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Model Profile for the Federal Programs Director in the State of Mississippi

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Model profile for the federal programs director in the state of Mississippi

By

Rico Jamel Buckhaulter

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Education Administration
in the Department of Educational Leadership

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2017

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2017

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Mississippi Department of Education requires that all school districts are in compliance with state and federal regulations in Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Title V, Title VI, Title X and other federally-funded grants or programs. Federal regulations require that each school district throughout the state employ a licensed administrator serving as the federal programs coordinator, director, or administrator in a full or part-time capacity (Mississippi Department of Education, 2013). For the purpose of this study, these positions will be referred to as federal programs directors.

Federal programs directors are responsible for the management and implementation of federal funds in public schools. The purpose of federal funds are determined by federal legislation and are used to improve student achievement, enhance teacher quality, increase equity and access to educational resources, and provide innovative strategies for recruiting teachers and improving graduation rates (NCLB, 2001). The work of federal programs directors includes promoting student achievement through strategic planning, administering professional development, providing research-based curriculum and instructional materials, and organizing extended school day and school year tutorial or enrichment learning opportunities for students. There are several

factors serve as common links between federal programs directors in Mississippi, which further prepare them to meet the responsibilities of this job. Such areas include working knowledge of federal program requirements, legal issues, personnel evaluation, and effective school reform initiatives.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this Doctoral dissertation to the all mighty God. It is because of him that all things are possible. I will continue to put him first and use this terminal degree for his glory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Shelsea D. Buckhaulte, my son, Cameron J. Buckhaulte, my parents, Dean and Barbara Buckhaulte for their support throughout the years. The faculty and staff at Mississippi State University provided continuous patience and support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requires that each school district throughout the state employ a licensed administrator serving as the federal programs coordinator, director, or administrator in a full or part-time capacity (MDE, 2013).

The federal programs director is responsible for the management and implementation of federal funds in public schools. Federal funds are defined by law and used to improve student achievement, enhance teacher quality, increase equity and access to educational resources, and provide innovative strategies for recruiting teachers and improving graduation rates (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001).

The work of federal programs directors involves a number of activities such as promoting student achievement through strategic planning, administering professional development, providing research-based curriculum and instructional materials, and organizing extended school day and school year tutorial or enrichment learning opportunities for students.

Federal programs directors in Mississippi are required to be properly licensed and endorsed by the MDE's Office of Teacher Certification and Licensure (MDE, 2015).

In addition to certification, several other factors are associated with the role of the federal programs director. These areas include working knowledge of federal program

requirements, legal issues, personnel evaluation, and effective school reform initiatives.

In terms of educational leadership, the federal programs director's role includes establishing the vision and direction of a school district's federally funded programs, resolving complex issues and problems, and continually staying abreast of new state and federal regulations (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004).

Role definition varies from school district to school district. For example, some federal programs directors may also function as assistant superintendents and are integral members of the district leadership team. Conversely, other federal programs directors may be given leadership roles such as technology coordinator, special education coordinator, or curriculum director.

Problem Statement, Purpose, and Research Questions

The problem this study addressed is the lack of information concerning what actually constitutes the responsibilities and tasks of the federal programs director in the state of Mississippi and the nation in general. Directors in Mississippi school districts are expected to successfully carry out several responsibilities and tasks, but specificity appears to be lacking from school district to school district.

The purpose of this investigation was to analyze information pertaining to the role of the federal programs director for each of Mississippi's 144 school districts using data readily accessible to the public in the form of documents and records in order to attempt to create a model profile for the position. Published "best practices" literature pertaining to the role of the federal programs director was also utilized.

Seven research questions guided the investigation. The seven questions providing structure for the study follow:

1. What are the “career paths” that appear to prepare an educator to become a federal program director?
2. What are the degree levels that appear to prepare an educator to become a federal program director?
3. What are the certifications/endorsements an educator needs to become a federal program director?
4. What are the major supervisory responsibilities of a federal program director from a consensus perspective?
5. What are the major work tasks of a federal program director from a consensus perspective?
6. What major managerial skill sets appear advantageous in relation to the federal program director position from a consensus perspective?
7. Can a model “profile” for the federal programs directorship be developed?

The seven questions provided the structural framework for the investigation and made the development of an “ideal” federal programs director possible.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was that it provided information needed by officials in institutions of higher learning and state departments of education. Colleges, universities, and state departments of education should be knowledgeable of expectations for federal programs directors lead to achieving managerial excellence in the position.

Teachers and qualified educators that aspire to become federal programs directors

must meet the guidelines that have been adopted in order to become licensed. However, does the credentialing process produce directors who have the potential to become successful leaders in the field?

Perhaps some key components impacting the preparation of the federal programs director have been left out of the current expectations. This investigation searched for inconsistencies in the preparation process for directors of federal programs, believing such knowledge could lead to adjustments being made to current school administration preparation programs and licensure requirements.

Methods

The methods section addresses the research design used in the investigation, how data were collected, and how collected data were analyzed.

The research design for this investigation may be referred to as a case study. Mississippi federal program directors constituted the case. Public documents and records provided information.

Collection of data for the investigation involved multiple publicly available school district, statewide, and national sources. Data were collected from archival documents and records accessible to the public. Data were collected relative to each of the seven research questions.

Tables were used to analyze data collected. Table-oriented techniques for displaying data for the purpose of analysis provide excellent display tools because they visually communicated information. Complicated information is often difficult to understand and requires illustration. Tables help increase understanding.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was that it was a case study and focused on federal programs directors in only one state, Mississippi. Essentially, inferences drawn focused on Mississippi, the state in which the bulk of data were collected. However, the “best practices” literature compiled was national in scope. Although the results cannot be readily generalized to other states, they may have limited value in regard to states other than Mississippi.

Another limitation that should be noted was that the investigation was limited to information (e.g., documents and records) readily accessible to the public. Private or confidential documents were not utilized because they fell outside the scope of the investigation focusing on publicly accessible documents and records.

Because of the emphasis put on the practical value of producing an “ideal” profile model, the investigation was purposely delimited to the state of Mississippi for the purpose of assisting school district officials and governing board members in the state to make better decisions when appointing federal programs directors.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter II presents a review of literature addressing federal programs directors and is subdivided into three major sections: (1) role of the federal programs director, (2) theoretical base, and (3) career paths.

Role: Federal Programs Director

In most public school districts, the role of the federal programs director is to administer programs funded through federal dollars, required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In January 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended and reauthorized as the NCLB.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed NCLB into law. This act dramatically changed and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The new Act required states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in particular grades, if those states were to receive federal funding for schools (United States Department of Education, 2002).

The change increased accountability for student academic achievement. The major change involved the United States Department of Education providing formula grants annually to each state education agency for programs listed under the NCLB.

Consequently, program funds flowed through state education agencies to local school districts. The primary responsibilities of federal program directors focused on

ensuring compliance with the federal regulations and state laws, coordinating program planning, implementation and evaluation for each of these areas, and expending federal dollars in accordance with federal regulations (Towan & Edwards, 2011).

The professional requirements for the job of federal programs director include making numerous programmatic, budgeting, and regulatory decisions to ensure accountability for federal funds which include Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Title V, Title VI, and Title X, as well as other competitively-funded programs. In addition, directors of federal programs are responsible for ensuring that numerous aspects of NCLB are implemented (MDE, 2013).

NCLB requirements emphasized accountability as a key component for increased student academic performance in public schools and placed increased pressure on states and school districts to close existing achievement gaps among students. All schools were expected to comply with these new accountability standards. However, to date, only schools receiving Title I supplemental federal funding are subject to sanctions if achievement goals are not met (Winters, 2011). Title I schools are directly affected by this legislation through programmatic requirements and sanctions if they do not meet adequate yearly progress goals toward their state's established proficiency goals. The federal government provides a listing of corrective actions for low-performing Title I schools, if they fail to make adequate progress for more than two consecutive years. Accountability, in the form of NCLB, has become the primary and most public method used to measure a school's overall effectiveness by analyzing student performance outcomes and holding schools responsible for improvements needed.

NCLB was designed to provide guidance to schools in response to the inequities that exist within the educational system. In an effort to increase effectiveness, many school districts rely on innovative uses of funding through federal programs.

Consequently, with the emergence of NCLB, the role of the federal programs director has come to include tasks focused on accountability and improving teacher effectiveness. The tasks can be categorized into four major areas: improving teacher quality and capacity, overseeing program activities that support increased student achievement, ensuring federal and state laws and fiscal requirements are upheld, and coordinating parental and community involvement efforts. In addition, the professional requirements of federal programs director include managing and implementing considerable amounts of federal funds to augment school-based educational and innovative support programs.

There is a compelling national interest in the quality of the nation's public schools. Through the legislative process, the federal government provides financial assistance to states and school districts in an effort to supplement state support. The primary source of federal K-12 support began in 1965 with the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. While the federal government does provide a considerable amount of funding to states and local school districts, the vast majority of all education dollars is derived from state and local funds. On average, 83% of all education funding is from state and local sources (United States Department of Education, 2005).

The change increased accountability for student academic achievement. The United States Department of Education provided formula grants annually to each state education agency for programs listed under the NCLB Act.

Consequently, program funds flowed through state education agencies to local school districts. The primary responsibilities of federal program directors focused on ensuring compliance with the federal regulations and state laws, coordinating program planning, implementation and evaluation for each of these areas, and expending federal dollars in accordance with federal regulations (Towan & Edwards, 2011).

Theoretical Base: Federal Programs Director

In the past several decades, a plethora of research studies have been conducted in an attempt to understand leadership. Bennis and Janus (2003) stated, “Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last seventy-five years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders...” (p. 4). The aforementioned statement appears especially apropos in regard to the role of the federal programs director.

Leadership studies were designed to determine if the traits and characteristics prevalent in leaders labeled as *good* or *effective* could be transferred to others. Results were inconclusive.

In the majority of the studies, effort was devoted to understanding whether leadership abilities were instinctive and inherent, or mostly learned. The preponderance of evidence from the majority of the studies suggested that no one leadership style seemed to actually fit all situations.

While some leadership theories placed emphasis on the leader’s traits or the current situation, the approach referred to as Skills-Based Leadership Theory focused on skills which strong leaders possess. The skills-based theory, a concept very suitable

to the work of the federal programs director, focused on the idea that one can identify the knowledge and skills needed in order to improve one's overall leadership abilities.

Development of the Skills-Based Leadership Theory is credited to the work of two major studies: one conducted by Katz (2009); and another conducted by and Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman (2000). Their research identified three basic categories of skills that effective leaders must possess: technical, human, and conceptual. Further work expanded the original theory to include what is commonly referred to as the four-skills model: a model that includes interpersonal, cognitive, business, and strategic skills. Both studies confirmed that leadership is not simply based on traits that one is born with, but rather on skills which can be learned, developed, and improved over time.

The research suggested that leadership skills generally fall into one of three categories: technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills.

Technical skills are defined as functioning at the proficiency level, based on specific knowledge, in a particular area of work. A person who is competent and knowledgeable about specific tasks or aspects of an organization was considered to exhibit technical skills. Studies further noted that technical skill lessens in importance as an administrator moves up in an organization (Katz, 2009).

Human skills are based on proficiency in regard to working with people. Leaders utilize human skills as they work with people in regard to understanding how they behave, how they operate in groups, how they communicate, and how they interact with others. Human skills are required as leaders attempt to influence and persuade others to accomplish organizational goals. Also, human skills are needed at all levels of

management: supervisory, middle management, and senior management (Mumford et al., 2000).

Conceptual skills focus on thinking through ideas and working with concepts or theories (Northouse, 2010). Leaders who express conceptual skills often demonstrate proficiency with asking hypothetical questions, participating in strategic planning, and projecting solutions to potential problems. While conceptual skills are used by all levels of leadership, supervisory managers use these skills less often than executives.

In support of conceptual skills, Northouse (2010) noted that in order to achieve success at the executive management level, leaders must develop considerable conceptual skills.

While some research focused on the leadership skills that managers use to take action, the work of Mumford et al. (2000) focused on the capabilities that make leaders effective. Leadership capability is categorized by five elements: leader competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environmental influences.

Three leadership competencies result in effective leadership: problem solving, social judgment, and knowledge. Additionally, Mumford, et al. (2000) noted four attributes which impact the leader's competencies and subsequently, the leader's performance. These attributes are general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability (i.e., reasoning which develops through experience), motivation, and personality. While attributes impact the leader's competencies, they also affect leadership outcomes.

Mumford, et al. (2000) noted that successful leadership includes effective problem solving and performance. Their research also documented that career experiences have a significant impact on the leader's effectiveness.

In addition, Mumford, et al. (2000) found that a leader's experiences in previous job assignments may help to develop motivation, problem solving abilities, and enhance knowledge levels in future endeavors. They also noted that environmental influences can be a factor in the success or failure of an organization's leader. Environmental influences are categorized as those factors that are beyond the control of the individual and should be used with caution as to not appear to be an excuse for poor performance or execution.

Simply put, the Skills-Based Leadership Theory provides an approach that allows potential leaders to examine holistically what is necessary to become an effective leader.

According to Reithel and Finch (2007), this theoretical approach, however, does not offer a prescribed list of steps or actions that a federal programs director must take to be considered an effective leader. On the contrary, this approach focuses on many facets of leadership: from interpersonal qualities to pragmatic experiences.

Career Paths: Federal Programs Director

During the 1990s, Rogers (1999) noted that the majority of federal programs director positions in Mississippi were held by experienced administrators. Today, nothing has changed from Rogers's findings. According to MDE records, the majority of the directors of federal programs in Mississippi continue to be experienced administrators and also former teachers (Mississippi Department of Education, 2014).

Rogers (1999) noted that the federal programs director provided service and expertise to schools in order to help them fulfill their missions without distraction. Increased accountability for student achievement shifted the role of the federal programs director from that of a manager of federal funds to instructional leader. This shift required the directors to be skilled in providing, organizing, and leading quality professional development for school administrators and teachers that directly leads to increased student achievement. While Rogers (1999) attempted to connect the role of the principal (building-level school administrator) to increased student learning outcomes, Rogers (1999) found that little research tried to determine the value of the role of the federal programs director to student achievement.

Young and McLeod (2001) studied the factors affecting the decisions to enter the field of educational administration. Their work was conducted in Iowa and utilized two techniques for data collection. Initially, Young and McLeod reviewed the university records of graduate students enrolled in an educational administration program and collected eight pieces of informational data on each of them. The graduate students' records were reviewed to determine (1) the number of years each student had as an educator, (2) grade and subject level taught, (3) if a master's degree was earned before enrolling in the program and in what area, (4) teaching credential endorsement area, (5) time taken to complete the degree program, (6) degree sought, (7) previous administrative experience, and (8) content of the student's statement in regard to pursuing graduate study. Data were reviewed to determine a purposeful sample of administrators and educational administration graduate students to study in depth. Researchers conducted interviews, both semi-structured and open-ended, with administrators and educational

administration students. Young and McLeod (2001) reported that factors affecting decisions that educators made to enter administration were career aspirations, administrative role models, exposure to non-traditional leadership styles, and encouragement and support from practitioners to pursue a career in administration.

The study also indicated that the subjects in the sample entered administration to facilitate learning, which was similar to the reason they gave for entering the teaching profession in the first place.

Young and McLeod (2001) concluded that mentoring, role modeling, and exposure to nontraditional leadership concepts played an important role in the subjects' decisions whether to continue teaching or enter educational administration. Nearly all of the encouragement given to prospective leaders to enter school administration came from fellow teachers and supervising administrators. Very little encouragement came from parents or students. Encouragement was perceived as more significant when it came from administrators.

Wolverton and Macdonald (2001) examined the career paths of educational administrators who were or wanted to become school district superintendents. The subjects were or had been middle-level administrators such as principals or directors of federal programs. They surveyed approximately 2,000 superintendents and superintendent certificate holders in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Of those surveyed, 61% responded. Findings indicated that both men and women educators demonstrated an understanding of the position of superintendent and the leadership skills required. Overall, they believed their work as principals or directors of federal programs prepared them to become chief executives. Women administrators,

however, were more satisfied with staying as principals or directors of federal programs than moving forward to become superintendents. Also, more women than men believed serving as a federal programs director provided an important door to becoming a superintendent or assistant superintendent because of the position's district-level responsibilities and tasks.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Chapter III presents the methods utilized for the investigation titled “Model Profile for the Federal Programs Director in the State of Mississippi.” The chapter is subdivided into three major sections. The sections address (1) research design, (2) data collection, and (3) data analysis.

The purpose of this investigation was to develop a profile of what could be considered an “ideal” federal programs director in relation to qualifications, responsibilities, and tasks. The investigation called for collecting and analyzing information pertaining to the role of the federal programs director for each of Mississippi’s 144 school districts using data readily accessible to the public in the form of documents and records. Published “best practices” literature pertaining to the role of the federal programs director was also utilized.

Research Design

A qualitative research design, referred to as “easily accessible” archival research, that focused on public information available in publications (hardcopy and electronic) provided through libraries; conference proceedings; and federal, state, and other governmental agencies was used in this investigation. In brief, the study focused on data collection and analysis of publically accessible archival information. Archival research

involves seeking out and extracting information from public and/or private documents and records (Blendinger & Adams, 2015).

According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2006), documents may be considered written communications prepared for either publication, personal, or official purposes. Records, on the other hand, are usually more narrowly define as written communications primarily intended for an official purpose, but also are usually available to the public at large.

Blendinger and Adams (2006) suggest that examples of documents and records used in archival research include books, chapters in books, articles, and websites, business and personal letters, diary entries, legal contracts, commission reports, meeting minutes, and newspaper articles.

Practically speaking, documents and records may be held personally, or in institutional archive repositories, or in the custody of the organization (e.g., government body, business, family, or other agency) that originally generated or accumulated them. Official documents and records (e.g., school board meeting minutes) ordinarily constitute excellent sources of information because of the care which official bodies must exercise to make certain that such materials are accurate, complete, and carefully preserved.

Newspaper accounts, although not always accurate in detail because factual material may be interpreted and presented in more than one way, also provide excellent sources of information. News articles often present essential facts and serve as a more or less permanent record of day-to-day happenings in a particular community.

Blendinger and Adams (2015), however, believe that archival research can be burdensome although it provides a treasure chest of information.

Archival research is often complex and time-consuming. Also, archival research can present challenges in identifying, locating and interpreting documents. Archival documents and records are often unique, necessitating travel to access them. Although some archival documents and records are electronically available, many are not. The researcher may have to hunt through large quantities of documents in search of material relevant to his or her particular study. In addition, some records may be closed to public access for reasons of confidentiality.

Data Collection Procedures

The purpose of this investigation was to collect and analyze information pertaining to the role of the federal programs director for each of Mississippi's 144 school districts using data readily accessible to the public in the form of documents and records. Published "best practices" literature pertaining to the role of the federal programs director was also utilized.

The data collection process utilized in the investigation provided the foundational structure for developing a model profile (in the form of a job description) for the position of federal programs director.

Data for the study were collected from published literature and from MDE documents and records made accessible to the public (MDE, 2014).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis process utilized in the investigation made it possible develop a model profile (in the form of a job description) for the position of federal programs director.

Visual graphics in the form of charts were used to analyze data collected because they focused attention on the most important aspects of the study. They also provide excellent tools for investigations such as this study because they communicate information visually. Complicated information is often difficult to understand and needs an illustration. These types of instruments increase understanding by getting points across clearly and concisely.

A chart, graph, or table represents a diagrammatical illustration of a set of data. When one of these items is placed within a narrative, the point being made becomes easier to see and understand.

Chapter IV visually displays collected data in the form of charts. Making comparisons, showing relationships, and highlighting trends through charts can significantly enhance the reader's comprehension of the study's findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter IV presents the findings and discussion for the investigation titled “Model Profile for the ‘Ideal’ Federal Programs Director in the State of Mississippi. The chapter also presents a discussion of the findings.

The purpose of this investigation was to collect and analyze information pertaining to the role of the federal programs director for each of Mississippi’s 144 school districts using data readily accessible to the public in the form of documents and records. Published “best practices” literature pertaining to the role of the federal programs director was also utilized.

The data collection and analysis process utilized in the investigation made it possible develop a model profile (in the form of a job description) for the position of federal programs director.

The findings are presented and discussed in relation to six of the seven research questions that guided the investigation. The seventh question that focused on developing a model profile for the federal programs directorship is addressed in Chapter V. The model identifies the responsibilities and tasks related to serving in the administrative role of the federal program director in the state of Mississippi.

A total of 144 job descriptions for federal program directors were collected and analyzed in the course of the investigation. Table 1 presents the official name of the

school district from which the job description was collected and the city (or town) in which the district's central office is located.

Table 1

Mississippi School Districts

<u>School Districts</u>	<u>City or Town</u>
1. Aberdeen School District	Aberdeen, MS
2. Alcorn School District	Corinth, MS
3. Amite County School District	Liberty, MS
4. Amory School District	Amory, MS
5. Attala County School District	Kosciusko, MS
6. Baldwin Public School	Baldwyn, MS
7. Bay St. Louis-Waveland School District	Bay St. Louis, MS
8. Benton County School District	Ashland, MS
9. Biloxi Public School District	Biloxi, MS
10. Booneville School District	Booneville, MS
11. Brookhaven School District	Brookhaven, MS
12. Calhoun County School District	Pittsboro, MS
13. Canton Public School District	Canton, MS
14. Carroll County School District	Carrollton, MS
15. Chickasaw County School District	Houlka, MS
16. Choctaw County School District	Ackerman, MS
17. Claiborne County School District	Port Gibson, MS
18. Clarksdale Municipal School District	Clarksdale, MS
19. Cleveland School District	Cleveland, MS
20. Clinton Public School District	Clinton, MS
21. Coahoma Agricultural High School	Clarksdale, MS
22. Coahoma County School District	Clarksdale, MS
23. Coffeeville School District	Coffeeville, MS
24. Columbia School District	Columbia, MS
25. Columbus Municipal School District	Columbus, MS
26. Copiah County School District	Hazelhurst, MS
27. Corinth School District	Corinth, MS
28. Covington County School District	Collins, MS
29. DeSoto County School District	Hernando, MS
30. Durant Public School District	Durant, MS
31. East Jasper School District	Heidelberg, MS
32. East Tallahatchie School District	Charleston, MS
33. Enterprise School District	Enterprise, MS
34. Forest Municipal School District	Forest, MS
35. Forrest County AHS	Brooklyn, MS

Table 1 (Continued)

36. Forrest County Schools	Hattiesburg, MS
37. Franklin County School District	Meadville, MS
38. George County School District	Lucedale, MS
39. Greene County School District	Leakeville, MS
40. Greenville Public School District	Greenville, MS
41. Greenwood Public School District	Greenwood, MS
42. Grenada School District	Grenada, MS
43. Gulfport School District	Gulfport, MS
44. Hancock County School District	Kiln, MS
45. Harrison County School District	Gulfport, MS
46. Hattiesburg Public School District	Hattiesburg, MS
47. Hazlehurst City School District	Hazlehurst, MS
48. Hinds County School District	Raymond, MS
49. Hollandale School District	Hollandale, MS
50. Holly Springs School District	Holly Springs, MS
51. Holmes County School District	Lexington, MS
52. Houston School District	Houston, MS
53. Humphreys County School District	Belzoni, MS
54. Itawamba County School District	Fulton, MS
55. Jackson County School District	Vancleave, MS
56. Jackson Public School District	Jackson, MS
57. Jefferson County School District	Fayette, MS
58. Jefferson Davis County School District	Prentiss, MS
59. Jones County School District	Ellisville, MS
60. Kemper County School District	Dekalb, MS
61. Kosciusko School District	Kosciusko, MS
62. Lafayette County School District	Oxford, MS
63. Lamar County School District	Purvis, MS
64. Lauderdale County School District	Meridian, MS
65. Laurel School District	Laurel, MS
66. Lawrence County School District	Monticello, MS
67. Leake County School District	Carthage, MS
68. Lee County School District	Tupelo, MS
69. Leflore County School District	Greenwood, MS
70. Leland School District	Leland, MS
71. Lincoln County School District	Brookhaven, MS
72. Long Beach School District	Long Beach, MS
73. Louisville Municipal School District	Louisville, MS
74. Lowndes County School District	Columbus, MS
75. Lumberton Public School District	Lumberton, MS
76. Madison County School District	Madison, MS
77. Marion County School District	Columbia, MS
78. Marshall County School District	Holly Springs, MS

Table 1 (Continued)

79. McComb School District	McComb, MS
80. Meridian Public School District	Meridian, MS
81. Monroe County School District	Amory, MS
82. Montgomery County School District	Winona, MS
83. Moss Point School District	Moss Point, MS
84. Natchez-Adams School District	Natchez, MS
85. Neshoba County School District	Philadelphia, MS
86. Nettleton School District	Nettleton, MS
87. New Albany School District	New Albany, MS
88. Newton County Schools	Decatur, MS
89. Newton Municipal School District	Newton, MS
90. North Bolivar Consolidated School District	Shelby, MS
91. North Panola School District	Sardis, MS
92. North Pike School District	Summit, MS
93. North Tippah School District	Tiplersville, MS
94. Noxubee County School District	Macon, MS
95. Ocean Springs School District	Ocean Springs, MS
96. Okolona School District	Okolona, MS
97. Oxford Public School District	Oxford, MS
98. Pascagoula School District	Pascagoula, MS
99. Pass Christian School District	Pass Christian, MS
100. Pearl Public School District	Pearl, MS
101. Pearl River County School District	Carriere, MS
102. Perry County School District	New Augusta, MS
103. Petal Public School District	Petal, MS
104. Philadelphia Public School District	Philadelphia, MS
105. Picayune School District	Picayune, MS
106. Pontotoc City School District	Pontotoc, MS
107. Pontotoc County School District	Pontotoc, MS
108. Poplarville School District	Poplarville, MS
109. Prentiss County School District	Booneville, MS
110. Quitman Consolidated School District	Quitman, MS
111. Quitman County School District	Marks, MS
112. Rankin County School District	Brandon, MS
113. Richton School District	Richton, MS
114. Scott County School District	Forest, MS
115. Senatobia Municipal School District	Senatobia, MS
116. Simpson County School District	Mendenhall, MS
117. Smith County School District	Raleigh, MS
118. South Delta School District	Rolling Fork, MS
119. South Panola School District	Batesville, MS
120. South Pike School District	Magnolia, MS
121. South Tippah School District	Ripley, MS

Table 1 (Continued)

122. Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District	Starkville, MS
123. Stone County School District	Wiggins, MS
124. Sunflower County Consolidated School District	Indianola, MS
125. Tate County School District	Senatobia, MS
126. Tishomingo County School District	Iuka, MS
127. Tunica County School District	Tunica, MS
128. Tupelo Public School District	Tupelo, MS
129. Union County School District	New Albany, MS
130. Union Public School District	Union, MS
131. Vicksburg-Warren School District	Vicksburg, MS
132. Walthall County School District	Tylertown, MS
133. Water Valley School District	Water Valley, MS
134. Wayne County School District	Waynesboro, MS
135. Webster County School District	Eupora, MS
136. West Bolivar Consolidated School District	Rosedale, MS
137. West Jasper School District	Bay Springs, MS
138. West Point School District	West Point, MS
139. West Tallahatchie School District	Webb, MS
140. Western Line School District	Avon, MS
141. Wilkinson County School District	Woodville, MS
142. Winona School District	Winona, MS
143. Yazoo City Municipal School District	Yazoo City, MS
144. Yazoo County School District	Yazoo City, MS

As previously stated, the 144 job descriptions for federal program directors collected from school districts yielded valuable information about the responsibilities and tasks of the federal programs directors in the state of Mississippi.

Career Paths for Becoming a Federal Programs Director

The first research question guiding the investigation asked: What are the “career paths” that prepare an educator to become a federal programs director?

All directors of federal programs in the state of Mississippi must hold a Class AA degree level credential (MDE, 2015).

The career path for directors of federal programs in Mississippi requires Class A degree level credential job experience prior to obtaining a Class AA degree level credential. To be eligible to earn a Class AA degree level credential, the applicant must first be eligible for a Class A teaching credential. After obtaining a Class A credential as a teacher, guidance counselor, or speech pathologist, a federal programs director must then earn a master's degree from an accredited university or college.

The most popular teaching paths to eventually becoming a federal programs director pertain to the applied disciplines of elementary education, English education, social studies, developmental reading, and mild/moderate disabilities special education. Earning an advanced graduate degree in educational administration appears common among directors of federal programs.

Forty-five percent of the federal directors in Mississippi continue their education and earn Class AAA and Class AAAA level credentials. These credentials require specialist or doctoral degrees.

Degree Levels for Becoming a Federal Programs Director

The second research question guiding the investigation asked: What are the credentialing levels that prepare an educator to become a federal programs director?

According to MDE, there are four credentialing levels: Class A (requires a baccalaureate degree), Class AA (requires a master's degree), Class AAA (requires a specialist degree), and Class AAAA (requires a doctoral degree). Because, the director must hold a master's degree at the very least is required (MDE, 2015).

A total of 143 directors of federal programs were employed in the state during the 2015-2016 school year (one position was not filled). Information displayed in Table 2

presents the credential levels (Class AA, master’s degree; AAA, specialist degree; AAAA, doctoral degree) of the directors. An AA class level credential signifies that the director has an earned master’s degree from a regionally/nationally accredited institution of higher education. An AAA class level credential signifies that the director has an earned educational specialist degree from a regionally/nationally accredited institution of higher education. An AAAA class level credential signifies that the director has an earned doctoral degree from a regionally/nationally accredited institution of higher education. The chart also presents numbers and percentages.

Table 2

Credential and Degree Levels of Directors of Federal Programs

<u>Credential Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Class AA (master’s degree)	79	55%
Class AAA (specialist degree)	30	21%
Class AAAA (doctoral degree)	34	24%

The findings shown in the chart indicate that the majority of the directors of federal programs (55%) have at least a Class AA master’s degree educator level credential. Forty-five percent hold more advanced degrees.

Educator licenses are valid from the day the completed application packet is received and validated by the MDE’s Office of Educator Licensure. All educator licenses expire on June 30th of the year of expiration. A five-year educator license issued at any time during the school year is valid for five school years including the school year in which it is granted. MDE (2014) defines a school year as from July 1 to June 30.

The renewal of educator licenses is also directed and governed through the MDE's Office of Educator Licensure. In Mississippi, only a five-year, standard educator license is eligible for renewal.

The Class A educator license can be renewed in four ways: (1) the completion of 10 continuing education units (CEUs) in content or job/skill related area; or (2) the completion of three semester hours in content or job/skill related area and five continuing education units in content or job/skill related area; or (3) the completion of six semester hours in content or job/skill related area; or (4) the completion of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards process.

The Class AA, AAA or AAAA educator license can be renewed in three ways: (1) the completion of three semester hours in content or job/skill related area; or (2) the completion of five continuing education units in content or job/skill related area; or (3) the completion of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards process.

The Mississippi Standard Career Administrator license can be renewed in four ways: (1) the completion of 70 School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) credits, (2) the completion of six hours of coursework, (3) the completion of 35 SEMI credits and three hours of coursework, or (4) the completion of a specialist or doctoral degree in educational administration/leadership.

Endorsements for Becoming a Federal Program Director

The third research question guiding the investigation asked: Does an educator need to have particular endorsements to become a federal programs director?

MDE does not require any particular teaching endorsements (e.g., English). Federal program directors, however, have to possess at least a Class AA level credential, preferably in the realm of educational administration.

To obtain a Class AA level credential, a Class A level credential must first be secured. It is not required that the Class A level credential have any specific endorsements. In regard to educational administration, the Class AA level credential endorsements can be any of the following: Career Level Administrator, Standard Career Level Alternate Administrator, Entry Level Administrator, Entry Level Administrator (Mississippi Alternate Path to Quality School Leadership Program) or Non-Practicing Administrator. Simply put, the Mississippi Department of Education requires that licensed educators seeking to serve in administrative positions in Mississippi K-12 public or parochial schools must become certified as administrators.

The department offers educators two pathways for obtaining an administrator endorsement. These two pathways are (1) the traditional route and (2) the alternate route. The traditional route requires the educator to complete a graduate level degree program in educational administration. The alternate route requires the educator to complete the Mississippi Alternate Path to Quality School Leadership Program. The alternate path includes a fifteen (15) day summer training session, nine (9) Saturday sessions during the school year, a one-year supervised internship, and mentoring by a certified National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) faculty member.

Supervisory Responsibilities of the Federal Program Director

The fourth research question guiding the investigation asked: What are the major supervisory responsibilities of a federal programs director from a consensus perspective?

Based on the information collected and analyzed from a consensus perspective, the major supervisory responsibilities of the federal programs director are to provide training, evaluation and supervision of federally funded personnel and programs in order to ensure that the requirements of MDE and the United States Department of Education are being met in relation to student achievement.

It is the responsibility of the federal programs director to coordinate federally funded grant projects in such a manner that will enhance regular education programs and provide quality services to all students. The following list addresses three major responsibilities of a federal programs director:

1. Translate and implement all goals and objectives related to federal programs in order to increase student achievement.
2. Ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state content standards and academic assessments. Also, seek out and apply for grants appropriate to district needs of the school district.
3. Coordinate federally funded grant projects in such a manner that will enhance regular education programs and provide quality services to all students.

Because of the frequency that they are mentioned in the literature pertaining to directors of federal programs, the above-mentioned responsibilities should be featured in any model profile for the position of federal programs director.

Tasks of a Federal Program Director

The fifth research question guiding the investigation asked: What are the major work tasks of a federal program director from a consensus perspective?

Based on the information collected and analyzed from a consensus perspective, the two major tasks of a federal program director are as follows:

1. Ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state content standards and academic assessments by seeking out and applying for grants that can aid school districts in reaching goals.
2. Provide effective leadership in order to develop the capabilities of administrators, teachers, and staff for accomplishing program goals.

Essentially, the two major tasks confronting the federal programs director fall within three important categories:

1. Federal programs compliance
2. Curriculum and instruction leadership
3. Grant writing expertise and productivity

Further breakdown of the tasks assembled under each of the three categories for the federal programs director in Mississippi may be described as follows:

1. Federal programs compliance:

Develop and submit the Consolidated Federal Programs Application (CFPA) and school wide plans to the Mississippi Department of Education.

Identify at-risk students who qualify for federally-funded program activities and tracks their inclusion into programs offered by the district.

Lead school administrators in the development and implementation of an annual District Highly Qualified Plan for Teachers.

Evaluate and monitor all federal funding and appropriate documentation to ensure compliance.

Develop and maintain budgets for each federal program with input from appropriate stakeholders.

Ensure all programs comply with federal, state and local regulations.

Provide effective professional development, training and guidance in order to build capacity of administrators, teachers, students and community in meeting federal program goals.

Prepare and submit required reports and applications to local, state and federal agencies.

Provide leadership and advocacy for families and children in need served by federal programs.

Allocate and administer all federal program funds to ensure expenditures are allowable, reasonable, meet the intent and purpose of the federal statute and aligned with the approved application submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education.

2. Curriculum and instructional leadership:

Develop and recommend effective programs for supervision and professional development of federal grant activities

Work with the curriculum director in the articulation and coordination of

the total instructional program and services of the district.

Encourage and plan experimental and innovative programs to improve instructional activities.

Advise in the selection of instructional materials.

Participate in planning and implementation of staff development.

Observe teachers and makes recommendations for improvement in the teaching-learning process.

Develop and submit proposals to seek funding for instructional programs as determined by recognized needs.

3. Grant writing expertise and productivity:

Research and pursue funding options.

Maintain current information on grants and funding availability through a database with available documentation.

Write competitive grants to meet specified district needs within appropriate designated time frames.

Collaborate with other agencies and programs in order to access funds to serve and meet the needs of students.

Survey and continuously monitor district needs relative to available funding sources.

Design appropriate grant formats to enhance appearance and readability of grant packages.

Provide coordination and support in the on-going development and

enhancement of the instructional technology program.

Because of the frequency that they are mentioned in the literature pertaining to directors of federal programs, the abovementioned tasks should be featured in any model profile for the position of federal programs director.

Important Knowledge and Managerial Skill Sets Needed

The sixth research question guiding the investigation asked: What important knowledge and managerial skill sets appear advantageous in relation to the federal programs director position from a consensus perspective?

Based on the information collected and analyzed from a consensus perspective, five key knowledge and skill sets necessary for performing at the level of excellence as a federal programs director emerge:

1. Comprehension of fiscal management strategies, such as the capability to develop and monitor budgets. Examples of activities related to fiscal management include the following: (a) approving purchase requisitions submitted for payment with federal program funds, (b) advising and supervising in the selection and purchase of instructional materials for areas of responsibility, and (c) accounting for equipment purchased with federal funds on the district's fixed asset inventory.
2. In-depth knowledge of each of all specific federal programs managed in order to assure compliance with federal, state and local regulations.
3. Command of English essentials in order to prepare and submit well written applications for federal funds to Mississippi Department of Education.

4. Mastery of evaluation and monitoring techniques applicable to federal program activities to ensure compliance.

5. Capability to supervise personnel (e.g., recruitment and retention of staff).

Because of the frequency that they are mentioned in the literature addressing the federal programs director position, the abovementioned important knowledge and managerial skill sets appear advantageous and should be featured in any model profile for the position of federal programs director.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this investigation focused on developing a model profile for the position of federal programs director in the state of Mississippi.

As previously stated, the purpose of the investigation was to develop the model profile through collecting and analyzing information pertaining to the role of the federal programs director for each of Mississippi's 144 school districts. Readily accessible to the public data were collected in the form of documents and records. Published "best practices" literature pertaining to the role of the federal programs director was also utilized.

Investigation Summary

The investigation titled *Model Profile for the Position of the Federal Programs Director in the State of Mississippi* was presented in five chapters: (1) introduction; (2) literature review; (3) method; (4) findings and discussion; and (5) summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The study also included a bibliography and appendixes providing resource references and specific materials relative to the investigation.

Chapter I presented content in four sections. After a brief lead in, the introductory chapter addressed (1) problem statement, purpose, and research questions; (2) significance of the study; (3) method; and (4) limitations and delimitations.

Chapter II reviewed pertinent literature. The chapter provided a review of the Skills-Based Leadership Theory and the roles and responsibilities of the federal programs director in Mississippi. The review of literature determined the significance of the federal programs director's role in the fiscal and programmatic stability of school districts in Mississippi.

Chapter III covered the methods used in the investigation. Chapter content focused on the research design, data collection, and data analysis. Utilization of archival data, readily available to the public, was featured.

Chapter IV presented the findings and discussion, Findings were presented and discussed in relation to six of the seven research questions that guided the investigation. The findings were presented in the form of written narrative and graphic visualization that emphasized charts.

The present chapter, Chapter V, summarizes the investigation, presents the model profile for the federal programs director based on the findings in response to the seventh research question, and provides recommendations for future action.

Conclusion: Model Profile for the Federal Programs Director Position

The conclusion for this particular investigation focuses on providing an answer to the seventh research question that guided the study. This question asked: Can a model profile for the federal programs director position be developed, using information gathered in relation to questions 1-6, that provides foundational support criteria upon which to base the development of a job description, vacancy notice, and performance expectations for a particular school district? The answer to the question is "yes." It was possible to develop a model profile for the position of federal programs director that

provides foundational support criteria upon which to base the development of a job description, vacancy notice, and performance expectations for a particular school district.

The model profile is presented in the form of five elements: (1) title, (2) qualifications required for the job, (3) goals for focusing the scope of the director's work, (4) performance responsibilities, and (5) day-to-day tasks.

The title of the educational administrator who will lead and manage federal programs for a school district constitutes the first element of the profile. The two most appropriate titles for the position of a director who leads and manages programs associated with the federal government appear to be one of the following: (1) director of federal programs or (2) federal programs director. Either title succinctly conveys the significance of the position.

The second element of the profile for the federal programs director focuses on the qualifications needed in order to qualify for the job. Eight repeatedly occurring qualifications appear to be most appropriate. The eight qualifications follow:

1. Master's degree from an accredited college or university at a minimum; specialist or doctoral degree preferred.
2. Valid Mississippi Class A (teaching) and Class AA (or AAA or AAAAA) certificates with preference given for special education or reading specialist teaching endorsement at the Class A level and preference given for administration and supervision endorsement at Class AA, AAA, or AAAAA levels.

3. Previous administrative experience (3-5 years) at the K-12 level of education required.
4. Previous administrative experience (1-3 years) at the K-12 level of education preferred.
5. Commitment* to the goals of Title I and Title II programs.
6. Demonstrable knowledge* of curriculum and instruction.
7. Proven ability* to work successfully work with others.
8. Competent* oral and written communication skills.

Evidence of each of the abovementioned areas that are noted with an asterisk (*) should be obtained from letters of reference, personal communication with previous supervisors, or during a personal interview.

Goals that provide direction and shape the work of federal programs director comprise the third profile element. Five of the most agreed upon and repeatedly occurring (job) goals follow:

1. To manage federally funded programs at a level that ensures all students have an equitable opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state content standards and academic assessments.
2. To seek out, apply for, and coordinate federally funded grant projects in such a manner that will enhance regular education programs and provide quality services to all students.

3. To ensure compliance with federal regulations regarding fiscal matters (e.g., budgeting and accounting).
4. To provide effective professional development and guidance for the purpose of building the capabilities of the administrators, teachers, and staff involved in implementing federally funded programs.
5. To coordinate federally funded grant projects in such a manner that will enhance regular education programs and provide quality services to all students.

The abovementioned goals possess overall applicability and provide an integral part of the profile. However, school districts are unique, differing in their needs. Not all school districts confront the same challenges. It should be noted that a particular school district may be very involved in federally funded early childhood programming and needs to develop a customized goal for the federal programs director such as the following: “To implement and supervise the Early Childhood Education Center and Family Resource Center program in order to facilitate the delivery of the best possible services to prekindergarten through third grade students as well as grades fourth through twelfth students and parents residing within the district.”

Performance responsibilities comprise the fourth element of the profile for the federal programs director. The seven most common occurring responsibilities follow:

1. Develop, prepare, and complete (in close collaboration with district-level and school-level administrators) the annual Consolidated Federal Programs Application (CFPA) and any Plan, implement, and evaluate of federally funded programs, including but not limited to Title I, Part A (Basic Programs); Title I, Part C (Migrant Education); Title I, Part D (Neglected and Delinquent); Title II, Part A (Highly Qualified Teachers); Title III, Part A (English Language Learners); Title III, Part D (Immigrant Education); and Title X, Part C (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education).
2. Identify homeless, English language learners, and at-risk students and track their inclusion in special programs offered by the school district.
3. Work with teachers, administrators and community representatives to develop a district academic calendar that is in compliance with district and state requirements.
4. Collaborate, as needed, with principals and other administrators to complete the annual District Highly Qualified Plan for Teachers (DHQPT).
5. Work with district-level administrators to coordinate and monitor professional development programs; and assist principals in professional development needs, planning, and implementation in relation to federally funded programs.

6. Coordinate federally funded program priorities, planning, and activities with district-level and school-level administrators to ensure program efficiency, accountability and concordance with the district-level strategic planning and individual school improvement plans.
7. Allocate and administer all federal program funds to ensure that expenditures are allowable, reasonable and necessary, meet the intent and purpose of federal program statutes, aligned with the approved application on file at the state department of education.

Similar to the findings for the federal programs director, the seven abovementioned performance responsibilities possess overall applicability and provide another key part of the profile. Since school districts are unique, however, performance responsibilities will differ in some degree from district to district.

Closely related to performance responsibilities, tasks makeup the fifth element of the profile model for the federal programs director. Because tasks are more numerous than any of the other elements, they are subdivided into five domains: general program management tasks, personnel management, finance and business management, grant writing, and compliance management. The 29 most commonly occurring tasks follow:

1. General program management: plans, coordinates, organizes, and implements all federal grant programs.
2. General program management: conducts, analyses, and evaluates existing programs and recommends changes annually.

3. General program management: plans and conducts districtwide programs of curriculum review for all federally funded instructional programs.
4. General program management: evaluates effectiveness of all activities of federal grant programs.
5. General program management: develops and recommends effective programs for supervision and professional development of federal grant activities.
6. General program management: works with district-level curriculum and instruction administrators in the articulation and coordination of the total instructional program and services of the district.
7. General program management: encourages and plans experimental and innovative programs to improve instructional activities.
8. General program management: advises in the selection of instructional materials.
9. General program management: participates in planning and implementation of staff development.
10. General program management: observes teachers and makes recommendations for improvement in the teaching-learning process.

11. Personnel management: provides assistance to district-level administrators (e.g., human resources director) in locating and employing personnel for federally funded teaching and staff positions.
12. Personnel management: provides training and supervision of federally funded personnel to ensure requirements of state department of education and United States Department of Education are being met.
13. Personnel management: supervises and/or evaluates federally funded teachers and staff as required.
14. Finance and business management: develops and submits funding request for federal program projects annually.
15. Finance and business management: submits fiscal information to the state department of education for approval as required.
16. Finance and business management: prepares an annual budget for presentation to the school district superintendent, school board, and state department of education.
17. Finance and business management: Oversees federally funded expenditures such as requisitions, purchase orders, and payment.
18. Finance and business management: advises in and supervises the selection and purchase of instructional materials for areas federally funded programs.

19. Finance and business management: accounts for all equipment purchased with federal funds on the fixed asset inventory documentation.
20. Grant writing: surveys and continuously monitors district needs relative to available funding sources.
21. Grant writing: searches out and pursues funding options.
22. Grant writing: maintains current information on grants and funding availability through a database with available documentation.
23. Grant writing: writes competitive grants to meet specified school district needs within appropriate designated time frames.
24. Grant writing: collaborates with other agencies and programs in order to access funds to serve and meet the needs of students.
25. Grant writing: designs appropriate grant formats to enhance appearance and readability of grant packages.
26. Compliance management: submits required reports to appropriate school district, state, and federal authorities.
27. Compliance management: monitors all federally funded programs to insure they comply with federal, state, and local regulations.

28. Compliance management: works with the superintendent of the school district and the school board to maintain up to date policies in relation to federal programs.
29. Compliance management: stays current with the latest state and federal guidelines and financial aid regulations related to federal programs.

The abovementioned tasks constitute the majority of federal programs director day-to-day workload. Taken as a whole, they indicate what the federal programs director does most.

In closing, it should be noted that to whom the federal programs director reports to (commonly referred to as “span of control”) in the organizational chart for supervisory purposes varies from school district to school district. Depending on the organizational design, the director could report to the superintendent, deputy superintendent, associate superintendent, or assistant superintendent.

Recommendations

Five recommendations are made in relation to the results of this investigation and the need to keep the position of the federal programs director as vital as possible. The five recommendations follow:

1. The profile of the federal programs director in Mississippi should be regularly compared (e.g., every three years) to similar studies across the United States to determine similarities and differences among the states.

2. Replication of this research study should be considered every three years in order to keep the profile of the federal programs director current.
3. Further research should be conducted to more accurately determine the relationship between the career paths of federal program directors and job performance.
4. Research should be conducted to determine the educational endorsements required for an administrator to be most effective in the position of the federal programs director.
5. The current Class AA level requirement of the Mississippi Department of Education should be further investigated to determine if the requirement is high enough to meet the actual expectations to become successful as a federal programs director.

The aforementioned recommendations were based on the findings and conclusions of the study.

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