



Needs Assessment for Superintendents Academy June 2004

Introduction

The primary purpose of this needs assessment was to assist the *Superintendents Academy* in better understanding and addressing the needs of its current and potential audience. The Academy's Project Coordinator, Evaluator, and Intern, in conjunction with leaders from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) Leadership Academy collaboratively constructed a survey to gather feedback from Massachusetts' district-level administrators in the following areas:

Online Courses

- Experience with online courses
- Interest in online courses
- Technical skills and hardware
- Helpfulness of four components integrated in *Superintendents Academy's* courses
- Importance of seven potential benefits of online courses
- Importance of five professional development topics offered by the *Academy*

Future Leaders

- Identifying and recruiting future leaders
- Developing future leaders

Procedure

On June 25, 2004, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) Leadership Academy faxed 270 Massachusetts superintendents a copy of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Online Learning Survey.

Responses were collected from
June 25, 2004 to July 8, 2004.

Sample's Demographics & Background

A total of 89 of 270 participants responded to the survey, representing a 33% response rate. Seventy-four percent (74%) of participants were male and twenty-six percent (26%) were female. Eighty-eight (88) respondents (99% of entire sample) were superintendents. One (1) respondent (1% of entire sample) was an assistant superintendent¹. All (100%) participants held advanced degrees. Forty-six percent (46%) held Ed.D.s, forty-four percent (44%) held Master's degrees, and ten percent (10%) held Ph.D.'s Table 1 illustrates this data.



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Figure 1: Number of Online Courses Respondents Participated in during the last 2 Years

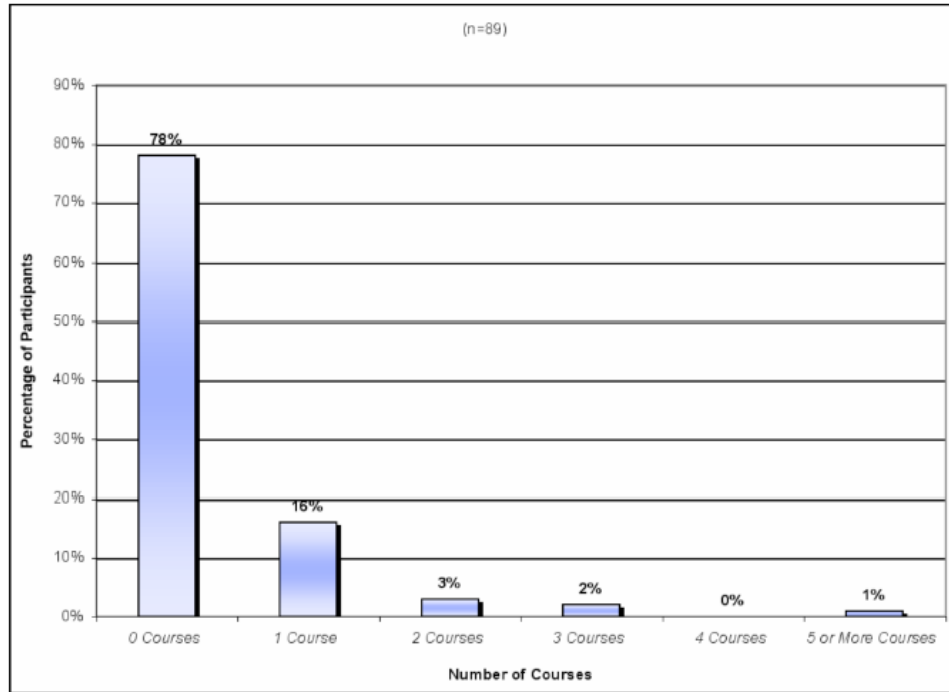
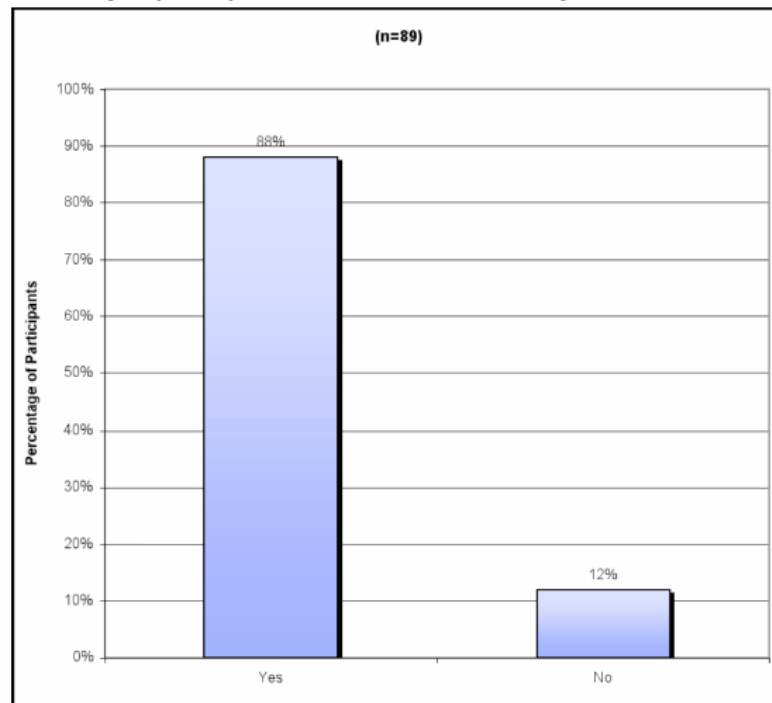


Figure 2: Would you participate in an online course that you found relevant?





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Figure 3: Number of Hours Participants would Devote to an Online Course they found Relevant

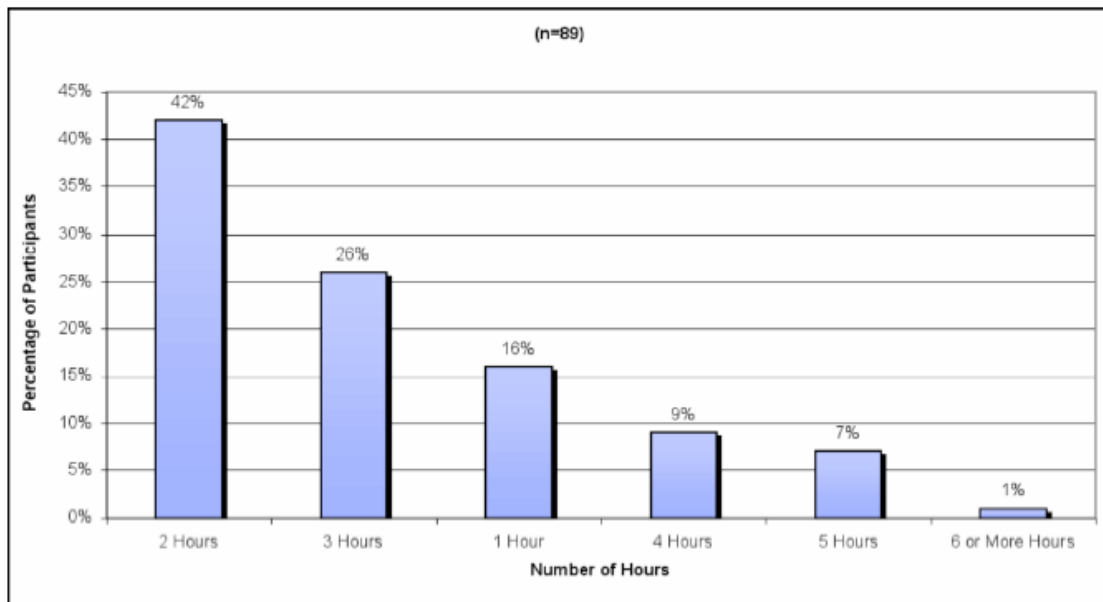
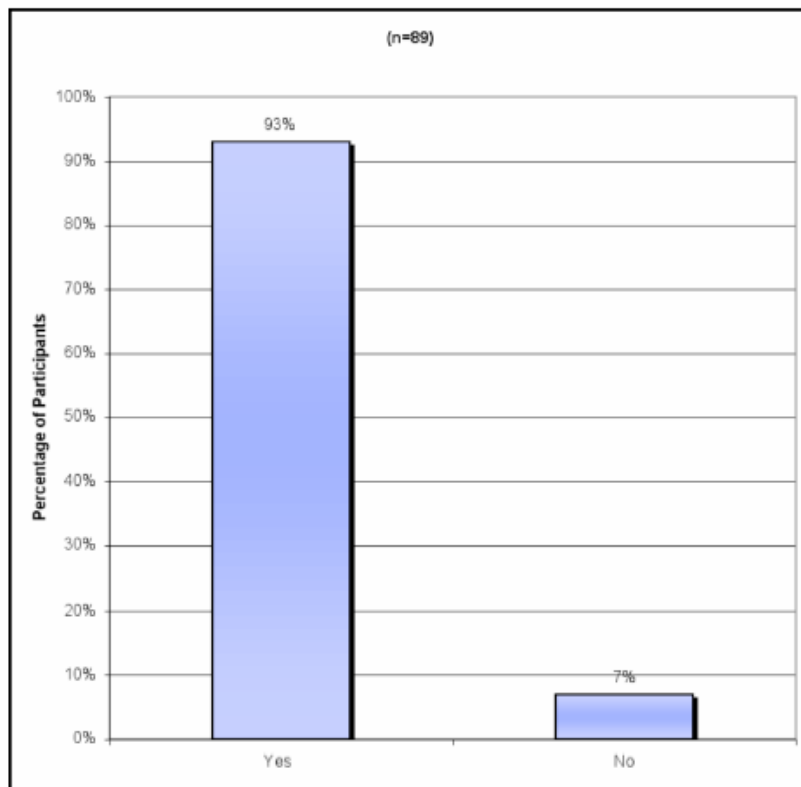


Figure 4: Do you believe you have the necessary hardware and computer skills to complete an online course?





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Figure 5: *Very Helpful* Components of the Superintendents Academy Courses

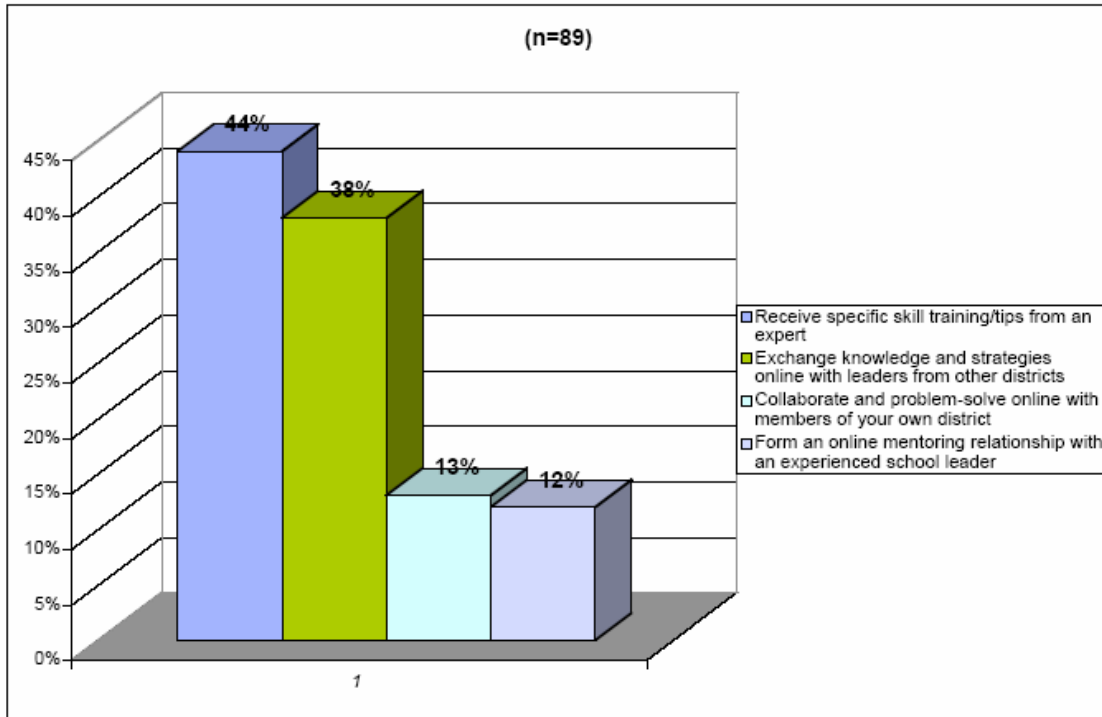


Figure 10: *Very Important* Benefits of Online Courses

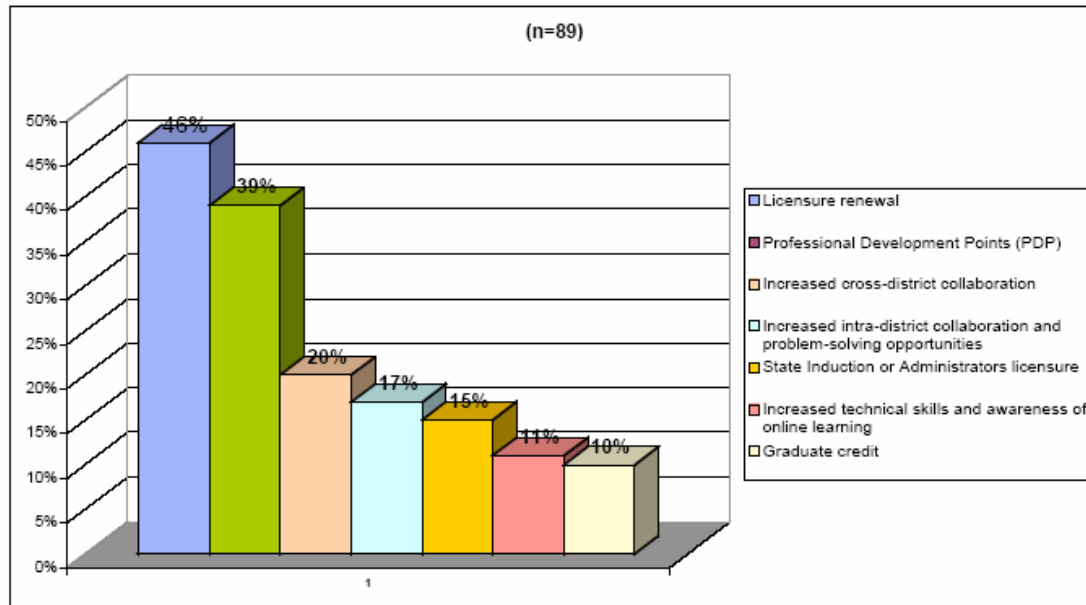
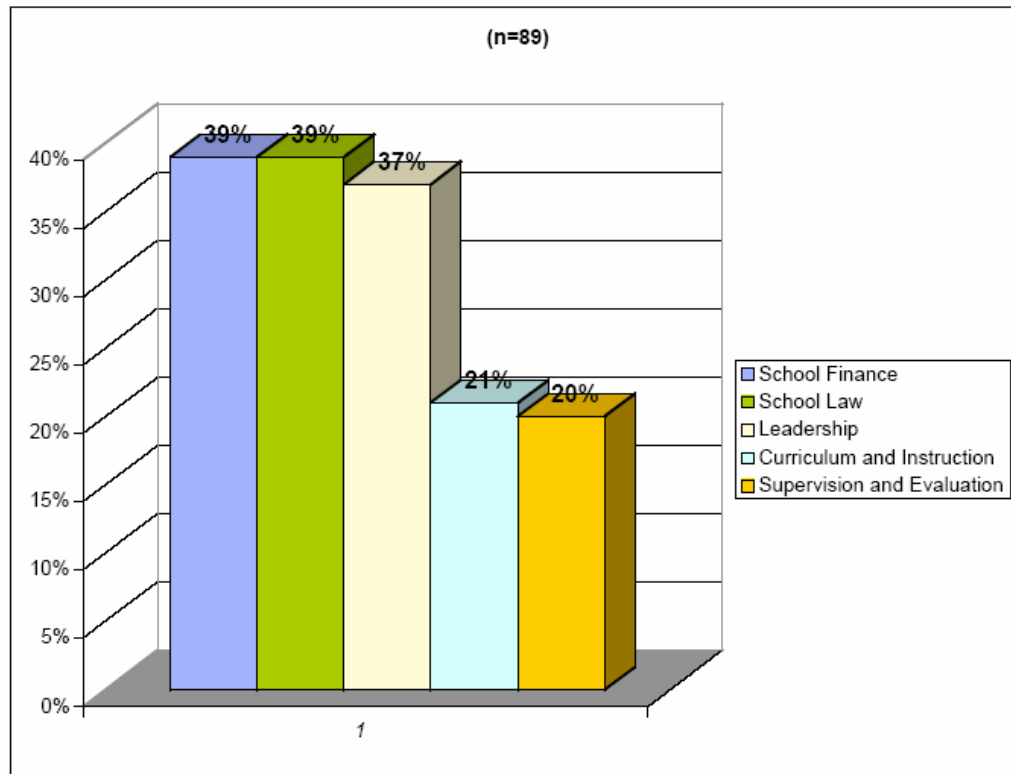




Figure 18: *Very Important* Professional Development Topics



Summary

Overall, in the last two years, a strong majority (78%) of participants had not taken any online courses. A strong majority (88%) indicated they would participate in an online course they found relevant. Only twelve percent (12%) indicated they would not participate in an online course they found relevant.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of participants indicated they had the hardware and computer skills needed to complete an online course. Only seven percent (7%) responded did not think they had the necessary hardware and computer skills to complete an online course.

When participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the helpfulness of four components of the *Superintendents Academy* online courses, responses indicated the most helpful component was the opportunity to receive specific skill training/ tips from an expert. The least helpful component was the opportunity to form an online mentoring relationship with an experienced leader.

When participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the importance of seven potential benefits of participating in online courses, responses indicated the most important benefit was licensure renewal. The least important benefit was graduate credit.

Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the importance of receiving professional development in the following topics: School Finance, School Law, Curriculum and Instruction, Supervision and Evaluation, and Leadership. Participants' responses indicated the most important topics were School Finance and School Law. The least important topic was Supervision and Evaluation.



Identifying and Recruiting Future Leaders

Figure 21: On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it for Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents to find and recruit new leaders within their district?

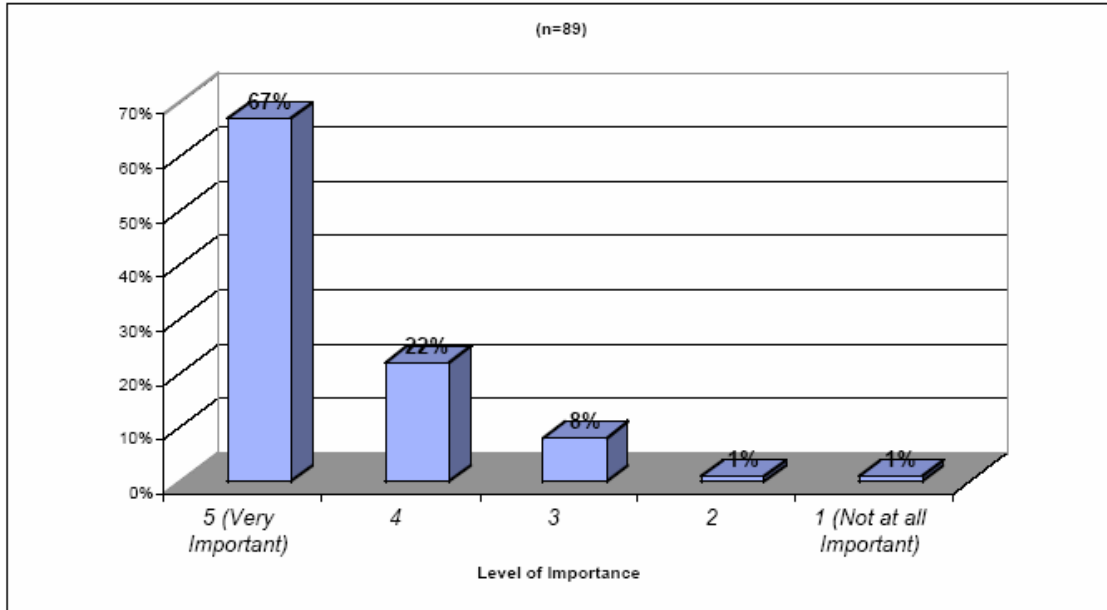
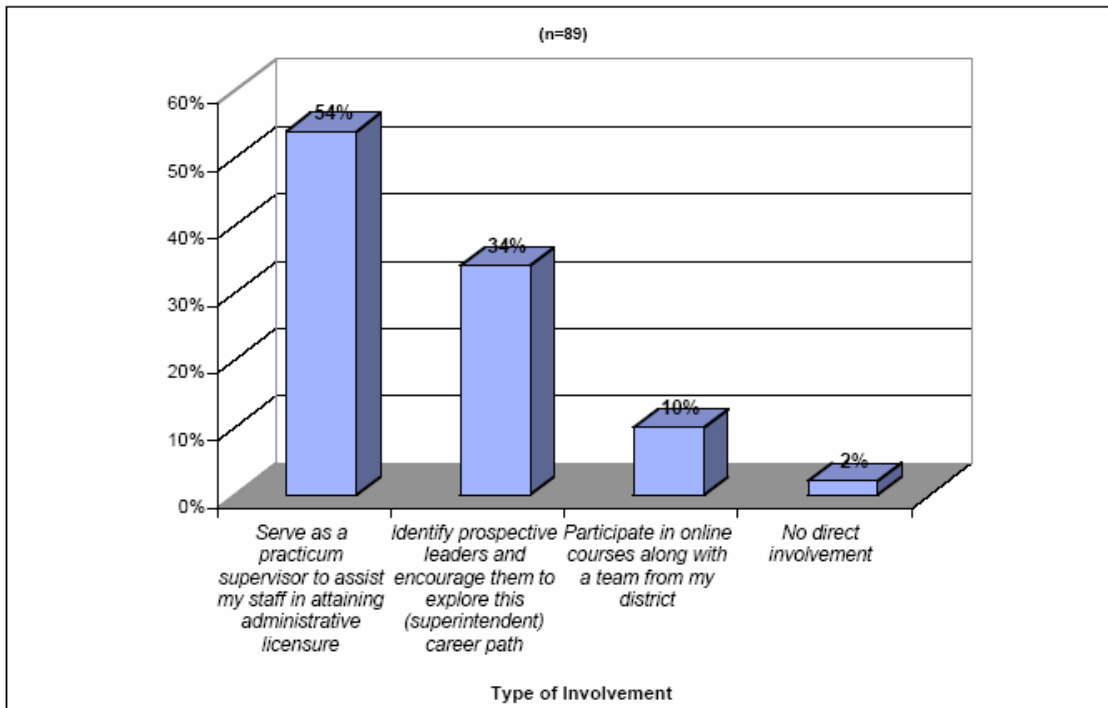


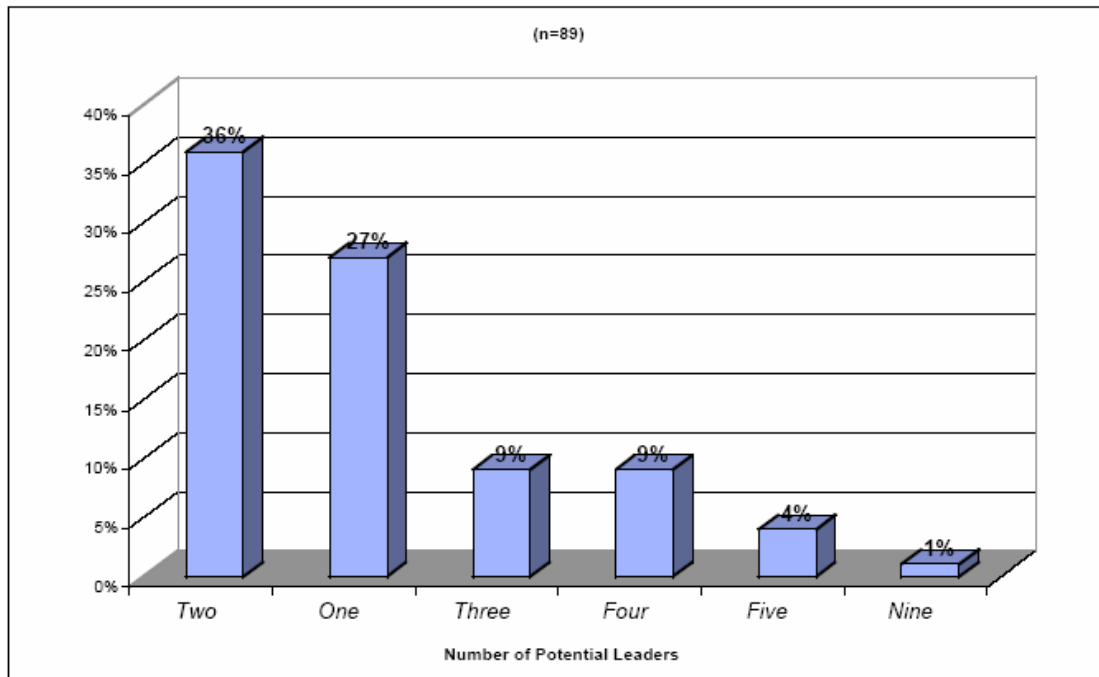
Figure 22: How Superintendents would participate in the Development of Future Leaders within their Districts





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Figure 23: Number of Potential Leaders Participants Listed



Summary

When participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how important it was for Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents to find and recruit new leaders within their districts, a strong majority (89%) indicated it was very important (67%) or important (22%). Eight percent (8%) indicated it was neither important nor unimportant (neutral). Two percent (2%) indicated it was not at all important.

When participants were asked, "To what extent would you participate in the development of future leadership within your district?" more than half (54%) indicated they would serve as a practicum supervisor to assist their staff in attaining administrative licensure. Approximately one-third (34%) would identify prospective leaders and encourage them to explore the career path of a district leader (superintendent or assistant superintendent). Ten percent (10%) indicated they would participate in online courses along with a team from their districts. Only two percent (2%) indicated they would not participate in any direct involvement.

When participants were asked how many principals or central office staff, within their districts, they could envision as future superintendents, participants listed a total of 185 people. The number of people participants could envision ranged from 0 to 9 people. On average, participants could envision 2 people from their districts as future superintendents. Nearly all (99%) of the future leaders participants identified held master's degrees. Approximately one-quarter (24%) held doctorates.