the title of principal has lent credence to her name and ability as an educator, the way she feels rabbinic ordination does for Jewish males in the field. While her motivation to become principal was not due to this, this element of gender bias has become abundantly clear to her since assuming her role as principal. Other opportunities that never availed themselves to her prior to the principalship, even though she had earned a doctoral degree, “followed the principalship rather than preceding it.” In discussing the frustrations qualified Orthodox educators, many of whom want to expand their professional horizons but not necessarily through the principalship, Rachel explained:

> They have no way of having a public profile and a voice in a way that's not true for men in the Orthodox community because you can get semicha...and now you have a little bit of public profile. And now you could hit the scholar in residence circuit and become a lecturer…The other leadership roles opened up after I had the principal's position to give me some kind of profile...and it's particularly acute for women...We don't have a way in the community as naturally giving women the kind of profile that might say, "You can be

> a teacher and a public intellectual, you can be a teacher and a thinker, a teacher and a writer, a teacher and a lecturer. And you don't have to be a principal."

Both Rachel and Shira articulated further biases that they have faced as women, and how it affected their thought processes when considering the principalship. Shira feels that the pursuit of the principalship, in and of itself, presented problems for her due to her gender, as she explained: "I think that I am highly ambitious. I definitely think that that is threatening to men, and that may have played a role in one of the reasons I was consistently turned down for a real leadership role." Shira attributed her delayed foray into administration to tempered expectations that are dictated by community norms. Shira stated, "The ambitions that I had were definitely tamped down because I had a perception of myself as inferior and my dreams should be secondary." Shira's frustrations also relate to her personal experiences as it pertains to promotion and advancement within the field, as well as fairly receiving opportunities to be mentored and trained for leadership roles and the like:

> When I started to get more ambitious and excited about different things, I was given those leadership opportunities to do that and yet, at the same time, there were always men who were advancing, like people who came to the school the same time that I came to the school and who were promoted…I knew that there were things that I wasn't learning that my male colleagues were because they were being mentored and there's an assumption and that's, again, the privilege that men are coming from...There's nobody taking women under their wing.

Rachel felt strongly that women are at a firm disadvantage in every way as it pertains to Orthodox Jewish day schools. Rachel pointed to various situations where a school is looking to hire a woman over a man, and that even in those instances there are undertones and overtones of

gender bias. Rachel, as a self-proclaimed outspoken individual, described this sentiment as follows:

> I'm going to say categorically that there is nowhere in Orthodoxy that it's an advantage to be a woman...even when people say, "We want a woman in this role...We want a woman in this role because we know it looks weird and everybody's all men, but we don't want a woman who expresses herself in a certain way...We want a woman, but not that kind of woman. Not a woman who sounds that way, who acts that way, who looks that way."

While much of what is cited by Rachel and Shira is upsetting and unsettling, they both ascended to the role of principal and currently hold positions in those same roles. The drive to succeed and pursue the role comes from within; however, four of the six female interviewees were influenced positively by the successes of those around them. The influence they felt came in a variety of ways, yet played a role in the decision to pursue the principalship.

Chana, a K-8 assistant principal for nine years, felt confidence in assuming the role, given the fact that her predecessor was female as well. Additionally, the head principal at her school empowers her to lead. Chana explained that "he is very pro-women being strong and listening to their advice...he definitely sets the tone for it to be okay for women to take on those leadership roles." For Rachel, who attended single-gender schools her entire life, "being in an all-girls or all-women's educational environment, I had more of a chance to see strong women in top leadership roles."

Furthermore, Rachel was deeply influenced by her mother, a successful principal in her own right. Orli, too, found inspiration and influence from her mother, who mentored Orli as a young teacher. For both Rachel and Orli, seeing the life of a principal, who doubled as a dedicated mother, was inspiring. Rachel exclaimed that being able to see her mother in action,

“modeled that this was a rewarding and meaningful and valuable way to spend your time.” Even to this day, Rachel finds connection with her mother through their united passion for education: “My mother and I talked shop all the time. Talk shop all the time about the issues that we face, the ways in which they're similar and the ways in which they're different.”

## EXTRINSIC FACTORS

### Salary

The effect of salary on one’s decision to pursue the principalship was an area that each interviewee was asked about. Eighteen of the 21 principals interviewed acknowledged that salary played a role in the pursuit of the principalship and was a factor in the overall decision. Each of these 18 interviewees identified the increased salary of a principal as a benefit that they either viewed as a necessity, potential necessity, or a benefit that they realize was necessary in hindsight of their respective decisions. While five of those 18 interviewees made a point of stressing that the area of salary did not drive their decision to pursue the principalship, it was indeed a major factor in the decision-making process. As Orli explained regarding her thought process:

> I was tutoring a lot on the side; it was hard to make ends meet. This definitely offered opportunity that I would have never had otherwise. I could only get so far as a teacher. It didn't inform my decision in any way. In other words, it wasn't a deciding factor, not ahead of time and not when it was offered to me, but it would have become one in short time.

The predicament of wanting to continue as a teacher, while simultaneously caring for one’s family in a responsible manner, is difficult. As Yaakov explained it succinctly, “It's very hard to make a living as a teacher. It's very, very hard in the Jewish communities.” Along the

same lines, Yehoshua added, “I think that administration seemed like the only long-term option that I had to be able to stay in education.” Yosef described the issue matter-of-factly:

> My family was growing and the finances of needing a better position obviously, if I wanted to stay in Jewish Education, that was certainly the only way to do it. At some point in your life, you just can't make $65,000 anymore and just support a family.

Perhaps it was Simcha, the oldest of the interviewees, as well as the most senior and most experienced, who identified the complexity of the issue at hand. The desire to live an Orthodox lifestyle, coupled with the desire to remain a teacher in some sort of capacity, can be quite challenging, depending on the finances of a family and the household income they’ve been blessed with. As a result, the acutely higher salaries that tend to be associated with administrators create a dilemma for many, as it represents the compromise of being able to remain in the field of education, one that many love so dearly, while alleviating the financial pressures that accompany an Orthodox style of living. Simcha explained:

> Teachers don't make a lot of money. So it's hard to make it and it's very costly to live in the Orthodox world. Usually a full-time teacher needs a spouse also to be working full-time for the family to get by. And so there's always that pressure of being able to bring in more dollars to be able to support your family and to do what you have a calling for. Because most teachers don't go into the field because they want to get wealthy...It wasn't the thing that moved me to go into it, but in retrospect, I absolutely needed it...We certainly couldn't have made it if we just maintained the teacher's salary.

By the same token, salary did not seem to be what dictates the entirety of the decision by any stretch, as important of a factor as it may seem to be. As discussed above, in relation to motivators for pursuing the principalship, there is often a desire to have broader influence, affect

change, and satisfy intrinsic motivations to serve as a leader. Yehoshua articulated the convergence of wanting to lead, together with the financial pressure he felt:

> If I can be making the same money I'm making now and teach, I don't know if I would just teach because again, I still think I would be missing a huge amount of my passion. But certainly, I wouldn't have been as eager to go as quickly.

While salary was certainly a factor among the overwhelming majority of the interviewees, it is in large part due to the vast discrepancy between teacher and administrator salaries. Simcha alluded to this difference above, calling the discrepancy “out of whack” after ascending from teacher to head of school. Yehoshua, a head of school as well, acknowledged the disparity between teacher and administrator salaries, while mentioning the flexibility that creating one’s own schedule provides:

> I think that the amount of money, the discrepancy in how teachers are paid versus how administrators are paid, and not just paid, but how they're treated. When you’re administration, typically, you don't have to worry about PTO and clocking in and clocking out. Your work is a lot more flexible in that kids aren't staring at you and you're in that period from the bell-ring to bell-end.

**Recognition**

Beyond the extrinsic motivator of salary, participants were asked about the recognition that one receives in the role of principal, and how that affected the decision to pursue the role. Only three interviewees articulated a positive correlation. One was Moshe, who lives in the community where he is principal and is involved in the community due to his immersion via the school and felt it was important to be recognized for his successes. Doing so makes him feel appreciated and sustains him.

Yet, for the majority of the other participants, recognition was not a consideration in the decision to pursue the principalship. In fact, four interviewees made a point of articulating that they were not resigned to chasing a promotion at any cost. These four principals were methodical in what they were looking for and what situation would motivate them to feel adequately prepared to take on the role of principal. Natan, for instance, was committed to doing everything he was tasked with as well as possible, and did not adopt the thought process of aggressively pursuing elements that would make him more eligible for a promotion of any sort. As Natan termed the approach, he was “intentionally being unintentional.”

For many others, this approach can potentially be seen as passive, or feel foreign to one’s persona or preferences. Often, one can feel a sense of urgency to climb the ladder as quickly as possible. Yet, doing so too quickly can be detrimental to one’s long-term growth and ability and can potentially be inappropriate for his/her skillset or personal goals. Moshe, while attending a conference for young teacher leaders and administrative training, came to this realization through discussion with others. While this went against his presumption of being focused on promotions and climbing the ladder, it changed his outlook and mindset as he considered the principalship:

> I was in the administrative cohort...there were a number of them who had been principals for 10 years, 12 years, 15 years and have no interest whatsoever in being head of school...I felt like, "Oh, whatever you do, you want to do it the best you can and you continue to move up. I don't want that job. I like this job...Do I want to be head of school? Is that something that I really want or do I just want to be principal?

# DISCUSSION

With an array of research on the pursuit of the principalship in the public school system, as well as various studies conducted within the private sector, comparing the findings of these studies to Orthodox principals within Jewish day schools was a goal of the study. While there were various responses germane to Orthodoxy and Jewish day schools, it was interesting to see how similar the role of principal is across all sectors. Many of the findings discussed within the literature review matched the findings of the interviews conducted within this study.

## MOTIVATORS TO PURSUE THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Interviewees identified a variety of motivations for pursuing the principalship, with none being mentioned more frequently than wanting to have a broader influence on the school and the overall education of its students. Of the 21 principals interviewed, 16 subjects were motivated by the broader influence that can be achieved via the office of the principal. This motivator was included in my hypotheses and was certainly expected, and dovetails with research that cited positive impact and making an impact as central motivators for pursuing the principalship (Harris, Arnold et al., 2000; Pellicer, 2007; Hoffert, 2015).

The two most frequently cited areas beyond the desire for broader influence were influence and inspiration from principals that interviewees have observed (some being family, and others via mentorship), as well as influence and encouragement from peers and family. The motivation to have broader influence was identified and hypothesized prior to conducting the study. The tasks and responsibilities of a principal are often uniform and comparable, regardless of whether the principal manages a private or public school. However, religious schools are driven by the religious philosophy that the school has adopted, thereby allowing the principal to formulate his/her own vision to achieve the desired goal and philosophy. Doing so empowers the

principal to further impact students, particularly in the realm of religious studies and spirituality (Glasman, 1996). This facet contributed greatly to the anticipation of such a strong response from the interviewees. Encouragement from peers and/or mentors was a significant source of motivation to pursue the principalship within the research, and made this particular motivator a hypothesis (Arthur et al., 2009). What was fascinating to note was the inspiration derived from seeing others fulfill the role successfully, as it was expected that the encouragement derived from others would solely center on the words of affirmation provided by colleagues and mentors.

Nearly half of the interviewees referenced the passion to mentor teachers as a motivation to pursue the principalship. A total of nine principals were motivated to guide, mentor, and evaluate teachers via the role of principal. This motivator is consistent with previous research, which found being a teacher of teachers to be a motivating factor for aspiring principals, particularly among female candidates (Harris, Arnold et al., 2000).

Fulfilling the intrinsic motivation to take on a leadership role within a team setting was a motivating factor for eight of the interviewees. This also corresponds with the nearly 10 interviewees who found motivation in wanting to fix or improve issues that were outstanding at their respective schools, and being willing to spearhead those missions for change. These findings match the findings of Pounder and Merrill (2001) whose research determined that the top four most attractive aspects of the principalship fall within this domain. Their research identified the desire to make a difference, the desire to implement school change, the need to grow personally and professionally and the opportunity to lead as central motivators for their subjects. Of related note, principals in this study cited their particular school as the driver behind the decision to pursue the role of principal, rather than the field at large, further solidifying the immediate change agency that many can feel empowered by.

A particular area of interest that stood out was the connection interviewees made between good teachers translating to good principals. This aligns with previous data that states that 80% of Jewish day school principals begin as classroom teachers (Schick, 2007). With nearly half of the interviewees pointing to the added responsibilities that they took on in other roles prior to becoming principal, as well as the confidence to lead that said roles provided, it was somewhat of a surprise to see a third of the interviewees point to specific teacher traits that qualified them to be named principals. There are some who view the transition from teacher to principal as a continuous one, an organic promotion that has overlapping functions (Cuban, 1988). However, others directly oppose this theory, pointing to the responsibilities assigned to each, the necessary relationships each must foster as well as the very workspace in which they can each be found and functioning in (Wolcott, 2003).

Nevertheless, this finding dovetailed with the interviewees who felt that pursuing the principalship was the ‘natural next step’ at that point in their respective careers. Perhaps this contrasts well with the interviewees who did not pursue the role of principal, yet acquired the role through circumstance, or being in the right place, at the right time. This finding aligns with research found in a study of new principals that examined the experiences of teachers who transitioned to the principalship and found that most subjects experienced leadership building roles before applying for the role of principal (Hoffert, 2015). These experiences instilled a sense of confidence in these prospective principals, as they felt that the role of teacher-leader would certainly provide valuable experience for their potential new positions. This confidence, compounded with the belief that they can continue to work with students on a broader scale, yet institute meaningful and authentic change, served as a significant factor in the decision to transition from teacher to principal (Hoffert, 2015).

## INHIBITORS TO PURSUE THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Research on what inhibits the pursuit of the principalship pointed to various deterrents. Politics, parents, pressure, work-life balance, and spending less time in the classroom were identified as central inhibitors towards the pursuit of the principalship, with many citing the seismic shift of job responsibilities that occur in transitioning from teacher to administrator (Howley, Andrianaivo et al., 2005; Hoffert, 2015). These inhibitors were all cited by the subjects of this study and found to be significant deterrents in pursuing the principalship, as will be discussed below.

The leading inhibitor towards the pursuit of the principalship was having to leave the classroom, and the role of teacher, mentioned by 10 of the 21 interviewees. While half of those who cited this inhibitor made a point to continue teaching in a part-time capacity in order to accept the role of principal, the others lamented not being able to continue as teachers, the driving passion for entering the field of education for many. The inhibitor of leaving the classroom was a concern identified in other studies as well, given the distance that teachers feel in working directly with students, as it is central motivator to enter education in the first place (Howley, Andrianaivo et al., 2005). Moore and Ditzhazy (1999) mentioned leaving the classroom as an insignificant motivator for aspiring principals too; however, it was not a significant inhibitor among the main inhibitions that prevent teachers from transitioning to administration. The role conflict and identity crisis that can be felt upon transitioning from teacher to principal can sometimes spur many new principals to intentionally remain in the classroom. This can be due to a desire to connect with one’s students in a more meaningful way, or even to maintain the title of teacher to garner trust and respect from the teachers the principal is supervising (Loder and Spillane, 2005). This finding was of great interest to me, as the

primary motivation for teachers who enter Jewish education is to instill a love for the Jewish religion, an intimate endeavor that can be harvested more directly, and via quality relationships, through teaching a student on a daily basis (Salomon, 2010). Perhaps this lends reasoning behind the many interviewees who made a point of retaining teaching duties even in their new role as principal.

Beyond this particular inhibitor, the results of the interviews conducted were quite varied. The increased stress level and time commitment were the next most popular inhibitors to the principalship, even though seven interviewees articulated that the schedule of an administrator did not represent a seismic change in the approach and time commitments that they'd already undertaken in their respective school leadership roles. Various studies have found stress to be a common inhibition among those considering the principalship, which made this finding unsurprising (Bass et al., 2006; Harris, 2011; Rayfield and Diamantes, 2003; Hoffert, 2015).

Furthermore, school politics and difficult conversations proved to be commonly cited inhibitors amongst the interviewees. Of the twenty-one principals interviewed, five specifically cited politics as an inhibitor to their pursuit of the principalship, with five separate mentions of difficult conversations and dealings with parents. Howley, Andrianaivo et al. (2005), as well as Bass et al. (2006), found politics to be a central inhibitor for aspiring principals, while parental difficulties and negativity has been cited frequently as well (Harris, 2011; Cusick, 2003; Beach, 2010; Shen, Cooley et al., 2004). With a premium placed on close communication between the school and parents in Jewish day schools, this was not a finding that was unanticipated by any means (Levisohn et al., 2016).

An additional inhibitor cited by the interviewees was the weight of responsibility that falls on the shoulders of a principal. Five of the twenty-one interviewees identified this pressure

to be an area that inhibited their pursuit. The weight of responsibility, and the pressure that such a burden is accompanied by, was found to be significant in previous research as well (Harris, 2011).

Lastly, the shift in quality of life, with specific mention of its impact on parental goals, is an area that made various interviewees hesitant to pursue administration. Interviewees cited quality of life as an inhibitor towards the pursuit of the principalship. Howley, Andrianaivo et al. (2005) reported this domain to be the most significant inhibitor, and that teachers most frequently pointed to the negative effects that the principalship has on one's quality of life as the main source of inhibiting the pursuit of the principalship. A large piece of what contributes to the quality of life of a Jewish day school principal is the many additional responsibilities that often fall on his/her desk (Schick, 2007). In addition to the expected duties pertaining to teacher instruction, curriculum and the like, many principals in Jewish day schools can essentially serve as the de facto executive director, with communal responsibilities and fundraising often falling under the jurisdiction of principal responsibilities (Schick, 2007). Schick (2007) found that more than one half of the principals he surveyed across Jewish day schools were in fact responsible for fundraising, with five of every six participants acknowledging the responsibility of various non-educational activities, including school office work as well as maintenance.

However, even with the bevy of responsibilities assigned to Jewish day school principals, it is noteworthy that Schick (2007) reported only 4% of the 380 North American Jewish day school principals interviewed to express negativity towards their role. Additionally, Schick (2007) reported 93% of survey participants felt that their decision to pursue Jewish education was "wise or good." These statistics bear that those who pursued the role, and had sustainability, feel satisfied with their decision amidst the various difficulties they may encounter.

## THE EFFECT OF GENDER, AGE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND LEVEL OF SCHOOL

In interviewing each of the 21 principals that participated in this study, the determined main goal was to identify various circumstantial facets to each person's journey towards the principalship. Firstly, to identify the effect that one's age had on his/her decision to pursue the principalship at the time that he/she in fact did so. Secondly, to determine the level of training and qualifications of each interviewee to occupy the role of principal. Thirdly, to explore if and how the level of schooling (i.e. primary, middle, or high school aged student) impacted the interviewee's decision. And finally, to determine the effect of gender on one's decision to pursue the principalship, and identify the viewpoints of female principals in their pursuit of administration.

The ages of the 21 interviewees vary in when they each assumed the role of principal. Five interviewees ascended to the principalship from 26-30 years old, eight became principals from 31-35 years old, five assumed the role from 36-40 years old and three interviewees joined their respective administrations from 42-45 years old. Interviewees were questioned if, and in what ways, the age that they assumed the role affected their pursuit of the principalship. Approximately half of the 21 interviewees (11 participants) did not feel that their age at the time had any ramifications on their decision or transition to the role. However, the other 10 participants cited the age that they assumed the office of the principalship as a factor, for a variety of reasons.

Research found that male high school principals assume their positions at an earlier age than women, more hastily sacrificing teaching experience for salary increase when given the opportunity (Eckman, 2004). The hypothesis posited above was that due to the extensive expenses for Orthodox Jews, there may be an urgency to pursue the principalship before the age

of 35-40. Of the six female principals interviewed, only one accepted the principalship before age 35, while among the 15 men interviewed, only four accepted the principalship after the age of 35.

Schick's (2007) survey of 380 Jewish day school principals in North America found that one in four principals were younger than 45 years old, with a relatively small number 65 years old and above. While his research examined all types of Jewish day school administrators, beyond just Orthodox constituents, it is noteworthy that all 21 interviewees joined the ranks of principals younger than 45 years old. In the nearly 15 years since Schick's (2007) survey, it is conceivable that professionals have become principals at younger ages than previously recorded. With that said, Schick (2007) did note that most principals with classroom experience ascended to the administration with five years of experience or less. These findings dovetail with the surprising finding that less experienced principals of religious Jewish day schools identify as more prepared than those principals with more experience, particularly when it comes to job tasks (i.e. technology, managing the facility) (Vaisben, 2018).

The level of training and qualifications varied among each of the principals interviewed. It was hypothesized that the number of trained principals among the interviewees would be low, as private schools do not operate within the same framework of standards that the public school system is held to in this regard. This hypothesis seemed to have traction among the responses of the 21 principals interviewed. Four interviewees do not hold any advanced degrees beyond their undergraduate degree. Nine of the principals interviewed hold master's degrees and other certificates within education, but no degree geared towards administration. Four participants studied for administrative doctoral degrees, and completed all coursework towards the degree, but have not been conferred a doctorate due to a lack of a dissertation. Finally, the last four

interviewees hold doctorates, three of which are in educational leadership and the other in studies unrelated to education. In fact, most of the participants who have earned degrees and certificates geared towards administration, only did so after their acceptance of the principalship, making the overwhelming majority of the interviewees under-trained by degree standards. These findings correspond with the research findings that even those Jewish day school principals who undergo training can lack certain necessary skills to be successful principals (Vaisben, 2018). Notably, the areas of lay leadership relationships, school budget and finance, as well as human resources, were found to be lacking proper training and understanding (Vaisben, 2018). When asked whether the degrees or certifications they'd received were helpful, effective or practical, even to those whose highest degree is a master's degree, only 13 of the 21 participants felt that to be the case.

Schick's (2007) survey of North American Jewish day school principals found one in four participants (380 returned surveys) to hold doctorate degrees, with 60% of participants holding Master's degrees in education. 30% of participants held Master's degrees in other fields, and one-third of participants were ordained. Schick (2007) also identified one-third of participants as expressing a sentiment of feeling unprepared for the role upon their acceptance of the principalship. It is conceivable that the statistics have not drastically improved since Schick's publication of the data he collected in this area.

In determining what role, if any, the level of school played in the decision to pursue the principalship, nine interviewees noted a positive correlation to the age of the students they would consider acting as principal, while all other interviewees did not identify the level of schooling as a factor in their decision. Two of the nine participants who were particular in their desired level of schooling, were specific about wanting to avoid primary school, namely grades one through

five. However, the other seven interviewees who identified the level of schooling as a factor in the decision-making process, were only interested in a specific age group. Four participants only considered high school, two were fixated on middle school, and one participant was adamant about occupying the principalship on the K-8 level. While these findings paint a picture of the role that the level of schooling can play in one's decision to pursue the principalship, the qualitative nature of the study precludes the ability to derive any conclusions in regards to the impact that level of schooling has on the decision-making process of aspiring principals.

Mitchell (2009) found that the elementary principalship is more desirable than the high school principalship, as many of the complexities of the position do not avail themselves in the younger grades, or perhaps not to the same extent as they do in the older grades of middle school and/or high school. Yet with high school tuition being far more expensive than elementary school tuition in Jewish day schools, it was hypothesized that interviewees may show a greater desire to pursue the principalship at the secondary level, as compensation tends to be far greater for those employed at the high school level. This hypothesis was not able to be found as conclusive, mainly due to the qualitative nature of the study.

In an effort to research what role, if any, gender has on the decision to pursue the principalship, six female principals were interviewed and agreed to participate in this research study. Of these six women, four entered the principalship between the ages of 33-36, while the other two women were 42 and 44 years of age. Interviewees were asked what role, if any, parental goals factored into the decision-making process to pursue the principalship. While two women articulated their intentional delay to pursue administration, due to their parenting goals, four interviewees discussed the complications of simultaneously fulfilling their goals as a parent while serving as school principal. Research has shown that women experience higher levels of

role conflict over household management, fearing the great difficulty in balancing motherhood and household goals while attempting to strive for their professional goals as principals at the same time (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). As such, this finding was in fact hypothesized.

Yet, beyond the decisions that each of these women made based on the personal needs of their particular families, the goal of this line of questioning was to determine to what degree gender bias affected the pursuit of each of these principals, as well as any potential disadvantages that they felt due to their gender. Four interviewees cited feelings, or situations, of gender bias and inopportunity as a result of being women. Research has suggested that there are fewer female administrators than male administrators, due to administrative positions often being considered “male” and seen as positions of power and authority (Biklen, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1999). Of note, each of these four women attributed the gender bias to being a product of how they are perceived as women in the Orthodox Jewish world, much more so than the perception of women in the world of education at large.

Schick (2007) found that 45% of the 380 principals surveyed in his study were female. This included reform and conservative Jewish day schools as well, as 80% of the female principals surveyed were principals in non-Orthodox schools. Nevertheless, he found that women were inexplicably compensated well below what male principals were being paid. Schick (2007) found that women principals with five to ten years of experience were paid $120,000, yet men of the same credentials were compensated nearly 60% more than that figure of compensation.

## EXTRINSIC FACTORS

The effect of salary on one’s decision to pursue the principalship was an area that each interviewee was asked about. Eighteen of the twenty-one principals interviewed acknowledged

that salary played a role in the pursuit of the principalship and was a factor in the overall decision. While five of those eighteen interviewees made a point of stressing that the area of salary did not drive their decision to pursue the principalship, it was indeed a major factor in the decision-making process.

Salary has been shown to play a significant role in the decision of many to pursue administration, with those Orthodox Jews employed in Jewish day schools recognizing the financial difficulties that living a life of Orthodoxy presents while remaining in day schools (Wertheimer, 2010). This is mainly due to the insufficient salaries of Jewish day school educators and the compensation afforded to those employed in day schools by and large (Gamoran et al., 1999; Wertheimer, 2001). As such, this was certainly a hypothesis and was accordingly expected. This hypothesis was also informed by the stark contrast in salaries that exists between teachers and Jewish day school principals (Schick, 2007). Yet, it was not a major factor in the study conducted by Pounder and Merrill (2001). Similarly, Beach (2010) found salary was not a significant incentive or motivator for aspiring principals either. Accordingly, the volume of interviewees that confirmed the impact of salary on their pursuit of the principalship was not fully expected.

Beyond the extrinsic motivator of salary, participants were asked about the recognition that one receives in the role of principal, and how that impacted the decision to pursue the role. Only three interviewees articulated a positive correlation that this aspect of the role had on their decision to pursue the principalship. While prestige, esteem or recognition are factors that were found to motivate the pursuit of the principalship by Harris (2011), this is not a finding that is mentioned throughout the research and it was not found to be significant among the 21 interviewees.

Of note, the hypothesis was formulated in part due to the logic that pursuing the principalship can frequently be driven by the lack of a 'next step' for a successful teacher. In fact, this exact term was often used by various interviewees (five in total). Particularly in the world of Orthodox Jewish day schools, promotion can be difficult to execute without the changing of title or role. Accordingly, Ellis and Bernhardt (1992) suggested that a model is needed within education that provides "adequate opportunities for challenge and advancement to satisfy the achievement motive of those with high growth needs." Their findings also seem to indicate a greater need for advancement in salary; yet do not point to a lack of job satisfaction for classroom teachers. This proved to be the case with 10 interviewees expressing hesitancy to leave the classroom, yet feeling a strong pull to have broader influence and meet higher growth needs (16 interviewees in total). Considering the model of distributed leadership, which is supported by the research of Spillane, Halverson et al. (2004), can relieve the immense burden that can fall on a principal. Furthermore, distributed leadership can empower capable school leaders on staff, and can be an effective practice worthy of further exploration.

## LIMITATIONS

The main items examined and analyzed within this study were the motivations and inhibitions of Orthodox Jewish day school educators who choose to pursue the principalship, as well as the impact of gender, age, level of school one teaches towards, and salary on their decision. While the research highlighted results that are of interest to the field at large, there were several limitations that affected the quality of the study. These limitations should be considered in analyzing the results of the research.

While I took great care to open the study to anyone who fit the criteria, several subjects who offered to participate in the study to fulfill the desired quota knew me via professional

networks and/or collaboration. This relationship may have affected their answers, as they might have worried that their answers would alter my perception of them, even though the interviews were conducted anonymously. Towards that end, while all interviews were in fact conducted in anonymity, answers given can potentially be limited due to hesitancy on the part of the interviewee. Additionally, the publicizing of this study, and any available interviewees, coincided with the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to government-mandated home lockdowns, as well as social-distancing guidelines and restrictions, interviews had to occur virtually via the Zoom platform. With schools closed and Zoom not yet fully mainstream, the comfortability of the interviewees may have been affected one way or the other, thereby affecting the results found within this study.

Lastly, this qualitative study was the first I've ever conducted. While great effort was taken to properly prepare appropriate questions that would best elicit open and broad responses, as well as to preserve the quality of the interviewee responses, some of the questions resulted in being somewhat leading in nature. While this occurred in questions that were more spontaneous or reactive to the richness of a particular response, they nonetheless serve as a limitation to various interviewee responses found within this study.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research offered insight into why Jewish day school teachers chose to pursue the office of the principalship, as well as what factors inhibited them from potentially doing so. Future research into some of the specific motivators and inhibitors, as well as specific demographics and their impact (e.g. school infrastructure, current leadership team/model, location, type of principalship), can shine a brighter light on what goes into the decision to alter

career paths. Identifying these factors could inform the field of education as to what attracts or deters potential candidates from joining prospective administrative opportunities.

First, while this research was geared towards examining what motivates and inhibits the pursuit of the principalship, research that is geared towards what sustains a principal to remain in administration, or what causes one to move back to strictly classroom teacher, would be important to the field. Many of the interviewees expressed pleasant surprises, as well as various regrets, with how each of their experiences as principals has treated them. Delving into the vast responsibilities and expectations of a principal in Jewish day school could better inform potential applicants and those considering the transition. Towards this end, curating research on principal training within the world of Jewish day schools could prove particularly valuable. The overwhelming majority of interviewees were not trained, and perhaps some of their perceptions, misconceptions, or adjustments could have been prepared for or avoided with proper or formal principal training.

Second, being able to examine the commonalities among various principal experiences could greatly inform which situations are better suited for which types of school leaders. Factors such as size of school, religious observance of school, location of school, turnover rate, and running budget could all determine the satisfactions and struggles of an entering principal, with some situations better served for new principals and others for more experienced candidates. Towards that end, examining the various roles within administration may provide valuable insight into which tasks and responsibilities tend to be assigned to which titles. With some schools adopting to choose a head of school, and various principals working under that leader, and others choosing to have a head principal, or perhaps multiple associate principals, or assistant principals for Judaic or general studies, it would be fascinating to identify which models

are most productive and/or satisfying. Related data could potentially shed light on how motives differ between those principals involved in Judaic Studies and those specializing in general studies in a Jewish day school setting.

Third, with so many teacher interviewees expressing an interest to have a broader influence, as well as mentoring others, research that examines teacher morale could help shine a light on how schools satisfy the professional curiosities that many teachers may foster, or how the schools fail to do so. Interviewees cited wanting to feel professionally challenged, yet for some educators this challenge can perhaps be met without a transition to the principalship or any level of administration.

Additionally, research on the expectations of a principal in Jewish day schools, and the expectations attached to them outside of school and during non-work hours, could inform the quality of life that various interviewees cited as an inhibitor, and delve into which boundaries are blurred by potential applicants or those considering the principalship. Identifying models that enable job satisfaction and peak performance could serve as a model for Jewish day schools across the globe. Research may better organize how quality of life is affected based on school demographics.

Finally, with salary proving to be a significant factor in the decision to pursue or accept the principalship, a more exhaustive study into the financial needs of Jewish educators, as well as their viability in Jewish communities, could serve as important data for necessary changes across the field or debunk ongoing assumptions about the life of an educator in the world of *chinuch*. Retaining our most talented educators is vital to the success of the field, as well as being able to attract potential successful teachers without discouraging these candidates when discussing finances. Identifying how to best position those in the field and their schools may shed light on

the inadequacies or misconceptions associated with committing to the life of a classroom teacher, and in some cases a married couple who are both teachers. (Schick's (2007) survey of North American Jewish day schools found more than a quarter of principals surveyed had spouses in Jewish education.)

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# Appendix A

## Ad Verbiage for Recruiting Potential Participants

Dear Principal,
I hope all is well with you. My name is Eitan Lipstein and I am a Middle School Assistant Principal at The Moriah School, an Orthodox Jewish day school in Englewood, New Jersey. I am also a doctoral student at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at Yeshiva University and would appreciate your participation in helping to carry out my doctoral dissertation research.

I am conducting a qualitative research study for my doctoral dissertation on the decision to pursue the principalship, and mainly looking to examine the motivations for teachers in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools to leave the classroom and pursue the principalship, as well as what aspects of administration inhibits the pursuit of the principalship in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools? With the job of a principal expanding on a yearly basis, and the pressures that are attached to the role increasing, this research will better inform why teachers within Jewish education pursue the role with all of these pressures, and why so many refrain from it as well. It is my hope that the research will shine a light on the motivators behind those joining the principalship and how to best position those suited for the principalship, as well as those educators who thrive at instruction and within the context of classroom teaching.

I am looking for current Heads of Schools, Principals or Assistant Principals who have served in the capacity of said administrator for a minimum of one year, and who previously served as a teacher for a minimum of three years. Ideally, participants will span the U.S. and vary in age, gender and school-level (i.e. elementary, middle, high). Your participation involves an in-person or video interview (based on the interviewee's preference and geographical logistics) which should last between 40-45 minutes. Questions will seek demographic information and ask open-ended questions regarding your motivations and inhibitions for pursuing the principalship. Please be assured that this interview is completely optional and is 100% anonymous, as your answers and image will not be distributed with any connection to your name, or the name of the school that you work for.

If you have any questions related to this research, please feel free to contact me at eitanlipstein@gmail.com or 516-477-7169.

As a principal myself, I am certainly aware of the sacrifice you are making to speak with me and the premium placed on the hours within your day and cannot thank you enough for your consideration and assistance in developing this research. It is my hope that it will better inform Jewish education and maximize the potential of all teachers who have chosen this career path.

Sincerely,

Eitan Lipstein

## Appendix B

## Interview Guide

*Pre-Interview Statement to all Interviewees:*

*Thank you so much for taking the time out of your incredibly busy schedule to serve as a completely anonymous subject of my study on motivators and inhibitors for Orthodox teachers to pursue the principalship in Jewish day schools. As a principal myself, I am certainly aware of the sacrifice you are making to speak with me and the premium placed on the hours within your day. Please be assured that this interview is completely anonymous and your answers and image will not be distributed with any connection to your name, or the name of the school that you work for.*

A. Please state your age, gender, what level of schooling you currently serve as a principal, and where your school is located.

B. Please tell me how many years you have served as a principal/assistant principal?

C. How many years prior to becoming a principal did you serve as a teacher?

1) Tell me the story of how you became a principal.

1a) Why did you decide to become a principal?

- What experiences or anecdotes were impactful in your decision to pursue administration?
- What role, if any, did outside influence (i.e. peers, family and individual recognition) play in your decision to pursue the principalship?
- What facets of the principalship were most attractive/intriguing to you as you considered becoming a principal?
- What, if any, facets of your successes as an educator did you feel translated most directly to you responsibilities as a principal? Did you feel a responsibility to pursue the principalship given your leadership qualities?

- Were there any experiences with principals you've worked with, if any, that helped drive you to pursue the principalship?
- To what degree, if any, did the leadership avenues that opened up through obtaining the principalship, which perhaps didn't exist as a teacher, affect your decision?
- How much of your decision to pursue the principalship was due to the field versus your particular school?

*Side questions of interest (perhaps to weave into conversation):*

A. What kind of role, if any, did legacy play into your decision? (Were you driven by the notion that the positive changes that you could possibly make would have a lasting impact, beyond just your tenure, in the role of principal?)

B. What kind of role, if any, did your desire to grow, or 'rise the ranks' within education, play in your decision to pursue the principalship?

C. What kind of role did the recognition you did or didn't receive, for your accomplishments and abilities as an educator, impact your decision to pursue the principalship?

D. What kind of role, if any, did job security play in your decision to pursue the principalship?

2) Were there facets of the principalship that made you hesitant to pursue administration?

- What does your daily schedule look like? Can you take me through your day yesterday or your schedule of tasks slated for tomorrow?
- Are there any other daily responsibilities that you did not mention?
- Please describe the differences and similarities between your responsibilities during the school day versus your responsibilities after dismissal or on weekends?
- Can you talk about how work-life balance factored into your decision to pursue the principalship?

- Hypothetically, is there a scenario where you would have refrained from pursuing the principalship?
- What role, if any, did the stress-level and responsibilities of the principalship play in your decision?
- Did you consider staying as a teacher? Why? Why not?
    - Is there anything you were capable of as a teacher that you're not capable of as a principal?

3) What role, if any, did the level at which you taught (i.e. primary, middle, high) impact your motivation to pursue your first administrative job?

3a) At what age did you begin as a principal? In what ways do you feel you were doubted or trusted as a result of your age?

3b) In what ways did you feel you were particularly qualified, or unqualified, due to your age?

3c) Have you received any degrees in education? If so, what kinds and from where? Have you received training or studied for the principalship in any capacity? If so, for how much time did you do so and through which training program?

- If you have received any training to become a principal (i.e. degree and/or certification), what element of the job did it best prepare you for? Why do you believe this to be so?

4) Did increased salary inform your decision to join the principalship?

- Can you describe the level of recognition you felt as a teacher and how that experience informed your decision to pursue the principalship and how you occupied the role of principal thereafter?
- Which of your responsibilities do you find teachers value most? Students? Parents?

- How have your motivations to enter the principalship been satisfied through occupying your role?
- In what ways do you feel satisfaction and/or regret in your decision to pursue the principalship?
- What do you find most satisfying now that you occupy the office of the principal?
- Which of your responsibilities do you find the most difficult to fulfill?
- What facets of the job do you find satisfying that did not stand out as motivators in your initial pursuit of the principalship?

**For female interviewees:**

1) Did you feel that you were at an advantage or disadvantage at any point of your pursuit of the principalship as a result of your gender?

2) Did your knowledge of other female principals you've worked with inform your decision? Did you feel discouraged by the struggles of any female principals whom you worked with?

3) Tell me about the mistreatment or bias you may have witnessed towards female administrators or applicants throughout your career in education.

4) Can you talk about the role that your maternal goals played in your pursuit of the principalship and how being a female factored into your decision to pursue the principalship?

5) How much, if any, of your pursuit of the principalship is due to your desire for promotion versus your interest in the role of principal?