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An Analysis of Research-Based Leadership Practices and the Principal's Impact on Student Achievement

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by

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Dr. Jill Hutcheson, Dissertation Chair	8-3-18 Date
Dr. Stephen Sherblom, Committee Member	8/03/18 Date
Dr. John Jackson, Committee Member	8/-3/18 Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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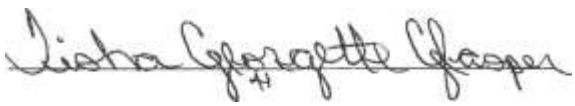

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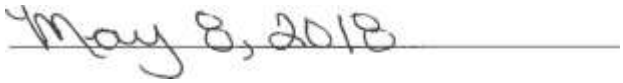

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the research-based leadership practices demonstrated by principals; in addition to how principals managed to lead others to become involved in student achievement. The participants of this study consisted of school principals from seven successful schools in Saint Louis City and Saint Louis in Missouri and Madison County, Illinois. For this study, a successful school can be defined as a school where student achievement met or exceeded the Adequate Yearly Progress targets set by the No Child Left behind Act of 2001. There were also 71 teachers who participated in this study.

Effective schools require an effective leader. However, most principals are placed in positions without having full knowledge of what it takes to be a school leader. This study may help principals in developing a plan for academic achievement. A relationship exists among successful schools and leadership.

Results that emerged from the analysis of data in this study suggested that principals of successful schools: (a) involved teachers, (b) established clear goals, (c) rewarded individual accomplishments, (d) advocated for the school to all stakeholders, and (e) were knowledgeable about then-current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. In addition, high expectations were set for both staff and students and interpersonal and meaningful relationships between staff and the teaching staff, parent volunteers, and school board members were developed.

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Key to Abbreviations

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
IRI	Informal Reading Inventory
SRI	Scholastic Reading Inventory
ISEL	Illinois Snapshots of Early Literacy
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
SIG	School Improvement Grant
ARRA	American Recovery & Reinvestment Act
IASA	Improving America's School Act
PI	Principal Investigator

Chapter One: Overview of the Study

Introduction

Shortridge (2015) reported that as accountability efforts in education rose, there was an increased interest in the importance of effective instructional leadership. Policymakers looked toward school-based leadership as a means to positively impact student achievement and to close the achievement gap. This political dependence on school-based leadership to accomplish the goals of school improvement could be seen in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The then-present research was based on the idea that specific leadership behaviors were found to impact students' academic outcomes.

Kelley, Thornton, and Daughtery (2005) reported that educational leadership was perhaps the most significant factor of an effective learning environment and was defined as the ability of a principal to initiate school improvement, to form a learning-oriented educational environment, and to stimulate and supervise teachers in a way that the latter may complete their tasks as effectively as possible (van de Grift & Houtveen, 1999). A main responsibility of a principal was to facilitate genuine teaching and learning with the overall mission of improving student achievement. Education, at the time of this writing, was centered on a leader ready to foster student achievement in some of the most complex environments. Maehr (1991) contended that a positive psychological environment could strongly impact student achievement. He proclaimed that leaders could make this environment by creating policies that stress goal setting, by offering students choices in instructional settings, and by rewarding students for their achievements. Maehr (1991) also described this environment as nurturing team work

through group learning, changing social comparisons of achievement, teaching time management skills, and offering self-paced instruction when possible.

A leader's role was vital in the growth of students becoming well-rounded. School leaders regularly balance the interests of varying groups. In a sense, education could be thought of as a knee bone connected to the thigh bone system of U.S. education, in which the moving parts relate to and rely on other parts. Leadership provides the backbone. Leadership is crucial, but not sufficient, it is supportive, and has to be supported; leadership offers direction, steadiness, and safety, but is vulnerable. "And when it is less than perfect, it is costly to the entire system" (Christie, 2002, p. 345). Balancing the stresses of personal and professional life was an on-going struggle. Leadership required a search for ways to support others while at the same time requiring self-support.

NCLB held educators accountable, particularly school principals, for all students achieving academic success. Teaching children at a high level of proficiency should be the core work of all educators. Teachers should continue to be highly qualified to teach the subjects and grade levels they are assigned. Use of varied instructional strategies, effective assessment techniques, data utilization and integration of technology are a given for teachers who want their students to be successful. Teachers should be held accountable; however, their success begins with holding students accountable for learning what is taught. An effective principal is needed in every school building of a school system striving for excellence in education. These principals understand the complexity of their position, perform duties and responsibilities at a high level, and are able to multi-task, fitting all of the interconnected pieces of school life together for the

good of their students. They are results-driven and accept no excuses from anyone. Success is the only option and mediocrity is simply not acceptable in a school run by a strong leader.

Background of the Problem

Many confuse the words leadership and management; they are two different words with very different meanings. According to Wagner (2001), management was the conducting or supervising of something. While leadership involved strong people in charge, inspired other individuals to understand and solved dilemmas by posing hard questions and identifying the large problems, while not presenting simple answers. Maciariell (2010) found that Drucker stated that all effective leaders he encountered, both those he worked with and those he merely watched, knew four simple things: (a) a leader is someone who has followers; (b) popularity is not leadership, results are; (c) leaders are highly visible, they set examples, and (d) leadership is not rank, privilege, titles or money, it is responsibility.

Educational researchers, such as Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990), showed interest in the leadership position of school administrators in establishing school environment and school authority. As reported by Heck et al. (1990), a number of studies determined a connection linking principal leadership behavior and student achievement. According to Leitner (1994), while researchers recognized a connection among principal leadership behaviors and effective schools, which included student achievement, a small number of studies established a fundamental connection between instructional leadership and school outcomes.

As reported by Magolda (2001), when looking at the effect of teacher instruction, leadership and student achievement, it was necessary to bear in mind that student learning goes further than the range of the classroom. Methods of leadership used by principals to distribute tasks and power have been the topic of then-current interest. According to Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2004) and Spillane (2006), this option engaged the thoughts of leadership in terms of activities and interactions that were dispersed among several individuals and conditions. Funds and the make-up of the school were both essential as they related to upgrading plans. Snowden and Gorton (2002) indicated, "The primary leadership for bringing about school improvement must come from the organizational level of education where the change is to take effect" (p.134). For that reason, there were situations where school improvement was the focus; principals must be equipped with the information and the expertise that is essential to successfully follow the improvement plan.

The efforts to improve the educational system increased rapidly, with a focus on national reform of the public educational system. These attempts grew in volume and complexity with diverging stages of support and assets coming from leaders at all levels, federal, local, state, and district. While schools and states connected in numerous attempts directly related to student success, the media and parents, for example, were still accusing the country's schools of not offering the education that was needed to survive in society, at the time, and even more in the days to follow. The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) was what led to efforts to rebuild schools. As a result of this continued focal point on school restructuring and upgrading, many

researchers, such as Fullan (2003), McNeal and Christy (2001), and Snowden and Gorton (2002) indicated that school administrators were key to school improvement.

Principals were given the charge of leading successful schools; that is why it was imperative that they obtain the needed information and related that information to their leadership practices. A principal's role in society, at the time of this writing, was complex. They dealt with many challenges calculated through principles attached to accountability for outcomes. Along with their many responsibilities, an overarching question among leaders of the time was whether their leadership behaviors had an influence on student achievement.

According to Hall and Hord (2006) and Sergiovanni (1990), in order to identify both self- and system-imposed obstacles to school improvement, states and districts should supply the required resources for school principals. Fullan (2005) and Hall, and Hord (2006) reported that improvements could take place; but, in order for that to happen, principals had to create a culture susceptible to change. Such cultures were generated when principals: (a) design a course of action which aids in the improvement procedure, (b) organize schedules that allow the staff to work jointly as they make efforts toward improvement, (c) demonstrate joint relationships with staff members and other principals, (d) take part in personnel development and added activities with improvement initiatives as the focal point, (e) make use of the assessment process to observe improvement and measure the amount of implementation, (f) have a conversation about the achievements and delays that occurred throughout the improvement procedure and, (g) draw attention to the accomplishments of persons as the improvement takes place.

Statement of Problem

As reported by Elmore (2000) and Jamentz (2002), standard-based accountability infused with NCLB challenged and strained traditional assumptions concerning instructional leadership. As reported by Duke (2004) and Jazzar and Algozzine (2006), improvements to schools were sometimes short-term, due to the fact they were substituted by the most recent treatment for the problems of the country's public schools. Leaders applying these ideas were subjected to lack of support, absence of management, and not enough resources for the initiative, eventually resulting in less than the preferred outcomes. Snowden and Gorton (2002) acknowledged principals as being the answer, to offer the leadership required for such efforts to meet up with success. Regrettably, Woods (2004) pointed out, "Many certified administrators have not developed the leadership skills required for school improvement" (p. 16).

As noted by Fullan (2005), administrators had to be supportive of school improvement, give power to individuals as it related to the improvement initiative, make needed resources available to staff members in order for them to apply the initiative, and promote friendly and joint relationships that encouraged improvements, so that positive results could be gained. Almost all states put into action a school improvement plan, the most important goal being improved student achievement, as well as completion of the conditions set forth by the ESEA. These states were relying on administrators to guide schools.

Purpose of Study

Factors, such as socioeconomic status, lack of funding, and poor leadership led to a number of schools that were struggling academically. In order for schools to be

successful, an effective leader had to be in place. Nonetheless, administrators were put in positions with a minute amount of knowledge about school leadership. This study explored elementary school principals' leadership styles from seven successful schools in Saint Louis City, Saint Louis County, and Madison County. To achieve this, the chief investigator utilized interviews, secondary data, and surveys. The participants in the study were principals and teachers. A successful school, for the purpose of this study, could be defined as a school where student achievement met or exceeded the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets determined by the state, with regard to the NCLB Act of 2001. Principals may use the framework of this study to help them develop a plan for academic achievement.

Research Questions

These overarching questions guided this research study:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

Significance of the Study

As noted by Jazzar and Algozzine (2006), since the establishment of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for School Reform*, in 1983, American public schools have been under scrutiny. School leaders continued to search for methods of improvement, engaging in a variety of improvement efforts. It was hoped that every student would gain knowledge, as they were under their guidance and leadership. Lashway (2003) noted that many researchers examined the qualities of principals and how those qualities aided them

in becoming effective leaders, and furthermore, principals of schools of successful reform initiatives.

When the NCLB Act was established, a groundbreaking educational leadership movement materialized, according to Leithwood and Jantzi (2002), while it was the principal's main job to build a structure of relationships in the school, the principal was also responsible for day-to-day administration. One long-term challenge principal's faced was how to raise standards. Unfortunately, results of some principal leadership studies assisted in the dispersing of a bigger amount of then-recent leadership resources toward developing teacher leadership rather than principal leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2002, p. 61).

In 2015, President Barack Obama signed The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The act gave backing to principal leadership and the roles principals played in schools. The act consisted of authorization of funding given to both states and districts; the funding could be exhausted in a number of ways. For example, principals who were in the early stages of their careers and professional learning were given mentoring opportunities for veteran principals to help to enhance their leadership skills. There were plans in progress to see how ESSA funding could be used. This plan would call for those wanting to become principals and then-current principals, to support programs that would meet their needs. Their needs would not be met, but it will illustrate that investing in school leadership could improve student outcomes.

The instruments for this research were on-line surveys, personal interviews, and secondary information from districts websites. In addition, the data collected may also provide more understanding of school leadership that is effective. Looking at the effect of

leadership principles, this study offers decision makers, professional designers, and staff with awareness of how individuals in leadership positions successfully lead schools. This study may assist principals or individuals seeking to become principals to prepare to become educational leaders.

Definitions

Adequate Yearly Progress - "Adequate Yearly Progress is one of the cornerstones of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is a measure of year to year student achievement on statewide assessments" (Georgia Department of Education, 2014, para.1).

No Child Left Behind Act –

No Child Left Behind Act is a federal law passed under the George W. Bush administration. No Child Left Behind represents legislation that attempts to accomplish standards-based education reform. The law and its subsequent implementation have grown to be a very controversial issue in Education. (Lewis, 2015, para. 1)

Individual Educational Program -

A federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that public school create an [Individualized Education Plan] IEP for every child receiving special education services. The IEP is meant to address each child's unique learning issues and include specific educational goals. The IEP is a legally binding document. The school must provide everything it promises in the IEP. (Stanberry, 2014, para. 4)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act –

> The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) emphasizes equal access to education, establishes high standards and accountability, and requires the inclusion of all students with disabilities in the student achievement system. The law authorizes federally funded education programs that are administered by the states. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). (Association of University Centers on Disabilities [AUCD], 2011, para. 1)

Developmental Reading Assessment –

> The Developmental Reading Assessment [DRA] is a standardized reading test used to determine a student's instructional level in reading. The DRA is administered individually to students by teachers and/or reading specialists. Students read a selection (or selections) and then retell what they have read to the examiner. As the levels increase, so does the difficulty level for each selection. (Phoenixville Area School District, 2011, para. 1)

Informal Reading Inventory – "The Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is an individually administered survey designed to help you determine a student's reading instructional needs" (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997, para. 1).

Scholastic Reading Inventory –

> Scholastic Reading Inventory is a computer-adaptive reading assessment program for students in Grades K–12 that measures reading comprehension on the Lexile Framework for Reading. SRI is designed to measure a reader's ability to comprehend narrative and expository texts of increasing difficulty. (authorStream, 2014. para. 1)

Illinois Snapshots of Early Literacy –

The Illinois Snapshots of Early Literacy are sets of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development for grades K, 1, and 2. They consist of brief measures of performance which can be used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy skills. (Illinois State Board of Education, 2015. para.1)

School Improvement Grant –

School Improvement Grants (SIG), authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), are grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) that SEAs use to make competitive sub grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in their lowest-performing schools. (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2015b. para 1)

Every Student Succeeds Act -

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015 and represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. The new law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country. (USDOE, 2015a. para 1)

Limitations

This study was focused on teachers and principals in only seven schools in a relatively small area of the Midwest. The research study may have shown stronger results if a broader population had been used, but the Principal Investigator (PI) was still able to collect effective data. In addition, only 71 participants responded out of 105 potential respondents. Although this was a small sample, the researcher believes the data can be generalized to the larger population of schools and educational professionals.

Additional stakeholders that could have been included in the study were: board members, parents, central office staff, and students. A small group of schools were studied; but, these schools represented several different socio-economic subgroups and included public, private, and Christian school settings. A larger sample size could have resulted in more data to support the conclusion. However, the researcher believes the data obtained is indicative of the general population.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. Several attributes aided principals in leading successful schools. Principals should be able to totally recognize the significance of a positive school culture and how a positive culture improves student achievement and professional development in school buildings. Principals' roles were important in the success of school improvement. A link between principals' leadership styles, philosophies, and goals and how they manage to guide others to increase student achievement may be utilized in the educational community to help endorse school improvement initiatives.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore seven successful schools in Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County, Missouri, and Madison County, Illinois, and investigate their principals' leadership styles, philosophies, and goals, principals' roles in leadership and accountability, how principal leadership behaviors impact student achievement, approaches principals used, and educational shifts. Only principals at the elementary level were the focus of this study. For the purpose of this study, a successful school was defined as a school where student achievement met or exceeded AYP targets set by the state with regard to the NCLB Act. This study sought to provide principals tools for establishing a plan for academic achievement.

The researcher considered George Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy, Mother Teresa, Rosa Parks, Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, Condoleezza Rice, and Barack Obama as leaders. In the researcher's opinion, these leaders shared a number of qualities, including vision, passion, commitment, character, influence, cooperation, and optimism. The same leadership qualities are important for effective school leaders.

Such leaders produced results, reached goals, and motivated others. Similar qualities could be found in successful school leaders. There was growing evidence from research conducted by Marzano (as cited in Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) that effective leadership had a positive impact on schools. According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), the impact of school leadership 10 years previous to this writing was visibly absent from school reform agendas.

When it came to school-related factors that affected student learning, leadership ranked high; second to classroom instruction. Leadership was important because leaders could release hidden abilities in organizations. Authors had different opinions regarding the role of a principal. Some speculated that the principal was an instructional leader impacting achievement (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982), whereas others regarded the principal's role as instructional and administrative (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Ribbins and Burridge (1994) emphasized the difference between the concepts of administration and instruction and Hallinger and Heck (1996) conversely believed that administration and instructions were inseparable.

In this sense, instructional and educational leadership were seen as strategies that materialized in order for a conglomeration of management instruments to be used to carry out a school's most important responsibility, which were student academic outcomes. Although researchers may differ as to the resources of leadership, there is no question as to whether the actions and views of a principal matter in the academic setting.

As reported by Tyack and Cuban (1995), the K-12 educational system had evolved into a period of accountability for teachers and principals. The push for this rise in accountability had its origins in public sentiment regarding declining school performance. At the time of this writing, federal education policy has made an effort to improve the performance of the nation's schools by setting performance standards and holding states accountable. According to Tyack and Cuban (1995), these policies focused more on the leadership abilities of school-based principals to direct the road of school reform and improvement: Provisions of the NCLB Act of 2001, and Obama's, *A Blue Print for Reform*, required principals to be effective instructional leaders that could lead

educational improvement. It was clear that successful schools would require highly qualified principals who could support effective instruction and teacher performance.

History of Federal Involvement in Education

According to Borman, Stringfield, and Slavin (2001), Cross (2010), and Vinovskis (2009), a shared understanding, partially rooted in the understanding of the Tenth Amendment, was that federal government historically played a limited role in education. Federal interest in education, however, could be traced back to the nation's founding**.** John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were two of our nation's most influential Founding Fathers, and both were firm in their support of education. John Adams proclaimed his support for education in a pivotal writing tilted, *Thoughts on Government*, where he stated, "Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially for the lower classes of people, are so extremely wise and useful that to a humane and generous mind, no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant" (as cited in McCullough, 2001, p.103). Thomas Jefferson, in his 1806 State of the Union address, exclaimed, "An amendment to our constitution must here come in the aid of public education. The influence over government must be shared among all people" (as cited in Padover, 1939, p. 87).

In spite of the support from Adams and Jefferson, there was always a debate about the federal government's role in education (Anderson, 2007; Cross, 2010). Initial attempts to form a federal presence in education disclosed a well-defined conceptual division on the issue. These divisions would have long-lasting influence on both the reasons and rationale for the collation of federal education bills (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). A large number of adversaries of an increased federal role in education alluded to a desire

to sustain local control, while backers reasoned their stance on the general welfare clause of the Constitution (Anderson, 2007). Therefore, the debate over the proper role of the federal government would influence all federal education legislation.

The Early Years

As stated by Cross (2010), the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was the first national legislation aimed at supporting schools. There were those who thought of this as important foundation to future federal education legislation. This law required that land for schools be set aside in the emerging townships of the Western Territories. As reported by Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010), Congress addressed the issue again during the Civil War: Modeled on the Northwest Ordinance, the 1862 Morrill Act generated land grants to help states in developing colleges of agriculture and mechanics.

Anderson (2007) reported that Federal participation in education in the early years had its share of debate. Several opponents made plans to stop what they viewed as federal infringement on the states' Tenth Amendment right. Anderson (2007) also reported there were critics who challenged that a Department of Education that began in 1867 succeeded in downgrading the department from cabinet-level to bureau-level in just a year. Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010) reported that federal education legislation was not passed until World War I. A part of this was due to a small number of literate military recruits; Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This was the first federal legislation that authorized direct federal program support for schools.

The Truman and Eisenhower Years

Anderson (2007) reported that not much federal education legislation came out of Washington during World War II, in spite of the presentation of a number of bills.

Exceptions to this trend were a sequence of acts that allotted funds toward local school districts. According to Anderson (2007), these funds were supposed to counterbalance the expenses of educating students from federal installations. “This program transformed the federal government’s role in education and, in the progress, transformed American society by expanding opportunities for higher learning to hundreds of thousands of veterans and their families” (Cross, 2010, p. 3). Political undercurrents during the 1950s strengthened the federal role in education, which included Presidential races, Congressional actions, and a Supreme Court decision.

Cross (2010) reported that driven by the military buildup of the Korean War, Congress passed the Impact Aid Act, beginning in the 1950s. This legislation hardened the aid provisions in the Landrum Act of 1941. Also, flourishing public school enrollment was a factor in education developing into a major issue in the 1952 presidential campaign. Additionally, in 1954, the Supreme Court delivered its historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This verdict changed the federal perspective “by injecting a new federal priority into state and local school policy-making” (Anderson, 2007, p. 38).

The Kennedy and Johnson Years

According to Cross (2010), during the 1960 presidential campaign, education was a key issue. John Kennedy, Jr., attempted to get the upper hand by portraying Richard Nixon as opposing a new interest for federal support for education. Cross (2010) also reported that during the 1960s, there were modifications made in how federal education legislation was outlined. Up until that time, major federal education legislation came about in the framework of national defense. During the 1960s, there were two significant

bills that shed light on how the paradigm shifted. Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010) reported that those two bills were the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ESEA of 1965.

According to Anderson (2007), replying to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act put a stop to public educational institutions blocking access to individuals based on race, color, or national origin.

A former teacher himself, President Johnson, supported the ESEA. President Johnson had a belief that education was influential in moving individuals out of poverty. Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010) reported that ESEA had a billion-dollar layout in its first year; ESEA offered K-12 education with unparalleled federal support and afforded states with monies to assist schools in the areas of instructional materials, professional development, and other educational programs.

As reported by Anderson (2007), during the 1960s the federal education legislation regulated the federal government's involvement in K-12 education. Forthcoming federal education legislation stemmed some reasoning from national defense needs, there would no longer be a need for defense to engage in a principal role in justifying a federal role in education.

Federal Education Legislation of the 1970s and 1980s

According to Cross (2010), even though prior federal legislation gave emphasis with regard to local authorities, the laws and regulations of the 1970s held larger accountability toward state government and made states more accountable to the federal government. Federal funds were set aside for certain programs, with reporting requirements, such as regulations for distribution of ESEA's Title I funds and in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142).

Cross (2010) reported that this federal law became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and required schools to provide all students with a free, appropriate public education. In the framework of adding federal accountability, IDEA was significant in the extent to which this law's regulations directed how schools must serve students with disabilities. The implementation of ESEA and IDEA represented an important milestone in the broadening of the federal involvement in schooling.

According to Cross (2010), years later ESEA's Title I provisions and the 1983 report of The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, mirrored ongoing public alarm and dissatisfaction with American public schools. "The education foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity," (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1). As reported by Cross (2010), Anderson (2007), Tyack and Cuban (1995), and Vinoskis (2009), *A Nation at Risk* increased the push for accountability and standards-based reform. At the end of President Reagan's presidency, respect with regard to local control of education had disappeared. Also, the accountability spotlight directed at states, as noted in ESEA and IDEA, would soon focus on teachers and administrators.

The Clinton Years

Anderson (2007) reported that when President Clinton was elected, the education standards movement was in motion. President Clinton made a great choice by appointing a key player in the movement, South Carolina's governor, Richard W. Riley, to the Department of Education. In addition to that, President Clinton appointed Marshall S. Smith as Undersecretary. According to Anderson (2007), President Clinton, along with

the education team announced the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994. This legislation, which reauthorized ESEA, searched for ways to improve the nations' schools under three principles: 1) clear and common expectations; 2) high expectations for learning; and 3) accountability systems for responding to results. As reported by Ravitch (2010), soon after President George W. Bush's inauguration, he made the announcement that he was planning to reauthorize ESEA, and the new title would be what is known, at the time of this writing, as NCLB.

According to Ravitch (2010), the NCLB Act of 2001 resulted from the accountability movement in education. Standards became the means for measuring school performance. Ravitch (2010) also reported that a system of authorizations would punish states, local districts, and schools when these standards were not met. Caillier (2010) described that in essence, NCLB readjusted the responsibility for school governance and answerability from the local government level to the state. According to Anderson (2007), Cross (2010), Ravitch (2010), and Vinovskis (2009), NCLB put an emphasis on its penal measures on states and extended the federal government's involvement in K-12 education.

Race to the Top

Shortridge (2015) reported that when President Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, the United States was in the clutches of the Great Recession. President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, in an attempt to arouse the nation's economy, support job growth, and capitalize in education. The ARRA included a viable grant program intended to motivate educational innovation and reform. According to Shortridge (2015), Race to the Top was

the name of the grant program, and state governments were offered a share of $4.35 billion to accept and support educational reform. There were four core areas ARRA presented: 1) education standards and assessments that get students ready for college and careers, 2) student data systems that can enlighten and improve instruction, 3) growth and retention of effective teachers and principals, particularly in districts that have high-needs, and 4) resources to support rigorous interventions in low performing schools.

The History of the Principalship

According to McCarthy (2016), between the 19th and 20th centuries it was the norm to have one-room schoolhouses in rural areas. Grades first through eighth were taught by one teacher. A wood stove heated the room. Students walked to school because most of the schoolhouses were built for students who lived four or five miles from the school. McCarthy (2016) stated that boys and girls used separate doors to enter into the schoolhouse, and they were separated when lessons were taught. McCarthy (2016) reported that the school year was shorter than it was in society at the time of this writing.

According to McCarthy (2016), school lessons were very different than those at the time of this writing. Subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, history, grammar, and geography. Teachers had students come to the front of the classroom to recite what they learned, because students had memorized the lessons. By doing this, the teacher was able to correct students on things, such as pronunciation, and the other students were able to continue on with their school work.

During this time, cities experienced tremendous growth; this growth led to an increased enrollment of students and the development of the traditional one-room school

house. Continued population growth finally ushered in a transition from the one-room schoolhouse to larger classrooms within larger schools. The number of teachers also increased, due to the student population growth. As noted by Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, and Usdan (1990), as students advanced, there was no other choice than to group students in particular grades. Out of this growth, the creation of the principalship developed.

According to Campbell et al. (1990), a principal in the early education years was in charge of keeping up with paperwork; for example, attendance records. As stated by Balcerek (1999), principals' roles evolved since the 1800s; they took on a variety of tasks, which included leader of the school, instructional leader, and transformational leader. As noted by Whitehead et al. (2012), during the 1920s several changes to American education took place. The Baby Boom, after World War I led to increases in the number of students attending school, and the demand for teachers rose as a result.

Macunovich (2002) reported,

> Between the years of 1946 and 1964 in the United States, Baby Boomers were born. An all-time low fertility rate in the United States rose from 75.8 children per 1,000 women of childbearing age in 1936, to a high of 122.7 in 1957, and then fell to a new all-time low of 65.0 in 1976. (p. 1)

The Baby Boom was defined as having occurred during the peak years of this roller coaster ride. Its legacy was a population bulge destined to leave its imprint on each phase of the life cycle. That imprint included the creation of an 'echo boom' of births during the 1980s and 1990s. There were a number of social, psychological, and economic factors that caused the Baby Boom. Older women who gave birth during this time had put off

having babies because of the Depression and World War II. Another factor that contributed to the Baby Boom was the rise of male incomes and the falling of women's wages (Macunovich, 2002).

The first generation of children and teenagers with substantial spending power, combined with their numbers, drove the growth of an immense market campaign, new products, and terminology introduced by the Baby Boomers. According to Macunovich (2002), it was anticipated that by the year 2019 Social Security would provide 60% to 70% of the Boomer's retirement income (p. 9).

Table 1 shows a representation of the number of births from 1930 to 2007 in the United States. Take note of the increase in births during the Baby Boom from 1946 to 1964, which created a need for more principals in the nation's schools. These data were collected from the 2012 edition of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States.*

Table 1

Illustration of Baby Boomers

Year	Births
1930	2.2 million
1933	2.31 million
1935	2.15 million
1940	2.36 million
1941	2.5 million
1942	2.8 million
1943	2.9 million
1944	2.8 million
1945	2.8 million
1946	3.47 million
1947	3.9 million

Continued.

Table 1. Continued.

1948	3.5 million
1949	3.56 million
1950	3.6 million
1951	3.75 million
1952	3.85 million
1953	3.9 million
1954	4.0 million
1955	4.1 million
1956	4.16 million
1957	4.3 million
1958	4.2 million
1959	4.25 million
1960	4.26 million
1961	4.3 million
1962	4.17 million
1963	4.1 million
1964	4.0 million
1965	3.76 million
1966	3.6 million
1967	3.5 million
1973	3.14 million
1980	3.6 million
1985	3.76 million
1990	4.16 million
1995	3.9 million
2000	4.0 million
2004	4.1 million
2007	4.317 million

Note. Source, Baby Boomers (2017).

Balcerek (1999) also noted that in the 1960s the principal was in charge of putting into place programs passed down from the state and federal government. These programs included the Elementary Secondary Education Act of the 1960s and 1970s, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975, and a number of curricular programs; the most notable were those programs with a mathematics and science focus (Balcerek, 1999). Principals' roles changed gears to include instructional leadership during the 1970s and 1980s. The principal's job as instructional leader was to ensure teachers were teaching and making certain students were learning. Both Geocaris (2004) and Lashway (2003) noted that principals became a part of curriculum matters, focused on making sure all students succeeded. In fact, Geocaris (2004) stated that the late 1980s was a time when principals were identified as the key to success.

As a result of principals being identified as the key to success, there was significant importance placed on accountability and student achievement. The 1990s was an era when principals were counted on to perform a number of duties, which included: (a) promoting the school vision, (b) arranging professional development, (c) managing and leading, (d) cultivating joint decision making and, (e) supporting effective professional dialogue, teamwork, collegiality, and working out issues focused on student achievement. Principals of the 21st Century were given the responsibility of leading and putting forth a collaborative effort for their schools, as they made efforts to meet the conditions put in place in the ESEA of 2001. As noted by Geocaris (2004) and Lashway (2003), both administrators and educators took part in the evaluation process and the use of student assessment information to develop instruction, as they worked toward ensuring student success.

At the time of this writing, principals had the responsibility to manage and lead. Principals continued to be faced with a multiplicity of duties and tasks in their school buildings. Archer (2003) indicated, “Foundations and policy groups are arguing that while there are plenty of people who could become administrators; few possess the skills or knowledge needed to succeed at a time when expectations for student performance have never been higher” (p. 1).

According to Rossow and Warner (2000), with the development of both industrialization and scientific management techniques, the phrase ‘principal teacher’ became simply ‘principal,’ and the job changed, and management became the central focus point. Eye (2001) stated that principals had to have great organizational skills and the ability to oversee service personnel and ensure that time was allocated through a range of responsibilities. During the 21st Century, principals continued to be accountable and were striving “to improve the teaching available to all children and to increase the learning of those children,” and at the same time, making an effort to reform duties for themselves and their teachers” (Kritek, 1993, p. 256). The question was raised, Are principals important? As asserted by Norton (2003), studies on both school effectiveness and student achievement were valuable and had one thing in common; the fact that the effectiveness rested heavily on school leadership and the quality of that leadership.

In order for school principals to do what was required of them, they had to assume a number of roles. According to Clark and Thomas (2001), the greatest function of the principal was definitely being a leader in the area of curriculum improvement. As stated by Reilly (2001), the principal was a creator of settings conducive to learning and a program developer, implementer, and assessor. Evans (1996) noted that principals also

had to develop environments where teachers were able to work together, exchange ideas, and create strong educational networks, which allowed them to share authority with their staff.

As reported by Bohn (2013), a principal was the primary leader in a school who established a culture of high expectations and belongingness for every child, staff member, and parent. A 21st Century principal must be able to juxtapose visionary, instructional, and managerial leadership to support change and stability simultaneously. A 21st Century principal strategically used fiscal and human resources to tackle some of the world's toughest problems, through the lens of the children who walked through the doors every day. According to D'Avilar (2013), a principal was a fearless individual who was always at the heart of the matter. He/She created a vision and spent time ensuring that others understood and implemented the vision. A principal created places of realized potential and used encouragement, determination, and persistence to secure the dream. A principal was priceless and could not be photocopied.

As reported by Dean (2013), the role of the principal was to bear pain. Yes, principals were asked to be visionaries, instructional leaders, change agents, CEOs, and CFOs, and no smart structure would require all of these roles from one person. It meant the principal must be all things to everyone. Dean (2013) also reported, with that being said, having all those roles was not the most challenging part of the job. It was the daily bearing of pain. Education was in a unique space of rapid change, and very few educators understood where the field was and where the field of education was headed. Change was scary. According to Dean (2013), the main job of the principal was to bear the pain of all uncertainty. Parents were uncertain about their children's futures. Teachers were

uncertain about their roles, expectations, and jobs. Central Office at the school district was uncertain about its purpose. Boards were uncertain about their longevity. Superintendents were uncertain about how many days they had left on the job. All of this came crashing into the schoolhouse, forcing the principal into the role of bearer of pain.

Smith (2013) stated, a principal was the instructional leader and lead learner in a school. While the areas of responsibility were vast and wide, an effective principal must focus attention on the areas that had the greatest impact on student learning. At the time of this writing, today's principal must recognize that one cannot address all of the responsibilities within a school and must prioritize time and energy on these high-impact instructional areas, while utilizing other individuals to attend to the other areas. (Smith, 2013) also reported that, as the lead learner, a principal must capitalize on any opportunity to discuss and model characteristics of effective instructional practice. Student learning was the number-one priority of education and must always continue to be the number-one priority of any principal

According to Leithwood (2001), every school district was unique in its own way. The way a school district responded to its uniqueness, along with providing leadership basics, was vital for the success of school leaders. There were a lot of schools that shared two challenges; and, these challenges required responses by educational leaders. The first challenge was a mutual push to change, faced by a large number of educational leaders in the United States; and that change was the wide-ranging set of state policies intended to hold schools more accountable. The second challenge was the conditions linked to diverse student populations.

According to Ryan (1998), in order to have success in a vast accountability policy framework, school leaders needed to (a) create and sustain a competitive school, (b) empower others to make significant decisions, (c) provide instructional guidance, and (d) develop and implement strategic school improvement plans. Ryan (1998) also noted that successful leadership in diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts called for the integrated use of two distinct approaches to leadership. The first approach included implementing policies and initiatives, which, according to the best evidence available, served well those populations of children about which education had been concerned. Such practices might include providing parent education programs, reducing class sizes, and building rich curricula delivered through sustained discourse, structured around powerful ideas.

Ryan (1998) continued to report that the second approach to leadership aimed to ensure, at minimum, that those policies and other initiatives identified were implemented equitably. This usually meant building on the forms of social capital that students possessed, rather than being restricted by the social capital they did not possess. Corson (1996), Larson and Murtadha **(**2002), and Foster (1989) reported that such an approach to leadership was referred to as emancipatory leadership**,** leadership for social justice, **a**nd critical leadership. Examples of strategies associated with this approach, beyond those described to this point, included: heightening the awareness of school community members to unjust situations which they may encounter and how such situations affected students' lives; providing members of the school community the capacities needed to avoid situations that generated inequities; and providing opportunities to become involved in political action aimed at reducing inequities**.**

Principals Role in Leadership

As reported by the Wallace Foundation (2013), school leadership was nearly absent from some major school reform agendas, and individuals who viewed leadership as significant to turning around failing schools conveyed doubt about how to move forward. As stated by Simkin, Charner, and Suss (2010), there was a survey taken in 2010 in which administrators and other stake holders acknowledged that principal leadership was amid the most pressing matters on a list of topics in public school education. The quality of the teacher was at the top of the list; but, principal leadership was next on the list, surpassing dropout rates, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), student testing, and preparation for college careers.

In *The Organization Man - an Overseer of Buses, Boilers, and Books,* written by Whyte (1950), the author stated that principals were similar to the middle manager. At the time of this writing, where there was a quickly changing era of standard-based reform and accountability. Another concept developed, which was closer to the model suggested by Collins (2001), who wrote *Good to Great,* which pulled lessons from then-modern corporate life to suggest leadership that focused on what was essential, what needed to be done, and how to get things done. With this shift taking place, dramatic changes in what public education needed from principals came into play. Principals no longer could function solely as building managers, with the task of following district rules, carrying out regulations, and staying clear of making mistakes. They had the responsibility of becoming leaders of learning who could develop a team capable of delivering effective instruction.

Processes for developing the district or building mission and vision. Multiple researchers, such as Johnson (1992) and Sergiovanni (1990) indicated that it was essential for the school leader to start with a vision. High achieving schools and schools that steadily improved the academic achievement of their students started with a clear and focused vision. The process of developing and creating a school vision for the school helped to establish a sense of purpose, as well as to guide the systems of the building. The basic core of successful leadership was made up of three practices: developing people, setting direction, and redesigning the organization. As stated by Schlechty (2000), not having a clear vision was one of the ultimate obstacles to school reform. As noted by Matthews and Sammons (2005), schools that had a clear vision were outstanding. However, schools that were ineffective lacked a clear vision. The school leader's chief role was to develop a vision, according to Day, Harris, and Hadfield (2001), Hallinger and Heck (2002), Heck and Hallinger (1999), and Leithwood and Jantzi (2005).

If leaders wanted to be successful, they had to create a vision that others would be willing to follow or facilitate, according to Barnett and McCormick (2004), Bolman and Deal (1994), Brown (1993), Campo (1993), Day (2000), Liontos (1992), and Parish and Aquila (1996). The school vision had to be centered on the student to aid in bringing the faculty together, as noted by Cavanaugh and Dellar (1998), Lambert (2003), and Leithwood et al. (1999). It was reported by Hallinger and Heck (2002), Lambert (2003), and Senge (1990) how significant it was to review the vision, because the vision steered the direction of the organization.

Hallinger and Heck (2002) reported that goals were more clear-cut, while the vision was more central. Through a joint process, setting goals could be implemented, and that inspired members of an organization to be more involved in the goals set by the school, according to Hallinger (1992), Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006), and Mitchell and Tucker (1992). As stated by Hallinger and Heck (2002), goals had to be attainable and should be able to be gauged, so there was more accountability. As noted by Leithwood et al. (2006), leaders were key in helping followers achieve school goals; that was done by having high expectations set. According to Leithwood et al. (1999), when expectations were set high, that helped to encourage teachers to go above and beyond to achieve goals, by comparing then-current performance to future success.

For several years, the definition of being a leader was a debatable topic amongst researchers. Some believed leaders had to be good with people, must be able to balance tough love with earned praise, and a leader must be fair and consistent. Others believed leaders must be organized and prepared, be good listeners, and must be visionary. This sometimes confusing and even contradictory definition caused deliberation. “Simple concepts are easily defined but complex concepts such as leadership must be defined more vaguely” (Leithwood & Duke, 1999 p. 8).

Hallinger (1992) reported that principal leadership went through a manifold of repetitions throughout the century previous to this writing. From the 1920s to the 1960s, principals were looked at as administrative managers, whose jobs were to supervise the daily operations in the school. This was a time when principals began to oversee programs, in particular programs funded by the federal government. As stated by

Hallinger (1992), principals' roles changed; instead of being individuals who were just the face of the school, they became known as agents of change in the 1960s and 1970s. No matter what the results were, shifting to become an agent of change and to be more engaged in issues, such as curriculum inside the school, was the foundation for the movement of the instructional leader.

Hallinger (1992, 2003), Leithwood (1994) and Stewart (2006) reported that it was 1980 when the movement toward instructional leadership began. This movement was driven by the reaction to the public's wish that school standards be raised, and student academic performances improved. As a means to school improvement, the principal led the faculty in the right direction to reach goals.

Senge (1990) recommended that leadership for creating a shared vision would capture the shared mind, and creative tension began. He explained how creative tension developed from realizing where a group wanted to be and described where the group was at the time. Effective leaders knew how to initiate creative organizational tension and how to connect the energy and rational stimulation it produced. Senge (1990) also reported that they established for themselves, and made possible for others, the method of creating visions of what could be, representations of desired states, valued aspirations, and developments of more appropriate futures. Leaders in the educational field helped to connect the stakeholders, community, staff, and students to shape visions of what a desirable education and school organization could be. According to Senge (1990), leaders also created a process to assess the alignment with and progress toward achieving that vision. They connected the value of assessment, an assessment frame of mind that pervades all levels of the organization. The vision would be shared and valued only when

a process of assessment was in place to provide feedback about the degree to which the vision was achieved.

The initial step in creating a more effective school was to display the school that had to be developed. Or, as Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you are going, you probably aren't going to get there" (as cited by Berra & Kaplan, 2002, para. 1). Recognizing where you want to go, as it relates to where you are, was essential to identifying areas where improvement was needed. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (2016) there had to be a shared vision created in a school community built on a set of beliefs in which the school community had to commit. The Maryland State Department of Education (2016) also reported that the vision for the school should be reflective to the school district's vision and goals along with the state standards. As reported by The Maryland State Department of Education (2016), the school improvement priorities needed to be aligned with the school vision. While creating a school vision was not a hurried-up process, it was not a hard one. There was a requirement from staff and other stakeholders to recognize and share core beliefs and describe how their ideal school would look.

It was found that principals rated highly by teachers for creating a solid instructional climate or taking sound instructional actions were able to cultivate a clear vision that all students could learn. As reported by Louis (2010), what got the highly-rated principals out of bed each morning was what kept them awake at night. They had a vision and believed that all students could achieve at high levels. They emphasized the value of research-based strategies. They spoke about the amount of time invested in

developing the school's vision, gathering research information, and then applied it to the local setting.

According to Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010), in one passage the researchers quoted a teacher and the principal at a school where the vision was securely planted, "My principal is very firm in what she believes" (p. 84). For her part, the principal made clear that the vision was 'nonnegotiable,' as the researchers put it, commenting that her expectations were high, and the teachers knew that. As stated by Nanus (1992), a vision was little more than an empty dream, until it was widely shared and accepted. A large number of leaders adopted a vision that was personal to them. The reason for this was they recognized that the vision would be utilized by others in their organization.

As reported by Ford (1992), people were motivated by goals which they found personally compelling, as well as challenging, but achievable. Having such goals helped people make sense of their work and enabled them to find a sense of identity for themselves within their work context.

Visionary leadership. The two words, visionary leadership, were usually heard when referring to a site leader. How is a leader that is a visionary identified? Visionary leaders had no doubt about what they believed, and they knew what was best for students academically, socially, and their emotional learning. The leaders combine their individual beliefs with other individuals with like minds and state their vision. These questions may be posed to staff, students, and parents: What's really important at the school and what type of atmosphere are you trying to create? Also, an important element was that the experiences of students and outcomes were at the center of this vision. A visionary leader

displayed the school's vision. The actions, without fail, lined up with the vision for the school. Additionally, leaders had a plan on how to carry out the vision.

Setting the direction for a School-Wide Vision. Setting direction and giving directions are not the same. When it comes to setting direction, the big picture had to be designed, and that included skills that were not the same. A study conducted by the Wallace Foundation (2013) showed that a leader had the skill set to explain and set clear directions, and with those things being in place, there was an enormous impact on the culture of the school, which contributed considerably to student achievement.

As reported by the Wallace Foundation (2013), school leaders were consumed with managing the day-to-day operations of a school, they fit in their leadership plan somewhere amongst handling paperwork, disciplining students, dealing with custodial emergencies, appointments with parents, and putting out fires. Having a clear direction set among teachers and administrators meant to create a common understanding about the school. Everyone was aware of what the primary goal was. Sharing a clear, school-wide direction allowed everyone to have a sense of purpose and identity. It led to the school as a whole having a way to gauge and examine daily routines and to rank activities that directly added to promoting the school's direction, goals, and vision.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) named components of setting clear direction: Identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, creating high performance expectations, monitoring organizational performance, and promoting effective communication throughout the organization.

Creating a climate hospitable to education. According to Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, and Cravens (2007), principals that were effective shaped school

buildings that were characterized by the basics, which were safety and orderliness; but, they also made sure that schools created an atmosphere in which students felt supported and responded to. For teachers, too, principals set a tone. The feel was non-bureaucratic, and teachers formed part of a professional community, that was "deeply rooted in the academic and social learning goals of the schools" (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2007, pp. 7-8). "Principals ensure that teachers do not work in isolation from one another, but work collaboratively, giving each other help and guidance to improve instructional practices" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 50)

Effective principals worked hard at building such school communities, as found by University of Washington researchers in an examination of leadership in urban schools. As reported by Portin et al. (2009), alongside their efforts to prioritize collaboration and address trust in the building, the principals, aided by other administrative staff, made improvement of the work culture a central target of their efforts to lead a learning improvement agenda. Some arrived at their job feeling that they needed to change a toxic culture at the school, to do what they needed to do. Others spoke of 'building a culture,' 'moving toward a culture,' or 'leading a culture of change.'

Portin et al. (2009) also reported that researchers stated that the key elements of a climate hospitable to learning was a sense of student and staff safety; respect for all members of the school community, without regard to the professional status or position; an upbeat welcoming, solution oriented, no blame, professional environment; an effort to invite and involve staff in various school wide functions; and a parallel outreach to students that engaged and involved them in a variety of activities.

As reported by Goldring et al. (2009), effective principals ensured that their schools allowed both adults and children to put learning at the center of their daily activities. Seashore-Louis and Leithwood (2012) reported, is it a surprise that principals at schools with high teacher ratings for instructional climate outranked other principals in developing an atmosphere of caring and trust. Or, that their teachers were more likely than faculty members elsewhere to find the principals' motives and intentions were good.

According to Marshall (2003), one former principal reflecting on his experiences reported that he recalled a typical staff meeting years ago at an urban school where morale never seemed to get out of the basement. Discussion centered on field trips, war stories about troubled students, and other management issues, rather than matters like using student work and data to fine-tune teaching. Almost inevitably, teacher pessimism was a significant barrier, with teachers regarding themselves as hardworking martyrs in a hopeless cause.

Improving Instruction

Effective leaders concentrated on the quality of instruction in their school buildings. According to the Wallace Foundation (2013) principals put emphasis on research-based strategies to enhance teaching and learning and began discussions about instructional approaches, with teams and individual teachers. There was a great deal of time spent in classrooms by principals evaluating instruction. Also, according to the Wallace Foundation (2013), this was the case in high schools, due to the fact that secondary teachers could not be expected to be experts in all academic subjects. Part of their responsibility was making sure that someone who was trained did so. They observed

what was working and what was not working, and they discussed their findings with teachers.

According to Mendels (2012), there was a study completed by the Minnesota/ Toronto team in 2010 that compared principals. The first group made regular, brief, and spur-of-the-moment classroom visits, which were followed up with feedback to the teacher. The second group's visit was scheduled and not for instructional observation. The researchers wrote that the low-scoring principals failed to provide their teachers with feedback. As it related to improving instruction, principals that were effective took the opportunity to embrace collaborative culture that they developed in their schools.

Research was done by individuals from the University of Washington, which showed that the school leaders they observed continued to see teachers working, teaching, and helping one another. As reported by Portin et al. (2009), to create opportunities for teacher collaboration and learning, supervisory leaders across school sites turned to the school schedule to create the time and endorsement for this kind of work to occur. Some principals moved to a block schedule, others gave up administrative meeting time to create more planning time for teachers, while others used the master schedule as a tool to create opportunities and accommodate for various teacher professional development activities, such as 'lab sites,' peer observations, grade-level meetings, and professional development.

According to Dettmer, Thurston, and Dyck (2005), surveys should be conducted, and observations should be used to determine which topics were suitable for professional development. Topics should carry great weight and meet the identified needs of the campus. Professional development had a goal to perfect and enrich the good teaching

practices that were already in place and offered information about other effective learning strategies that may be used. It was rare that school buildings deserted all of their established teaching strategies and instructional practices. Review of then-current practices should take place on an annual basis to determine if strategies were successful.

Critical to this determination was whether the program or practices were used with reliability, monitoring of implementation took place, and student achievement was positively impacted. The building principal's role in improving student achievement was vital through facilitation, leadership, and support of effective instructional strategies. Principals must be willing to work together with staff to agree upon suitable instructional strategies and support teachers through active involvement, collaboration, and effective leadership.

Historical Background of Accountability

McDonnell (2005) contended that, for a long period of time in the United States, accountability was a part of educational improvement efforts. A wide-ranging past review of education since the introduction of common schools in the 1800s demonstrated how school leaders were required to respond to the many demands placed upon them from a multiplicity of sources. In this perspective, legislation like NCLB could be seen as evolutionary more than it was revolutionary. In the early days of schooling, school principals and teachers ran the school, and they had the tasks of taking care of teachers' curricular and management tasks of running the school.

Blount (1998) reported that, as school leaders, they had to teach, administer promotional exams, and discipline the students, while also having to interact with the parents, the local community, and school board**.** During the 1900s, on the other hand,

elementary education attendance laws and high school enrollments increased the attendance of principals in schools. Also, principals had the responsibility of supervising staff and interacting with parents and local officials. A lot of these responsibilities still existed amongst principals, at the time of this writing. During the 20th Century the political dialogue was focused on racial and gender equity, which inevitably turned the national spotlight back on the schools. In her exploration of the evolution of the federal government's involvement in education, McDonnell (2005) described three distinct periods that characterizes the previous 40 years.

Peterson, Rabe, and Wong (1991), as cited in McDonnell (2005), stated that the first period started with the introduction of the ESEA of 1965 by Lyndon B. Johnson. One of the main initiatives in his War on Poverty, ESEA focused on support for underprivileged students living in impoverished areas through Title I, a categorical program that provided funds to schools that needed it. The funds offered assistance to students who were eligible through pull-out programs and services outside of the core instructional program of schools. Peterson et al. (1991), as cited in McDonnell (2005), also reported that, due to the absence of governmental oversight, there was no steady enforcement or accountability of the appropriate use of the funds to meet the policy's primary goal. As a result, between 1965 and 1980, the original legislation was reauthorized four times in order to better target the needs of disadvantaged students. Right away, principals became used to managing the bureaucratic demands for accountability.

Between the years of 1980 and 1987, the second period of evolution took place. Corresponding with the release of the report, *A Nation at Risk*, the federal government

pushed for higher standards; which decreased Title I funds to support the effort (Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013). There was a respond by the state that led to an increase of attention placed on graduation requirements, content standards, teacher certification, and assessment. During this time principals had to make decisions about how to best make use of their scarce resources, in order to keep up with societal emphasis placed on global competitiveness and excellence for all students. Increased pressure came from local, state, and federal sources to respond, while fiscal support diminished.

In 1988, the final period of evolution took place with the reauthorization of ESEA that defined the academic expectations for Title I-eligible students. In 1994, it was a requirement that during the next six years, content standards had to be aligned with a means to assess them through the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), reauthorization of ESEA. McDonnell (2005, as cited in Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013) stressed that receipt of Title I funds entailed submitting specific plans that detailed the use of the funds and that "states were required to hold schools and districts accountable to make adequate progress toward achieving the standards and they were to identify districts and schools in need of improvement to take corrective action in cases of persistent academic failure" (p. 30).

Gonzalez and Firestone (2013) reported that, in 2001, NCLB continued to intensify the federal and state governments' focus on standards, assessments, and sub-group performance outcomes with explicit performance targets, timelines, and sanctions to be imposed when applicable. Through NCLB, principals were being held more accountable to meet the diverse needs of disparate constituent groups. An overview of the American educational system uncovered that school leaders always responded to quite a

few sources of accountability in a variety of forms. As a matter of fact, the federal requirements, such as those executed by NCLB were pretty current developments that were added to the already full load of responsibilities that principals must assume**.** According to Gonzalez and Firestone (2013), as a result, principals were then met with the daunting challenge achieving excellence in education for all students by the year 2014, while making sure all of the other demands associated with being the instructional leader of the school.

Accountability

According to the George W. Bush Institute (n.d.) school accountability had a history that let us know that the idea and its principles had solid background. Support came from Democrats and Republicans, business leaders, civil rights communities, and parents and educators. Also, the George W. Bush Institute (n.d.) reported that Senator Robert F. Kennedy discussed the evaluation of the progress of all students. Standing as a representative for the poor and less fortunate, Robert Kennedy stated during a Senate hearing on the law that,

> It is very difficult for a person who lives in a community to know whether, in fact, his educational system is what it should be, whether if you compare their community to a neighboring community they are doing everything they should be, whether the people that are operating the educational system in a state or local community are as good as they should be. (p. 2)

As stated by the George W. Bush Institute (n.d), Robert Kennedy went on to say that, "He wonders if there could not have been some system of reporting. Through some

testing system that would be established by which the people at the local community would know periodically what progress had been made" (p. 2)

As stated by the George W. Bush Institute (n.d), Lyndon Johnson's mark was stamped all over the bipartisan bill and its principles. The Democrats even signed the act at a one room schoolhouse that he attended in Johnson City, Texas. Also, according to the George W. Bush Institute (n.d), Johnson stated that, "as President of the United States, I believe deeply no law I have signed or will ever sign means more to the future of America" (p. 2).

For decades, principals were recognized as important contributors to the effectiveness of schools. In an era of school accountability reform and shared decision making and management in schools, leadership mattered. Principals constituted the core of the leadership team in schools. Effective school research showed that effective principals influenced a variety of school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, their ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals, their effective allocation of resources, and their development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning (Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb 2009; as cited in Rice, 2010, para. 1). The importance of principals was recognized by both educators and researchers. According to Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2009), sensible studies on the efficiency and sharing of principals were scarce; this was caused by having a limited amount of information to study principals, their complex efforts, and their impact on school results.

According to Perry and McWilliam (2007), school accountability, as it related to someone answerable for activities that took place in schools was nothing new. Teachers

had always been held accountable for making sure the curriculum was followed, for having great classroom management techniques, and for carrying out a number of duties that went beyond classroom teaching. At the time of this writing, it was not long ago that teachers were also held responsible for the way they dressed and for their behaviors during school hours and after hours, to a level that was perhaps sterner than the many dress and ethical behavior codes that now exist. As reported by, Perry and McWilliams (2007), three things changed considerably over three decades. Those three things were the nature, scope, and purpose of accountability practices in school districts. These practices became universal in school districts to a degree that they left little, if any, room for experimentation, innovation, and risk taking; and all of those conditions were important for learning.

The origins of accountability may be found in educational practices; the perception was consequently changed, organized, and re-invented in the business world. This process, that Strathern (1997) called “cultural replication, is one where values cross from one domain of cultural life to another and then, in altered form, back again” (p. 308). Ranson (2003) reported that accountability was re-imported into education, and over the years was further processed and developed to a place where it was one of the leading discussions amongst educators at all levels. According to Ranson (2003), many debated that practices of accountability were created to a level that accountability was no longer one piece of the education system but constituted the system itself.

According to Perry and McWilliam (2007), schooling accountability, which was being accountable to someone for the activities that went on in schools, was nothing new. For years, teachers were accountable for following the outlined curriculum, maintaining

order in their classroom, and being responsible for carrying out a number of duties that included, but went beyond classroom teaching. Perry and McWilliam (2007) also reported there was a drastic change over the three decades previous to their writings, in the nature, scope, and purpose of accountability systems in schools. These systems became omnipresent in schools, so much that they threatened to leave little, if any, space for experimentation, innovation, and risk taking.

As reported by Ranson (2003), the social, ethical, or moral measurements of education were made private, marginalized, and shut down by the stresses of the performativity culture. The emphasis that was put on what was, in fact, a limited selection of outcomes could, as reported by Ranson (2003), "inadequately represent the more comprehensive spiritual, cultural, moral, aesthetic and intellectual values and purpose of schooling" (p. 467). According to Ranson (2003), school leaders' responsibilities went farther than the formal accountability practices. These responsibilities included making sure that the standards, philosophies, and principles expressed in mission statements, strategic plans, curriculum, and educational frameworks were performed in daily school practices.

As reported by Ranson (2003), it could be argued that the amount of responsibility principals had was not the same as the responsibility they had relating to accountability. However, they did have the responsibility of making sure that students were offered the experiences and opportunities. When it came to making decisions, principals must provide the spaces that made this possible. The number of teachers to be receptive to classroom subtleties, to let both themselves and students have the opportunity to experiment and take risk, could not be buried in a restricted drive to

respond to systemic accountabilities. Accountability was a vital component of the professional list of modern school leaders. On the other hand, the responsibility to connect with the social and the systemic could be lost when accountabilities were simply leadership imperative.

According to Ordu and Ordu (2012), well-defined accountability practices had to be in place at seven different levels to safeguard student success at the time and in the future. Goals, beliefs, values, visions, and actions must be aligned comparable to what one may find in a balanced scorecard. If these things were not operating in tandem, then the system may be doomed to fail. The seven levels of accountability for student success were: state, school system, school, principal, teachers, parents, and students.

State Level

Also reported by Ordu and Ordu (2012), a plan should be in place in all states to measure accountability. There were 32 states approved for NCLB waivers, eight states had a conditional waiver, which meant they had not yet satisfied the Obama administration's requirements for a new principal/teacher evaluation system, incorporation of College and Career Readiness Standards, and other stipulations. If these states were allowed to have waivers, it was important that these states had a plan in place, so that all educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders understood how schools would be monitored and what criteria would be used to determine school improvement. A number of the states that received NCLB waivers had established impressive accountability plans.

School System

Ordu and Ordu (2012) reported, for school systems in states where NCLB was still active, "The accountability standards stayed the same: required scores in key subject areas, test participation rates at 95 percent, attendance, graduation rates and adequate performance of special populations such as disadvantaged students and students with disabilities" (Ordu and Ordu 2012, para. 8). What will be the accountability of school systems in states with waivers? These measures should line up with the state accountability plan components that were monitored and held accountable for. Superintendents, boards of education and leaders had to be visionaries, progressive thinkers who were well versed about what was happening around the country and how to keep their school system on the cutting-edge of transformation. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional learning were important success indicators for school systems. All levels of system operation had to connect back to improvement of student achievement. High expectations must be in place for school system leaders, principals, teachers, students, and their parents.

School. According to Ordu and Ordu (2012), how does one know if students are successful and what actions will be taken if they are not? If schools could answer that question and have an accountability plan in place, those schools were most likely to have a great level of success. Most times, the school improvement plan was the accountability plan for the school. This plan outlined the same parts that would be found in a school systems strategic plan. The actions that would take place were clear. The action plan should include improving each content area based on then-current school baseline data from the most recent school assessments, a professional development plan that was lined

up with the action plans, a technology plan, a plan for improving student attendance, and parent involvement, and a plan that outlined how data would be utilized, analyzed, and interpreted. Guaranteeing student success in schools meant teachers and staff members were held accountable for quality work directly impacting student achievement. Identifying core causes for lack of student success and aggressive interventions to address areas of weakness must be implemented.

Principal. Reported by Ordu and Ordu (2012), often times it was said that principals must be strong instructional leaders. Being a strong instructional leader was only part of what principals should know and be able to do. Principals had to be change agents, be able to deal with massive uncertainties, human relations expert, school culture shaper, and an excellent performance manager. If principals were knowledgeable, courageous, and willing to hold everyone accountable for keeping their students at the center of everything they did, success was bound to follow.

Every school had to have an effective principal, in every school building of a school system striving for excellence in education. Principals of these schools had a clear understanding of their position, performed duties and responsibilities at a high level, were able to multi-task, took no excuses from anyone, and success was the only option and mediocrity was not acceptable in a school run by a strong leader.

Teacher. Also reported by Ordu and Ordu (2012), it was clear the damage an ineffective teacher could do to students. It could take years of instruction with an effective teacher to turn that damage around. School systems would need a strong focus on developing the number of teachers through solid induction programs, job-embedded professional learning, support for implementation of the new Common Core Performance

Standards with accompanying assessments, and teacher evaluation programs linked to student achievement outcomes. Teaching children at a high level of proficiency should be the core work of every teacher. All teachers should continue to be highly qualified to teach the subjects and grade levels they were assigned. Teachers should be held accountable; however, their success began with holding students accountable for learning what was taught.

Parents. Ordu and Ordu (2012) reported that, the curriculum outside of student's mattered. This curriculum dealt with how students spent their time away from school, what they valued, their support systems, and how involved their parents were at the school. What students learned in school could be unlearned easily if there was no reinforcement at home or in the community. Parents had to have certain skills in order for their children to be successful in school. Parents could attend parent workshops and adult education classes to gain knowledge in certain areas.

When parents were fully involved in their children's school years, the chances of those children being successful increased in the area of the school community, monitoring school work, communicating effectively with teachers and being able to identify resources to aid them with social, emotional health issues, and other disablements to school success.

Students. According to Ordu and Ordu (2012), responsibility and taking ownership were two things that students had to be taught to take ownership of. Schools where students could thrive and be successful made sure that personalized learning environments were significant. In preparing students for the 21st Century in the United States, teachers had to continue to be unwavering and prepare them to be competitive in a

global economy. Failing to do so would be detrimental to not only the individual child, but to the future of the nation.

Principal's Role in Student Achievement

In *Principals and Student Achievement*, Cotton (2003) gave an in-depth review of research results relating to how principals influenced student achievement. Among her most noteworthy discoveries was that principals of flourishing schools demonstrated qualities that cut across setting demographics and school organizations was ambitious; but, the results, according to Cotton (2003), were high in relationship to student performance and teacher effectiveness. Principals continued to be confronted with the challenge to improve student achievement; as such, a number of school districts changed their thinking as it related to leadership. Leadership was then on the forefront of their agendas, and there was an unyielding obligation to cultivate and promote exemplary school leadership. At the time of this writing, the definition of an exemplary leader went beyond the administrative role. At the time of this writing, leaders were expected to motivate, set goals, teach, and ensure that results were gained. Visionary and performance-driven principals were individuals who led high performing schools.

As stated by Cotton (2003), there were times when principals' roles seemed to be disconnected from the everyday procedures of teaching and learning that largely influenced student achievement. Along with principals' skills to inspire and support teachers in utilizing the best instructional approaches, a large number of principals felt they were unable to assist in directly affecting student achievement. There were researchers who believed that a principal's attitude toward achievement could lessen their own effectiveness to encouraging high levels of achievement in their schools. Cotton

(2003) also noted that principals who had a strong belief that they were directly accountable for and engaged in students' learning created higher levels of achievement; while, on the other hand, some principals had a belief that they could do little to create solid results among students in their schools. Principals who had a firm belief that they affected student achievement truly were involved in a number of behaviors that were undoubtedly connected to student learning and performance.

There were both movies and books featuring school principals. *Waiting for Superman*, a 2010 movie premiere, was directed by Guggenheim (2010), and *Lean on Me*, a 1989 movie premiere, was directed by Alvidsen (1989). In 1999, Gruwell wrote *The Freedom Writers Diary*. The portrayals contributed by books and moves have run from ineffective to out-of-touch authoritarians to effective and skillful leaders able to turn around a low performing school. These were the questions that arose: Do principals really have an impact on schools? Can principals turn schools around? And if they can, what do they do to achieve success? All of those were vital questions; but, there was a small amount of research done on the principal's role. According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), researchers said that principals ranked next to teachers, as it related to their impact on student achievement.

At the time of this writing, and, according to Usdan, McCloud, and Podmostko (2000), that changed. The principal's primary responsibility was student learning. Principals had to go above and beyond and spend less time in their offices and more time in classrooms. Usdan et al. (2000) also reported that principals were given detail to focus on curriculum and instruction, as well as gathering, examining, and using data to improve

student achievement. Principals were responsible for gathering stakeholders that included the community, teachers, and students, to assist in reaching those goals.

According to Usdan et al. (2000), student achievement was looked at more than ever by principals, and they were still able to manage to fulfill their traditional administrative and building responsibilities. Principals' workdays became lengthy, working 10-hour days, and a large number of principals believed the job was just not achievable as it was then-shaped. According to Usdan et al. (2000), there was no way possible that a low performing school could be turned around by a principal alone. At the lower grades, principals had a great impact on students. According to Leithwood, et al. (2004) and Seashore-Louis, Wahlstrom, Leithwood, and Anderson (2010), it was not known why principals had an impact at the elementary level. Some of the factors may be, there were more upper-grade level teachers than at the elementary schools. As noted by Seashore-Louis, et al. (2010), principals at the upper levels were less likely to offer one-on-one supervision and support to their staff members.

Another reason principals at the upper levels may not have had as much of an impact was that teachers at these levels were typically subject-specific. Finally, as noted by Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, and Simieou (2010), elementary school principals spent a lot of time in the classroom; on the other hand principals at the high school level had not totally shifted to the role of instructional leader.

According to Habegger (2007), principals were asked the question, "What were your major goals for the building?" (p. 43). They responded by saying, it was not to produce high test scores, but instead to develop positive relationships. One principal expressed a wish for students to develop caring relationships with adults throughout the

building. There was a sense of hope that these relationships would inspire students who did not want to attend school to be inspired to do so, because of the support and nurturing they received. Payne (2003) stated that, for students who came from poverty-stricken environments, the key to their motivation for success would be built on relationships they developed. As reported by Karns (2005), when teachers had positive relationships with students and students had positive relationships with one another, learning could take place. Principals had successful schools when they truly understood the significance of a positive school culture and how that could lead to student achievement and professional growth throughout the school building.

As Hallinger (2005) noted, instructional leadership was not going to disappear, while it was ill-defined since its conception. It was reported by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) that the principal was looked upon to recognize the system of beliefs, as it related to quality instruction; also, to have adequate knowledge of the curriculum and be aware that appropriate content was being given to all students. As reported by Hallinger (2005) and Mosenthal, Lipson, Torncello, Russ, and Mekkelsen (2004), there was mounting pressure on school leaders to provide more sound support instruction, and that steady and conversant support from them made a difference. According to Stein and Nelson (2003), there were scholars who put emphasis on the significance of principals' understanding of curricular content and instructional materials; and there were those that focused on principals' support for improved instruction.

Types of Approaches

Trait approach. As reported by Northouse (2004), there were many attempts done to study leadership and to describe the makeup that describes what a leader was.

During the 20th Century, studies were done on leadership traits to establish what made individuals great leaders. Theories developed were labeled as great, because they concentrated on recognizing the qualities and characteristics possessed by great leaders. Dating back to the 20th Century, leadership traits, characteristics, and the definition of the word grew to fit specific kinds of leaders and certain types of situations with people who were involved. Beliefs emerged that only great people were born with certain characteristics that made them great leaders.

There was no consistency of traits, according to Stogdill (1974), that set apart leaders from non-leaders in 27 different situations. This meant that a leader in one situation may not be a leader in another situation. Stogdill (1974) performed two surveys that examined over 280 studies collectively to give an overview of the trait approach. The first survey showed that an individual in a leadership role was different from his/her followers as it related to intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability. The survey also showed that a person did not turn out to be a leader simply because of certain traits. The traits the leaders possessed must be relevant to the situation in which the leader was involved.

Stodgill's (1974) second survey investigated 163 studies in which he compared the findings of his second survey to those of the first survey he conducted. Comparable to the first survey, Stodgill (1974) found 10 quality characteristics associated with leadership. Those characteristics were: persistence, responsibility and task completion, initiative in social situations, originality in problem solving, willingness to accept consequences of decisions and actions, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress,

willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, self-confidence, ability to influence other persons' behaviors, and capacity to structure social interaction systems.

Mann (1959) conducted a review including more than 1,400 studies about personality and leadership. He implied that personality traits could be used to decipher leaders from non-leaders. The results of his study recognized leaders to be proficient in the traits of intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extroversion, and conservatisms. In 1991, Kirkpatrick and Locke also reviewed the importance of leadership traits. They found that "it is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people" (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 59). They debated that leadership traits made some individuals not the same as others and the difference needed to be recognized as a significant element of the leadership process. The trait approach in studying leadership was centered on the belief that personal characteristics, such as intelligence, were to be transferred from one situation to another.

Skills approach. According to Northouse (2004), the skills approach was a developing research theory that concentrated on the necessary competencies needed for effective performance. The major focus of the skills approach was that it placed emphasis on the abilities and skills that could be learned and developed. Katz (1955) found that leadership was governed by three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual. According to Katz (1955), the technical skill was having the knowledge and being competent in a specific area of work. The human skill was the ability to work with people. Leaders who grasped this ability were able to work well with supervisors and peers to reach the school's goal. Through this approach, a leader was also capable of creating an atmosphere of trust among his/her colleagues to increase encouragement

among staff members in the planning of events that would affect them and the students. To be an effective leader an individual had to be able to form an idea and be able to use that idea.

Style approach. The style approach emphasized the way in which leaders conducted themselves or how they acted. This approach concentrated on the actions of leaders toward their colleagues in different situations. Task and relationship behaviors were the actions that were focused on. The purpose of this approach was to clarify how leaders were able to combine the two behaviors in efforts of influencing everyone to reach a common goal.

Educational Shifts

The principal and change. Schools that showed improvement had leaders who were excellent at leading change and making improvements. “About every single study of school effectiveness has shown both primary and secondary leadership to be a key factor” (Sammons, 1999, p. 195). Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, and Easton (1998) noted that schools that displayed improvement had principals in place that labored jointly with and had full support from educators, parents, and community members to activate initiative. Principals’ hard work was centered on two key dimensions: making connections with patrons by reaching out to parents and community members and increasing and developing professional dimensions within the faculty and staff and endorsing the development of a professional community within the school. According to McLaughlin and Talbert (2000), principals whose schools received low scores in regard to leadership were viewed as managers who made available an insignificant amount of encouragement for teaching and learning in the school. On the other hand, principals who

received high ratings were engaged in activities that not only developed, but also sustained a solid teacher community.

These school leaders who received high ratings valued relationships and professional standards were their focal points. Leithwood (2000) and his colleagues supported the fact that elementary and secondary-level teachers focused on nurturing the conditions for school growth by doing the following: creating joint cultures among subgroups of teachers, encouraging development of teachers, and observing teacher loyalty as a sign of structural capacity. According to Leithwood (2001), the seven components of capacity and their cumulative relationships were: (a) the knowledge that teachers had, (b) their skillfulness and direction, communities were professional, (c) soundness of the program, and (d) technical resources and leadership from the principal. Professional development should center on the information and competences of educators as individuals, so they could make a difference in their classrooms. Additionally, the organization had to be developed. Social or relationship resources were important to improving schools, and that was why development had to take place.

Other resources, such as materials, equipment, space, and time were all needed for instructional improvement. If excellent leadership was not involved in school capacity, the leadership could become challenged. Elmore (2000) agreed that the responsibilities of principals was to strengthen talents of individuals within an organization, developing a popular culture of expectancies around the use of those skills and information, holding the numerous parts of the organization together in a useful relationship, and making individuals answerable for their offerings to the joint outcome. Elmore (2000) pointed out that this only applied to a small group of then-present leaders, and that it was a system

problem. The nations' schools would keep on producing only a minute number of brave leaders until changes were made in recruitment. When that happened, schools would get leaders they deserved.

Educational Reform Movements

According to Robinson (2008), "Every country on earth at the moment is reforming public education" (p. 6). So are we (educators) ready for a paradigm shift? There were several paradigm shifts that stood out, took place over the years, as it related to educating students and the leaders who guided this work. To begin, examine some of the most impactful movements. The movements discussed are *A Nation at Risk*, NCLB, the *Common Core Standards,* and the ESSA. These reform movements were of particular interest to both educators and non-educators, with characteristics displayed in movies, such as: *Lean on Me* (Alvidsen, 1989) released in 1989, *Waiting for Superman* (Guggenheim, 2010) released in 2010, and *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007) released in 2007. There were movies that paralleled and highlighted the central role of leadership styles and each of the reform movements discussed in Chapter Two.

As reported by the USDOE (2001), the NCLB Act, was signed on January 8th, 2002, by President George Bush. The Act was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was the chief federal law in pre-collegiate education. In 1965 the first ESEA was enacted and also in 1994, the act was reauthorized, encompassing Title I and the federal government's flagship aid program for students less fortunate. Also reported by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2001) the NCLB Act came into effect because there was widespread public worry centered on the state of education. The NCLB legislation had requirements set in place in every public school in

America. According to the USDOE (2001), at the center of the NCLB Act, measures were put into place to not only motivate extensive growth in student achievement, but to ensure that states and schools were held answerable for student advancement. These measures included students being tested students annually, academic growth, Report Cards for students, teacher qualifications, and changes in funding. As the law's effects started to set in, questions arose from educators and policymakers about the practicability of its goals and periods.

Growing concerns about the law arose. Most of the concerns centered on the rules relating to AYP and the goal of every student being 100% proficient on state assessments by the 2013-2014 school year. In most cases, schools that made the headlines were high-performing schools. There were advocates of the NCLB Act, with some educational leaders showing support for the law's stable accountability mandates, characterizing them as critical levers of change, inclusiveness, and transparency of results. According to Peterson and West (2003), the laws' ultimate effectiveness, some observers argued, may rely on how closely states and schools stuck to principles of 'tough accountability.'

NCLB could be linked with the 2010 movie, *Waiting for Superman,* a documentary film directed by Guggenheim (2010). The film broke down the failures of the American public education system by following quite a few students as they made every effort to be accepted into a charter school. The film received both praise and negative criticism from commentators, reformers, and educators. In the researcher's opinion, this movie was edifying and heartbreaking and focused on the fact that the future of education rested on quality teachers and the authoritative unions that enabled bad

teachers. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers were the main villains in this movie.

The *Waiting for Superman* movie may have never been written; every morning Guggenheim (2010) drove his children to a Los Angeles private school. The route to his children's school allowed him the opportunity to pass a number of public schools. He and his wife had decided that public schools would not equip their children with the necessary education to prepare them for the future. During his research for the movie, he found that many schools were not right for any kids.

The movie, *Waiting for Superman* (Guggenheim, 2010), concentrated on Bianca, who would be in Kindergarten, a first-grader named Francisco, a second grader named Anthony, and another second grader named Daisy, as well as an eighth grader, Emily. Students were enrolled in schools through the lottery system. These children's parents did not do well in school or they started working, which led them to dropping out of school. For their children, not finishing school was not an option. One of the mothers was a single mother working as a receptionist in Harlem, and she had taken pay cuts on her job. No matter how many jobs she had to work, she was determined that her daughter would be afforded the opportunity to further her education.

Guggenheim (2010) focused on students who had a desire to be educated. Guggenheim interviewed the students very calmly. Sternly, the students stated their goals of how they had a desire to attend college and go into the medical field or broadcasting. His bigger challenge was to reach those students who thought school was a prison instead of an institution for learning. He wrote this movie, *Waiting for Superman,* to spark

discussions and debates, and he wanted individuals to think about a serious problem whose answers escaped Presidents and parents for a long period of time.

In 1993, *A Nation at Risk* was issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Walters, 1993). Bell, who was Secretary of Education, appointed the members of this commission. The primary focus point was secondary education. After closely examining secondary schools' curricula, it was established that the core curriculum no longer had a significant purpose for combining all of the subjects.

In order to expand the state of education in the world, A *Nation at Risk* (Walters, 1993) made the recommendation that teacher education, teaching, and education standards be restructured. This report mentioned there was a great call for more support for teachers who taught a diverse student population a variety of subjects. A *Nation at Risk* also supported an increase in teachers' salaries; increasing teachers' salaries would not only appeal to teachers, but would help keep teachers who were highly qualified on staff. This would also establish the concept of merit pay and incentives, such as grants and loans.

This movement could be linked with the movie *Lean on Me* (Alvidsen (1989). This film was written in 1989 by Schiffer and was based on Joe Clark, a high school principal in the inner city of Patterson, New Jersey. Unless there were improvements made in students' test scores, the New Jersey state government was going to take over the school. The school had a number of problems, including drugs, gang violence, and poor scores on the basic skills test for the state.

There was a law passed by the state legislature that stated if schools did not meet minimum test requirements they were put in receivership**,** which meant a school district

could not govern itself effectively. Mr. Clark was determined to help the students be successful. On the basic skills practice test, only 33% of the students passed, and the minimum passing requirement was 75%. In an effort to prepare students for the test, Mr. Clark initiated a campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to provide students the opportunity to practice for the real test. As the school year progressed, Mr. Clark and the students started to bond, and he became a father figure. Mr. Clark continued to go beyond, to ensure teachers were going beyond to help students be prepared to take the state exam.

In the movie, *Lean on Me* (Alvidsen, 1989), with Mr. Clark's hard work along with the teaching staff, an adequate amount of students passed the basic skills exam and the administrative team that was in place was able to retain control over the school. Mr. Clark did not allow fear or being threatened by individuals who did not agree with him get in the way of doing what was best for students. His actions caused him to become unpopular with both students and his colleagues. All students, parents, and teachers should be clear as to what the standards of success are in all schools.

According to the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center (2017), the *Common Core Standards* were a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. What a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade was outlined in the standards. The standards were created to ensure that all students graduated from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they lived.

As reported by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center (2017), the *Common Core Standards* were informed by the highest, most effectual standards from states across the United States and countries around the world. The standards outlined the knowledge and skills students needed to gain throughout their K-12 education, in order to graduate high school prepared to succeed in entry-level careers, introductory academic college courses, and workforce training programs. The *Common Core Standards* were: (a) research- and evidence-based, (b) clear, understandable, and consistent, (c) aligned with college and career expectations, (d) based on rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills, (e) built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards and (f) Informed by other top performing countries in order to prepare all students for success in our global economy and society. By having the *Common Core State Standards* in place, there was a solid and strong expectation set for student learning. The standards were intended to be vigorous and significant to the real world, mirroring the skill set necessary for young people to be successful in college and their career choices.

American students will be prepared for the future and equipped to enter into the worldwide economy. The Common Core State Standards Initiative was an educational initiative in the United States that detailed what K-12 students should know in English Language Arts and mathematics at the end of each grade (Council of Chief State School Officers, & the National Governors Association Center, 2017). The initiative was sponsored by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and sought to establish consistent educational standards across the states, as well as ensure that students graduating from high school were prepared to enter credit bearing

courses at two or four-year college programs or to enter the workforce. With the *Common Core State Standards* in place, students would be equipped with the knowledge and skill set necessary for them to be successful in college and with their career choices. The first step in converting the educational system was to have the *Common Core State Standards* in place. New standards would be implemented, and it would be mandatory that states adopt new assessment benchmarks to measure student achievement. At the time of this writing, the 2014-2015 school year's formal assessment was expected to take place and that time period corresponded with the expected implementation year for most states.

In 2007, Academy Award Winner, Hilary Swank, along with an outstanding cast, starred in the movie, *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007); the Common Core movement could be linked to this movie. This movie was based on the book, *The Freedom Writers Diary,* written by Gruwell (1999). The movie was a success at the box office. Swank played Gruwell, who was a schoolteacher new to the field of education, and very excited. She left her hometown of Newport Beach to take a teaching job at Woodrow Wilson High School. The high school had been a high-achieving school, but recently an integration plan had been put in place.

Gruwell's (1999) enthusiasm was challenged when she found her class was composed of at-risk students, the untouchables, and not the eager-for-college students she expected. Her students self-segregated into racial groups within the classroom. This caused problems, as gang fights broke out and, consequently, most of her students stopped attending class. Not only was Gruwell challenged with gaining her students' trust on personal and academic levels, but she must do so with very little support from her

professional peers and district higher-ups. For example, her department head refused to provide Gruwell with an adequate number of books for her class, because she insisted they would get damaged and lost. Students slowly start to trust Gruwell and she purchased diaries, in order for the students to write down their personal life experiences. These experiences included: witnessing their friends die, being victims of abuse, and being evicted. Gruwell was determined to turn things around at the school and change the students for the better. She took on two-part time jobs, in order to purchase additional books and devote more time at school. As time progressed, the students began to behave in a respectful way. Not only did her department chair continue to give her a hard time, her colleagues began to be unsupportive of her teaching methods.

She made it through the school year and the upcoming school year she taught the class again. At the beginning of the year she made the sophomore class do an assignment. According to the *Freedom Writers* film (LaGravenese, 2007), this assignment allowed the students to share their struggles and how they would go about changing them. As the year progressed she ask the students to transform their diaries into book form. She collected the entries and named them *The Freedom Writers Diary* (Gruwell, 1999). Things started to take a turn for the worst. Her husband divorced her, and she was informed by her department chair she would not teach the students their junior year. Gruwell put up a good fight, and she convinced the superintendent to allow her to teach the students their junior and senior year.

The film ended on a good note; she was able to successfully prepare a number of students to graduate and go on to attend college. For many of these students, they were the first in their families to attend college.

In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the ESSA. The act gave backing to principal leadership and the roles principals played in schools. The act consisted of authorization of funding given to both states and districts; the funding could be exhausted in a number of ways**.** For example: principals who were in the early stages of their careers and professional learning were given mentoring opportunities and for veteran principals to enrich and enhance their instructional leadership skills. There were plans in progress to see how ESSA (2015) funding could be used. This plan would call for those wanting to become principals and then-current principals, to support programs that would meet their needs. This movement could also be linked with the movie, *Lean on Me* (Alvidsen, 1989).

Summary

As stated by Robinson (2008), reforming public education was a movement that was in the forefront of the educational movement. The character, Clark, told viewers in the movie, *Lean on Me* (Alvidsen, 1989), educators had to learn to 'Lean on Each Other as we Leave No Child Behind;' this would result in students being equipped to meet the criteria laid out in the *Common Core State Standards*. Bredson (2005) and Lazaridou (2006) found that those individuals who did not work directly in the educational field looked at school administrators differently. Bredson (2005) and Lazaridou (2006) also reported that, instead of looking at them as instructional leaders, they looked at them as managers of the school. Bredson (2005) and Lazaridou (2006) also reported that, leaders of schools began to take different paths. That stemmed from the pressures put on school leadership as a result of data-driven accountability, due to the NCLB Act. The principal changed from a management-style approach to a teacher-focused method, in order to deal

with the challenges of raising student achievement.

School improvement plans continued to spread across the nation, as schools struggled to contend with society and its demands and the needs of students. These plans came in a variety of forms and started at different levels (i.e., local, district, state and national with little coherence and/or national continuity). School systems and states were moving forward in efforts to seek improvements, but critics continued to say the nation's public schools were clearly not going above and beyond to equip students with what they would need in order to be productive citizens in the future. The purpose of the 2001 reauthorization of the ESEA was to make certain that all children were equipped with the education and skillfulness needed to be successful in society. As the nation's schools were in search of ways to comply with the ESEA of 2001, they were looking for ways to guarantee all students were skilled in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics. Qualified teachers were educating children, students attended schools that had a zero-tolerance level for violence, and students focused on being high school graduates.

As it related to accountability for the effectiveness of schools, principals were responsible for carrying out that task. According to Heck et al. (1990), measures of principal effectiveness included student achievement, commitment to academic goals, and creating high expectations for student achievement. The principal's job changed its focus from managerial issues to instructional issues, with emphasis on increasing student achievement. With accountability at the top of the list, principals had to be able to synchronize these two aspects of their work. Even though principals were engaged in all duties involved with managing a school, additional time had to be given to the

instructional program to give surety to the academic success of all students. Principals dealt with a number of dilemmas; these dilemmas ranged from concerns regarding how to (a) provide strong leadership, (b) collaborate effectively, and (c) decision making. All of these were connected with the overarching concern of accountability.

Schools were seeking out ways to meet the requirements of the ESEA of 2001 and made certain that no child was left behind. It was crucial that individuals serving in positions of leadership had the understanding and also exhibited the practices that were needed for leading effective schools and the improvement process.

It was often said that principals must be strong instructional leaders. That was only part of what principals should know and be able to do. They also must be change agents, capable of dealing with vast ambiguities; human relations gurus; school culture shapers; savvy budget administrators; and outstanding performance managers. If principals were knowledgeable, courageous, and willing to hold everyone accountable for keeping their students at the center of everything they did, success was bound to follow.

An effective principal was needed in every school building of a school system striving for excellence in education. These principals understood the complexity of their positions, perform duties and responsibilities at a high level, and were able to multi-task, fitting all of the interconnected pieces of school life together for the good of their students. They were results-driven and accepted no excuses from anyone. Success was the only option and mediocrity was simply not acceptable in a school run by a strong leader. Many states had new leader accountability instruments that would be used to evaluate system and building-level leaders. Principals operating at the proficient-to-

exemplary level of these accountability systems would have the most positive impact on student achievement.

As reported by Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010), the United States federal government had a lengthy history of participation in public education. According to McCullough (2001), Prominent Founding Fathers emphasized the necessity of an educated community to sustain a free and democratic society. Tyack and Cuban (1995) asserted that, even though several colleagues agreed with this principle, issues over states' rights and restricted power of the federal government saturated the national dialogue on education. According to Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010), countless adversaries of federal involvement in education grounded their arguments in the powers held in reserve to the states by the Tenth Amendment. Given this political background, a significant amount of the initial education legislation passed by Congress was highly reverent to local government control.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) reported that, though a rising nation, challenged with inexhaustible immigration and participation in international conflicts, the United States could not overlook the need for a suitable public education system. According to Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010), the arrival of the 19th Century saw a rising national interest for the federal government to support an acceptable public education system. As reported by Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010), despite the fact that Congress was able to pass federal education legislation during World War I, there would be no other chief education legislation that would come out of Washington, DC until the end of World War II. With the passing of the GI Bill the federal government took a momentous step toward increased involvement in education. Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010) contended that,

the political and social dynamics of the 1950s and 1960s took education issues to the front of the national dialogue. Anderson (2007) and Cross (2010) asserted that a change in public sentiment linked to issues of education was influenced by the Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education 1954*, Civil Rights Act of 1964, and ESEA of 1965, education continued to remain and be an essential part of United States political conversation that has been going on since the 1960s.

Historically, the growing movement of federal involvement in K-12 education concurred with substantial increases in accountability as an instrument of school improvement. Accountability has drawn attention to the role of the school principal as vital to school improvement and reform.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As the state of Missouri plunged onward with school improvement efforts it was critical that principals facilitated the initiatives. Some schools struggled academically because of ineffective leadership. Principals, in some cases, did not have all of the knowledge it took to be a school leader. Research by Woods (2004) suggested that a strong relationship existed between successful schools and effective leadership. This qualitative study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the leadership practices of school principals and student achievement. Educational leaders may consider the data from this study as a framework when planning academic achievement initiatives.

This study investigated school leadership practices at seven successful schools in Saint Louis City, Missouri, Saint Louis County, Missouri, and Madison County, Illinois. Teachers were surveyed regarding their principal in regard to leadership style, philosophy, goals, and ability to motivate individuals to engage themselves in improving student achievement. For the purpose of this study, a successful school was a school where student achievement met or exceeded the AYP targets set by the state, in alignment with the NCLB Act of 2001.

Research Questions

These overarching questions guided this research study:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

Sample

Seven elementary school principals and 71 teachers from school districts within

the counties of: Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County in Missouri and Madison County, Illinois, were participants in this study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The principle investigator (PI) distributed surveys and gathered data from the respondents. In addition, secondary data were available from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in Missouri's Website and the Illinois State Board of Education's Website, regarding per pupil expenditures, school size and demographics, as well as information pertaining to how AYP was analyzed. The survey teachers completed for this study was available to participants using *Survey Monkey*, a web-based survey tool. Principal surveys were completed via face-to-face, telephone, and mail. For this study, the researcher developed the instruments to collect data from respondents in regard to principal leadership traits. An elementary school principal and the dissertation committee chair previewed the survey to determine its effectiveness. When looking at other methods, the survey method seemed proper to use for the qualitative approach.

According to Babbie (2001), the recognized benefits of the survey method were: (a) surveys were simpler and not as expensive as other forms of data collection, (b) one could gather a huge quantity of data in a short time, (c) to research some aspects of human insights concerning the variable under study, and (d) they could be clearly used in field settings. As stated earlier, the survey was chosen as the most practical and dependable instrument for this study. Surveys were a very useful and efficient tool for conducting research with a large sample, because each person responded to the same set of items.

Procedures

An approval letter explaining the study was sent to seven superintendents asking permission for their principals and teachers to participate (Appendix D). Once permission was given, an approval letter was sent to seven principals (Appendix C). Seventy-one teachers completed survey questions on *Survey Monkey* (Appendix B). The building principal was responsible for emailing teachers the link, which allowed the teachers to complete the survey. Principals made teachers aware of the deadline that the researcher put in place for them to have the survey completed.

Role of the Principal Investigator

The PI, a teacher in a suburban elementary school at that time, created and distributed the surveys and analyzed all data collected. The analysis of data resulted in recommendations for improving academic achievement on standardized assessments. The researcher and Dr. Terry Stewart, who served as Assistant Dean, Department of Educational Leadership and School Administration, Lindenwood University, created the teacher and principal survey questions. The principal questions were based on leadership style. The teacher survey questions centered on their principal's leadership styles. The questionnaire instrument should have both reliability and validity. Validity was heightened by asking direct and appropriate questions. According to Bernhardt (2004) this was one of the best ways to increase validity.

Description of the Schools

The principals and teachers from seven schools participated in this study. All schools were located in the Midwest, within 50 miles of a large urban area. School A was a private, independent, non-parochial elementary school located in North Saint Louis City, Missouri.

School A housed junior kindergarten through sixth grade and served urban youth in a neighborhood setting. The school was founded in 1999 and graduates had a range of options, including leading parochial, independent, and public schools to attend for their middle school and high school education. It was stated in the school's mission statement that "Children in underserved communities can overcome barriers with determination, hard work and a support system of exceptional educators and advocates with bold expectations" (City Academy, 2013, p. 1, para. 1).

School B was established in 1982 and was located in the state of Illinois. The school website stated:

> Collinsville Christian Academy's vision provides a Christian educational environment based upon a Biblical Worldview, academic excellence, and character formation thus preparing children to glorify God through obedient service in all spheres of human activity. This vision is attained through the highly qualified staff and well-defined program of study for Kindergarten through 12[th] grade. (Collinsville Christian Academy, 2015, p. 1, para. 3)

School C was approximately 10 miles west of downtown Saint Louis in Ladue, Missouri. As reflected on the school's website,

> The school was built in 1938 with character, the school building was built with charm and quality. The physical structure of the school reflects a tradition of excellence within a nurturing environment. Reed School is a collaborative community that values diversity and encourages students to develop: academically, through data and research-based instruction, socially and emotionally, through character education and community outreach, creatively,

> through use of technology, STEM activities, and the arts and physically, through daily health and fitness activities. The vision of Reed School is to meet the learning needs of each individual while creating an inclusive and unified community. (Reed Elementary School, 2013, p. 1, paras. 1-2)

School D was a public school in suburban Saint Louis County. In the parent handbook, the school's mission was to

> provide a dynamic, child centered setting where imagination is celebrated, diversity is respected, and the excitement of learning thrives, is to educate, nurture, and inspire the whole child and stimulate life long learning through parental and community involvement, ongoing professional development, and comprehensive instruction of the highest quality. (Old Bonhomme Elementary School, 2013, p. 2, para. 1)

School E was a public school in Saint Louis County. As reflected on the school website,

> > Bridgeway is a community that challenges and inspires everyone to reach his or her potential. They are united and empowered to create a school where all students demonstrate significant improvement in their understanding and application of the state standards. All students are responsible citizens; parents and community members are involved; and everyone is assured of a safe environment. (Bridgeway Elementary School, 2013 p. 1, para. 1)

School F was a public school located in North St. Louis County. As reflected on the school website,

> Students, staff and parents contribute to a positive atmosphere where continual growth and lifelong learning are evident. There is a diverse community of learners, who are dedicated to exploring the past, enriching the present and inspiring the future, thereby working to achieve excellence in education. (Willowbrook Elementary School, 2013, p. 1, para. 1)

School G was a public school located in Madison County, IL. According to the parent handbook,

> The school values every child and works extremely hard to fulfill their responsibility and commitment to provide learning opportunities in a safe, non-threatening and supportive environment. The highly qualified and dedicated staff works collectively to encourage, motivate, and inspire students to learn and achieve. Educational learning standards serve as the schools guide to provide meaningful, engaging, and fun learning experiences. The mission of the school is to work with parents and the school community to promote the overall growth and development of each child by providing a learning environment that will effectively ensure the skills necessary to be lifelong learners and productive citizens in our global society. (Hamel Elementary School, 2013, p. 2, paras. 1-4)

Anonymity

The PI established a sense of cooperation with all participants by fully explaining the research study's components at the outset, through correspondence sent to superintendents and principals prior to completion of the survey. The welfare of each participant was a primary concern. All participants where made aware of the rationale, nature, methods, and procedures of the research. The PI's contact information was made

available to each participant. Participants had a clear understanding that they could refuse to respond to the questions and they could pull out at any time during the research. The PI advised the potential participants of any probable consequences of their participation.

Summary

Chapter Three included the plan of research, the population, data collection and analysis and described the method of study. Once surveys were returned, the PI at the end recorded the data from the surveys and noted that the following themes occurred in the survey data received from the seven participating schools: principal leadership roles, instructional climate of a school building and the overall role principals played in improving instruction.

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

The purpose of this study was to analyze the research-based leadership practices demonstrated by seven principals. There was a unique difference between theory and practice of principals. In Chapter Four, an analysis of the qualitative results is presented.

Research Questions

These overarching questions guided this research study:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

For the purpose of gathering and analyzing the resulting data, (a) seven superintendents received an approval letter explaining the study and asking permission for their principals and teachers to participate (Appendix D), (b) seven principals received an approval letter explaining the study and informing them that their superintendent had given them permission to participate in the study (Appendix C), (c) all seven principals received principal interview questions (Appendix E). The PI used *Survey Monkey* to gather data from 71 teachers asking them to complete a survey about their principal's leadership practices (Appendix B). Principals provided the teachers in their building with a link to complete survey and informed them of the time timeline for completing the survey.

Teacher Survey Analysis

In an analysis of seven schools in the St Louis Metropolitan area, the survey indicated principals of successful schools were consistent with one another in their

practices. The data suggested, principals being consistent in their practices allowed them to enhance student achievement. A summary and corresponding graph highlights each question from the survey.

Teacher's involvement. Figure 1 represents how teachers rated their principal on involvement in design and implementation of decisions and policies. Thirty-two point nine percent of the teachers strongly agreed they were involved, 31.4% moderately agreed, 30% somewhat agreed, and 7.1% disagreed.

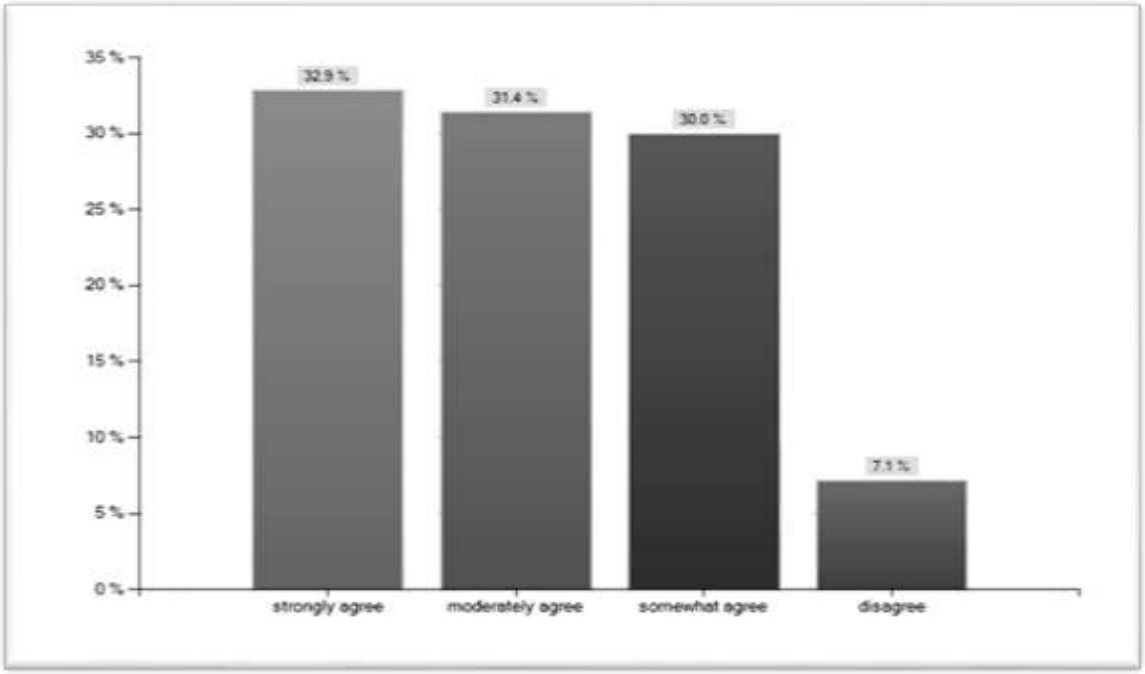

Figure 1. My principal involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

Principal establishes clear goals. Figure 2 represents how teachers perceived their principal in regard to establishing clear goals for their school. Sixty point nine percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 21.7% moderately agreed, 15.9% somewhat agreed, and 2.9% disagreed.

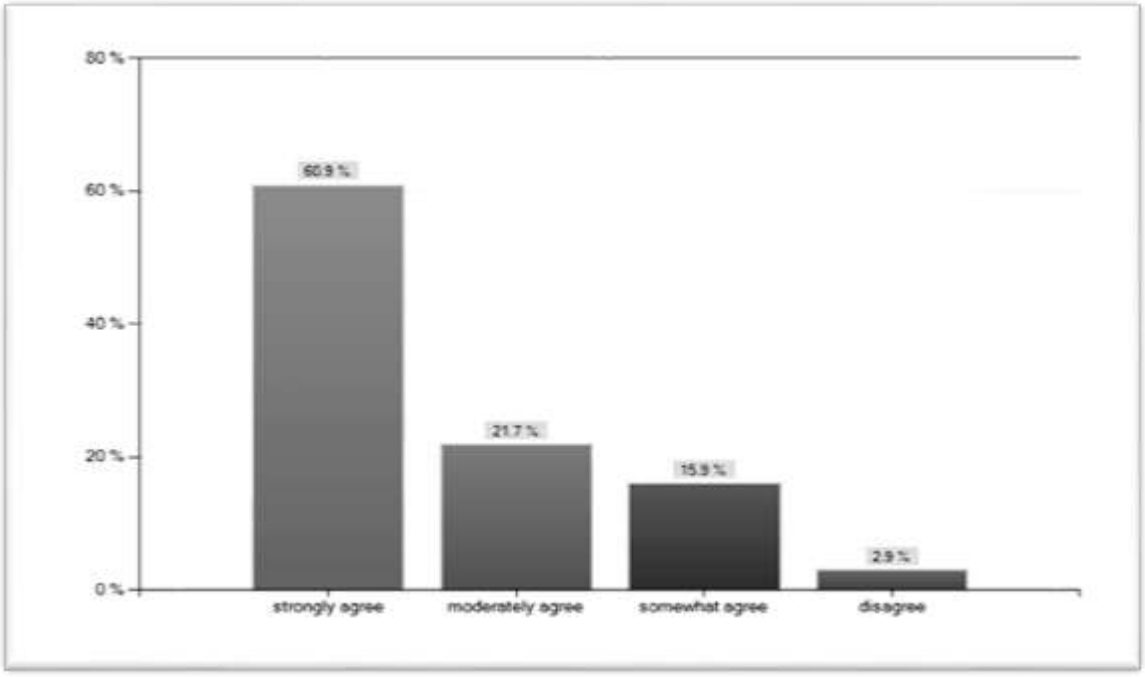

Figure 2. My principal establishes clear goals and keeps these goals in the forefront of the school's attention.

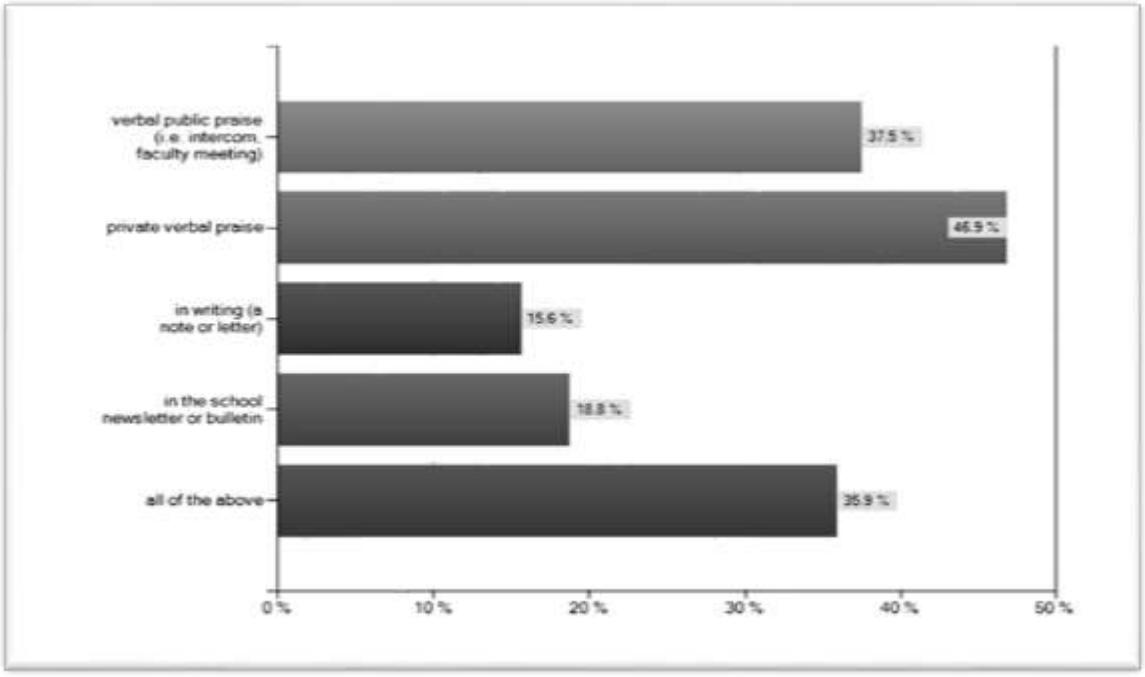

Figure 3. How does your principal reward individual accomplishments?

Individual accomplishments. Figure 3 displays a representation of how teachers felt about their principal rewarding accomplishments. Thirty-seven point five percent of

the teachers reported that their principals used verbal public praise, 46.9% used private verbal praise, 15.6% used notes or letters, 18.8% used utilized the school newsletter or bulletin, and 35.9% reported principals used all of the above.

Principal's roles in staff awareness of theories and practices. Figure 4 is a representation of how teachers rated their principal as it relates to the principal ensuring that faculty and staff were aware of the most current theories and practices, at the time of the study. Forty-seven point nine percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 36.6% moderately agreed, 16.9% somewhat agreed, and 1.4% disagreed.

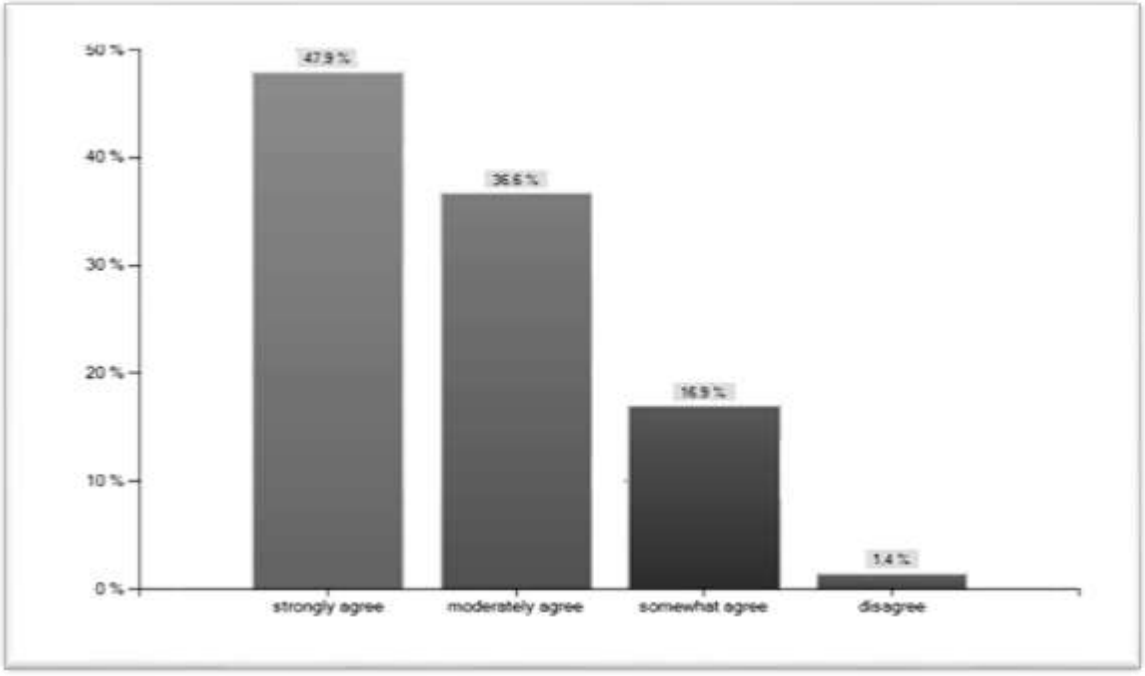

Figure 4. My principal's role in staff awareness of theories and practices.

Principal's role as an advocate. Figure 5 represents how teachers rated their principal as being an advocate and spokesperson for the school and all stakeholders. Seventy-two point five percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 18% moderately agreed, 7.2% somewhat agreed, and 1.4% disagreed.

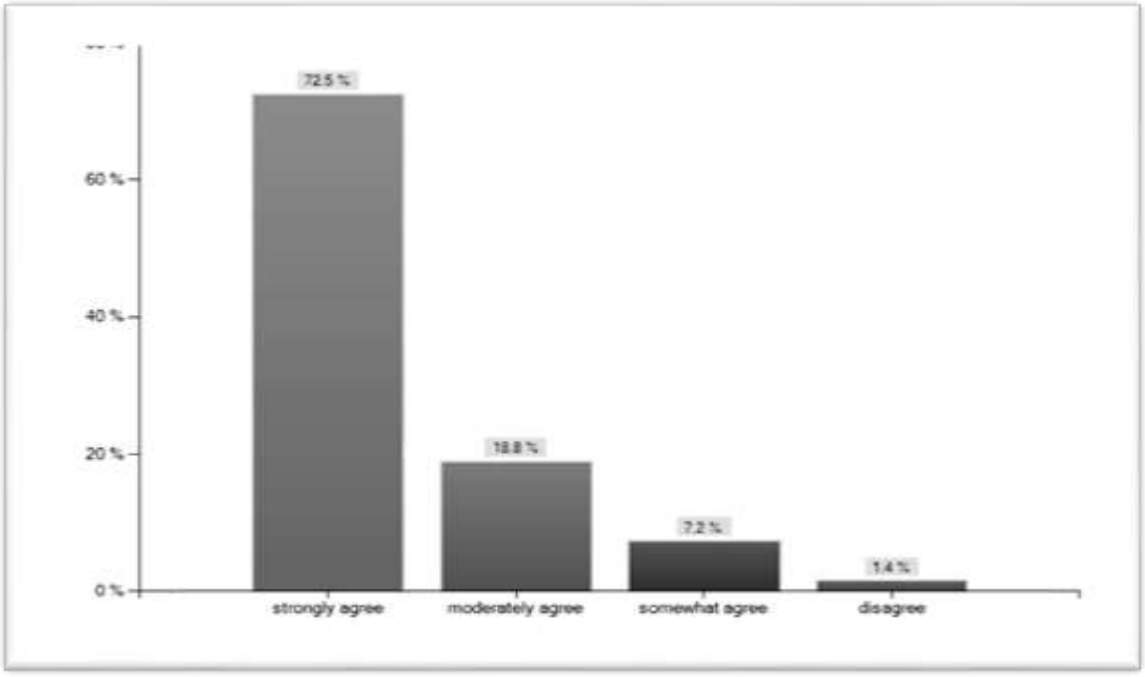

Figure 5. My principal is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders.

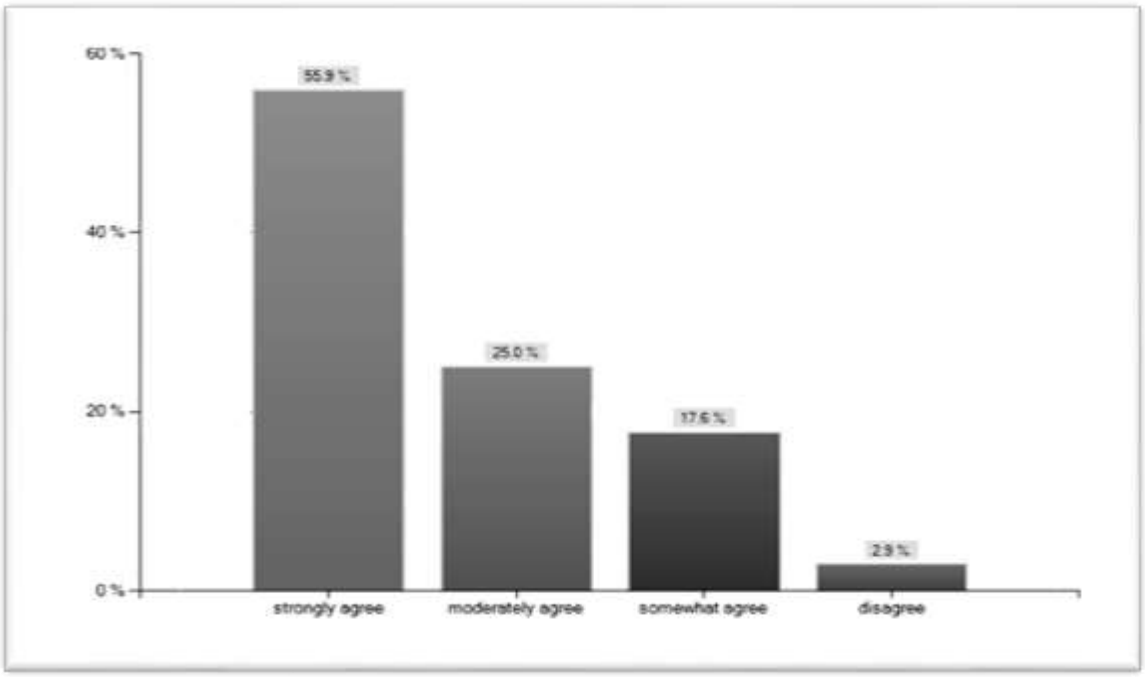

Figure 6. My principal provides the necessary materials and professional development for the successful execution of my job.

The principal's role in providing the materials and professional development. Figure 6 is a representation of how teachers rated their principals. Fifty-

five point nine percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 25.0% moderately agreed, 17.6% somewhat agreed, and 2.9% disagreed.

The principal's awareness of the details of running a school. Figure 7 illustrates how teachers rated their principal as it relates to the principal's awareness of the details of running a school. Forty-eight-point six percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 30.0% moderately agreed, 20.0% somewhat agreed, and 4.3% disagreed.

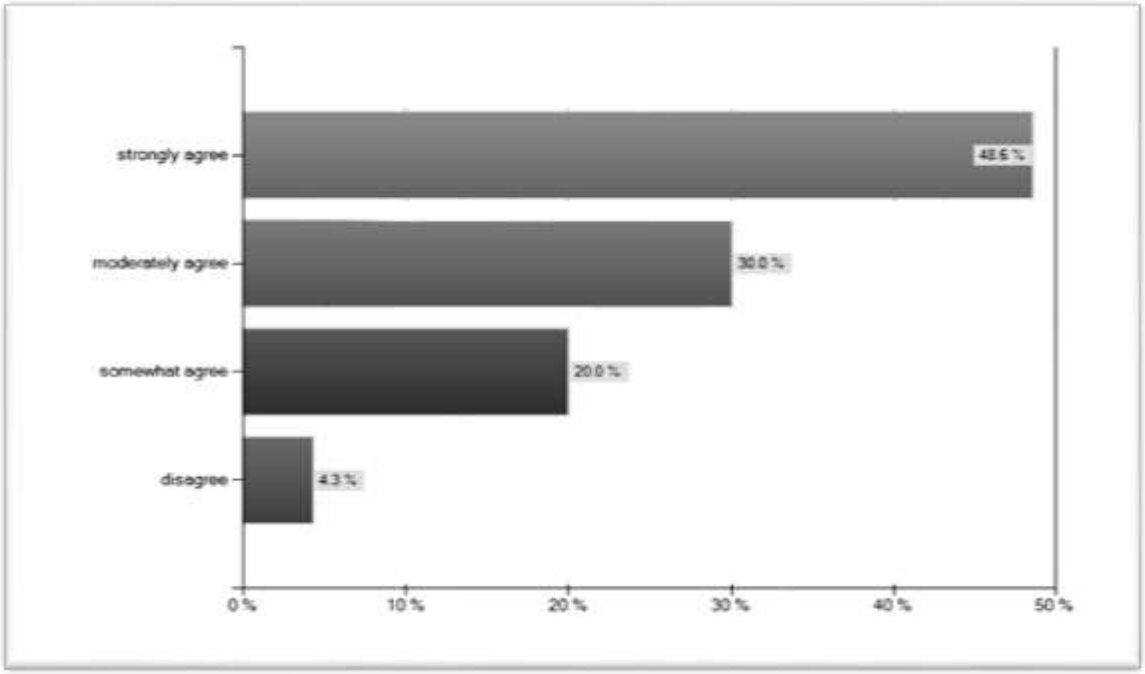

Figure 7. My principal is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems.

Principal ensures the effective use of instructional time. Figure 8 represents how teachers rated their principals as it relates to the principal ensuring the effective use of instructional time. Thirty-four-point three percent of the teachers reported their principals limited interruptions, 47.1% of the teachers reported visitors must sign in, 2.9% reported messages were delivered to classrooms, and 1.4% reported all of the above are used.

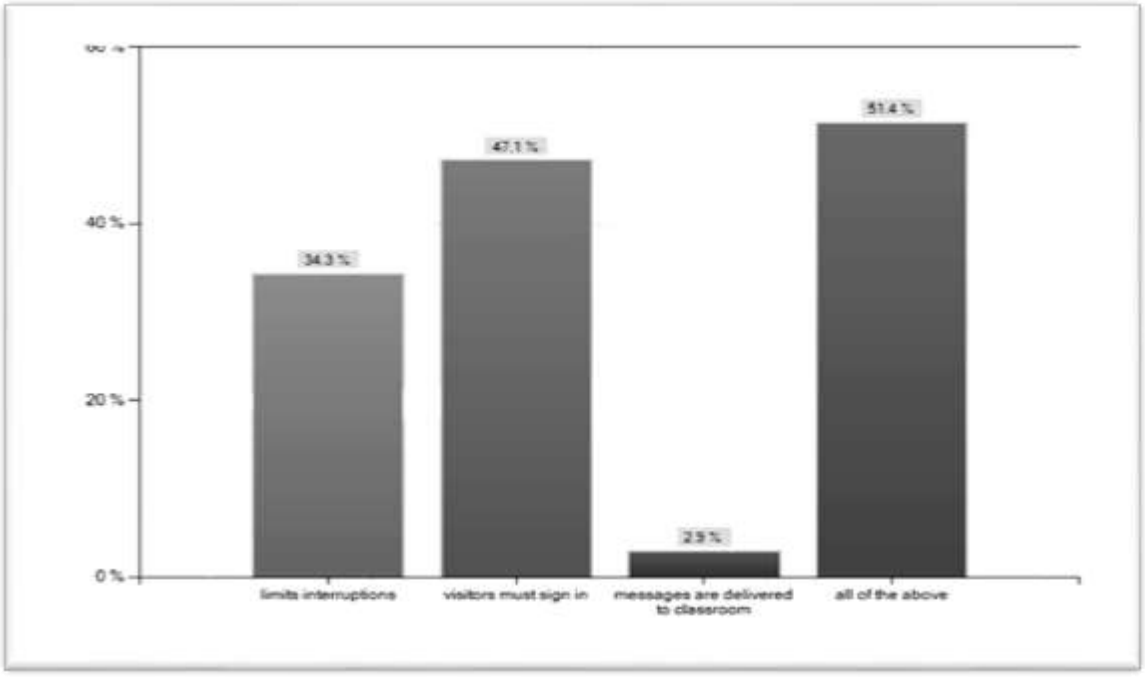

Figure 8. In what ways does you principal ensure the effective use of instructional time?

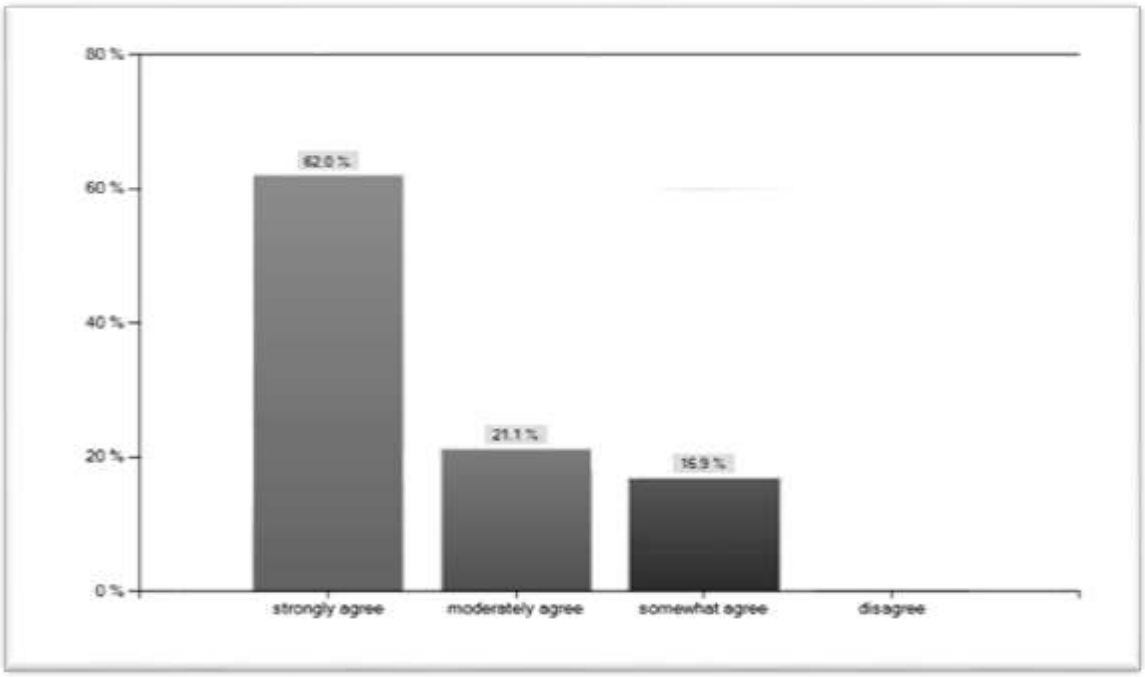

Figure 9. My principal is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

The principal is well informed about present-day curriculum, instruction and assessment practices. Figure 9 is a representation of how teachers rated their

principal. Sixty-two percent of the teachers strongly agreed, 21.1% moderately agreed, 16.9% somewhat agreed, and 0% disagreed.

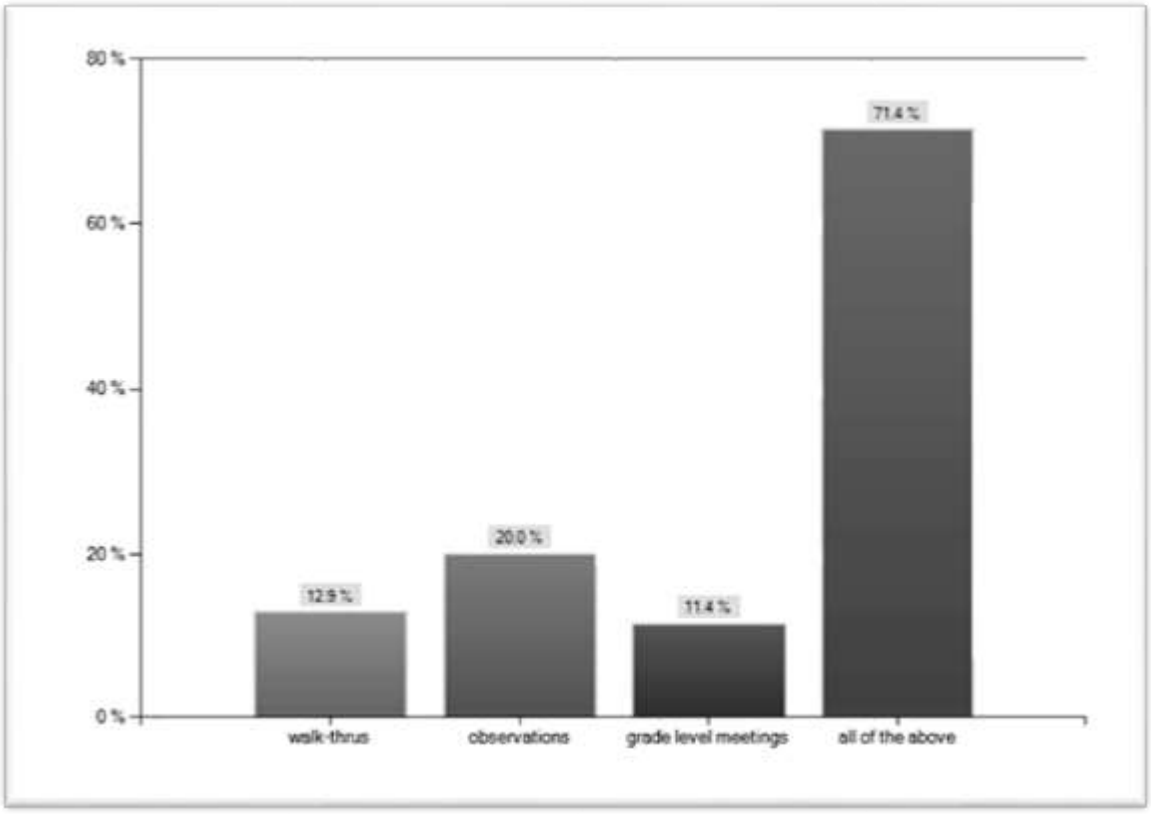

Figure 10. In what ways does your principal monitor the implementation of best practices?

Teachers reported ways the principal monitors the implementation of best practices. Figure 10 is a representation of how teachers rated their principal's actions. Actions were: walk-throughs 12.9%, observations 20.0%, grade level meetings 11.4 %, and all of the above 70.1 %.

Principal Questionnaire Analysis.

The experience of the principals who participated in this study ranged from two years to 13 years. The PI emailed principals a questionnaire that consisted of 12 questions relating to leadership and their leadership style. In examining the themes among the answers, Principals stated, 'The need for collaborative leadership with clear decision-

making parameters is needed between all groups. This essential feature appeared to define effective leadership as reported by the surveyed principals.' They also shared that 'leaders are servants; a good leader has capable and competent people surrounding them. A leader is one who desires to make a positive difference for others.' In addition, they felt that

> relationships are vital, and a leader has to devote a considerable amount of time to foster positive relationships. They have to be vigilant in this area. A good leader also needs to be a good listener and know when to speak and offer advice to help solve the problem that might exist. Building trust is important, without it, you will not succeed.

All principals agreed that 'there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement. As indicated by constructed survey responses, principals believed the following statements were critical in promoting student services:

- 'Making choices and decisions that in turn will have a direct impact on student achievement;'
- 'Establishing high student achievement goals by a strong principal is essential for successful schools;'
- 'Allowing staff ownership in their positions provides growth opportunities and empowers the staff. Additionally, there is a belief that 'staff members begin working with students as they work with teachers. Staff members build trusting relationships with students where students feel safe to take risks;'
- 'Setting goals and having a vision provides the framework for high achievement;'
- 'Supervising teachers in curriculum usage and strategies;'

- ‘Collaborating towards a common mission and the willingness to work hard, honest reflection, and difficult conversations around students’ and teacher work all lead to student success;’ and
- ‘Setting high expectations for both staff and students establishes common ground for improvement’

The perception of the principals from the teachers and their individual leadership styles had a direct correlation to the quality demonstrated in students’ work, the improved and consistent procedures in communicating, maintaining positive discipline outcomes, making data-driven curriculum choices, helped to improve teacher quality, and attained superior standardized assessment scores. The results were that they had in-depth discussions about students learning and have good reasons why they did the things they did. Where the principal initiated collaborative decision-making, hands-on activities, visibility in the building and classrooms; planned group and individual professional development workshops, this style of leadership was not necessarily seen, but rather sensed. It was how people (staff, students, parents) felt, related, and worked that told if there was a productive model of leadership.

Based on data gathered from the principal survey, it was evident that strong leaders provided support in a variety of ways, such as: principals had to be motivators, approachable, team-builders, decisive, efficient, and humanistic. Answers taken from the survey showed that principals shared the following traits, making their school successful: (a) interpersonal and meaningful relationships between staff, the students and constituents; (b) high quality and investing in professional development for staff members; (c) well-educated and involved parents; (d) students who were eager and

prepared to learn; (f) teaching staff, parent volunteers, and school board members who were dedicated to student success and strong staff and parents.

Based on the questionnaire, principals believed that grade level expectations were met by frequent observation and dialogue with teachers; and, about those observations, feedback, and monitoring, the qualitative and quantitative data were available in buckets full. In addition, the frequency of activities, such as meeting with grade level teams, curriculum mapping, reading newsletters, monthly discussions covering curricular issues, staff development, and providing outside resources for teachers and students enhanced and supported effective schools. Other regular lesson plans and grade book checks, test reports, faculty meetings and team collaborations, benchmarking assessments, discovery education, constant observations, on-going in-services, and educational leadership were some of the invaluable tools principal must use to be successful.

Principals reported it was critical to assist teachers in their buildings who were having difficulty in the classrooms by identifying weakness, creating strategies for success, setting goals, and creating follow-up. They would first identify the specific areas of improvement that they would observe and engaged the teacher by writing a plan of action to remediate the issue, appoint a mentor-teacher to work with the struggling teacher, and model possible solutions and provide constructive feedback. Principals used one or more of the following assessment tools to measure sustained student achievement:

- Developmental Reading Assessment
- Informal Reading Inventory
- Scholastic Reading Inventory
- Gates Macginite Reading Tests

- Discovery Education
- Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy
- Aimsweb
- Some curriculum specific testing
- Classroom/teacher assessments
- Informal observation and documentation
- Map and grade level benchmarks
- Formative and summative data collection
- Data teams analysis
- Positive behavioral interventions

According to the principals, professional development helped teachers gain a capacity for leadership in the following ways: (a) ‘providing exposure to new and different perspectives, and (b) ‘teachers are able to stay current in educational trends and resources through professional development opportunities. ‘Congruently, professional development allows teachers a chance to learn and grow, just as any other skill we learn, there needs to be equity regarding input, guided practice in authentic embedded activities with independent practice and specific feedback.’ ‘High quality professional development provides that in the context of leadership activities.’

Some programs that principals had in place to promote parental and community development and train parent volunteers in literacy were: (a) active parental safety groups, (b) active diverse curriculum committees, (c) active parent teacher organizations, (d) garden clubs and civic organizations contributed to parental and community

involvement, and (e) parent education nights co-facilitated by parents and staff accentuate the collaborative nature of school.

Other activities, such as weekly newsletters to parents, monthly family fun nights, and parental involvement at the school-board level and annual community events recognized the essential partnership needed for successful schools. Many school leaders included inviting police officers, fire fighters, and pastors to speak to students on various education topics. Parent representation on school improvement team and other sub committees, parent orientation night, curriculum night, math and evening reading in-services, and district quarterly parent classes provided a sense of belonging. These initiatives all played a major role in creating a climate of success.

Summary: Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to address these research questions:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

Using surveys, interviews, and secondary data from successful schools, a review of the survey data showed that the following themes emerged:

Three themes emerged from the data collected by the researcher. They included principal leadership roles, the instructional climate of a school building, and the overall role the principal plays in improving instruction.

Principal leadership roles:

- Principals involved teachers in the design and implementation of decisions and policies

- Principals established clear goals
- Principals were advocates and spokespersons for the school and stakeholders

Leadership data was gathered from previous figures listed in Chapter Four and findings showed that the high percentage of teachers that strongly agreed that their principal included them in the design and implementation of decisions and policies was 32.9% of the teachers, and the low percentage was 7.1% who disagreed. The high percentage of teachers who agreed that their principal made goals clear was 69.9%, and the low percentage of teachers who disagreed was 2.9%. Finally, 75.2% of teachers strongly agreed that their principal was an advocate and spokesperson for the district and all interested parties, and 1.4% of teachers disagreed.

Instructional climate of a school building:

- Principals rewarded individual accomplishments
- Principals were aware of the details of running a school
- Principal ensured that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices

Leadership data were gleaned from previous figures listed in Chapter Four and findings showed that there was a high percentage of teachers, at 46.9%, who shared that their principal used private verbal praise as a way of rewarding accomplishments; and, a low percentage of 15.6% of teachers shared their principal used written correspondence. A high percentage of teachers, 48.6%, strongly agreed that their principal had a keen awareness of the details of running a school, and a low percentage of teachers, at 4.3%,

disagreed. Finally, there was a high percentage of teachers at 49.7% who strongly agreed that their principal made them aware of then-current theories and practices.

Overall role the principal played in improving instruction:

- Principals ensured the effective use of instructional time
- Principals provided materials and professional development
- Principals were well informed about present day curriculum, instruction and assessment practices
- Principals monitored implementation of best practices in a number of ways

Leadership data were collected from previous figures listed in Chapter Four, and findings showed that there was a high percentage of teachers, at 47.1%, who reported that their principal ensured the effective use of instructional time by having visitors sign in; and, 2.9% reported that messages were delivered to the classroom. There was a high percentage of teachers, at 55.9%, who strongly agreed that their principal provided them with required materials and made opportunities for them to attend professional development workshops, and 2.9% disagreed. A high percentage of teachers, at 62.9%, strongly agreed that their principal was aware of the then present-day curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, and 0% disagreed. Finally, there was a high percentage of teachers, at 71.4%, who reported that their principal used walk-throughs, observations, and grade level meetings to monitor the use of best practices and, 12.9% reported their principal used walk-throughs.

Chapter Five: Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate elementary school principals from seven successful schools in Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County in Missouri and Madison County in Illinois. The study investigated leadership styles, philosophy, and goals. Additionally, the study looked at how principals were able to lead individuals to become involved in efforts to improve student achievement. For the purpose of this study, a successful school was defined as a school where student achievement met or exceeded the AYP targets set by the state, with regard to the NCLB Act of 2001.

Noonan, Walker, and Kutsyuruba (2008) found that the day-to-day activities and leader's decisions emulated the broad emphasis and culture of a school and its leadership. Bredson (2005) and Lazaridou (2006) found that those individuals who did not work directly in the educational field looked at school principals as managers and not as instructional leaders. With increasing stresses of the data-driven accountability that began when the NCLB Act of 2001 was put in place**,** a different path was taken by school leaders. School leaders were changing from a management style of school leadership to an approach that was teacher-focused in order to meet the challenges of increasing student achievement.

Leaders were capable of utilizing personal strength to meet the goals of the school by increasing human capacity. One of the underlying questions embedded in this study centered on the relationship between increasing school capacity, as measured by student achievement and principal leadership. Stated differently, what is the effect of leadership on school achievement? An assumption that most educators made was that school capacity improved by having the

combined power of a school staff to arrive at a communal goal of increasing student achievement.

A review of survey data suggested an overwhelming agreement that there was a relationship between leadership and student achievement. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the principals who participated in this study sustained success in their schools in some of the following ways: (a) making choices and decisions that had a direct effect on student achievement, (b) setting high expectations for both staff and students, (c) allowing others to get involved, (d) encouraging students who are eager and prepared to learn, (e) encouraging interpersonal and meaningful relationships between faculty and staff members, (f) soliciting parent volunteers, and (g) supporting school board members who share like views in regard to students' success, parent involvement and a strong staff.

Research Questions

These overarching questions guided this research study:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

Summary of the Findings and Results

According to the survey data collected for this study, successful school leaders in this study were inclined to display the following behaviors: (a) involved teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies, (b) established clear goals and kept them in the fore front at their schools, (c) praised faculty and staff accomplishments both privately and publicly, (d) made sure that faculty and staff were made aware of current theories and practices and made it apart of discussions,

(e) were supporters and voice for the school to all stakeholders, (f) provided necessary materials and professional development, (g) addressed present day and possible problems, (h) were mindful of the particulars and undercurrents in the running of the school, (i) limited interruptions during instructional time, (j) had a clear understanding about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices and monitored the principal's implementation of best practices by observations, and (k) completed frequent walk-throughs and grade level meetings.

Research questions included the following: What aspects of principal leadership positively impact achievement?; Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?; and How do principals sustain success in their schools? According to the findings, the answers were: 64.3% of the teachers strongly and moderately agreed their principal involved them in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies, 46. 9% of the teachers reported their principal used private verbal praise to reward individual accomplishments, and 60. 9% of the teachers said their principal established clear goals, and those goals were in the forefront of the schools attention.

According to teachers, 47. 9% strongly agreed that their principal ensured that faculty and staff were aware of the then-current theories and practices and made the channel of communication for these a fixed aspect of the school's culture, 72. 5% of the teachers strongly agreed that their principal was a supporter and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders, 55. 9% of the teachers strongly agreed that their principal provided the needed materials and professional development for the successful carrying out of their jobs, as it relates to principals being aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and used this information to address then-current and potential

problems. Forty-eight point six percent strongly agreed, and 51. 4% of the teachers reported that ways their principal ensured use of instructional time were: (a) limiting interruptions, (b) visitors must sign-in, and (c) messages were delivered to the classroom, rather than interrupting over the intercom. Sixty-two percent of the teachers reported that their principal was knowledgeable about then-current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, and 71. 4% of the teachers reported that their principal monitored the implementation of best practices by doing walk-throughs, observations, and having grade-level meetings.

Three themes regarding principal leadership emerged from the analysis. They were: principal leadership roles, the instructional climate of a school building, and the overall role the principal played in improving instruction. Overall respondents to the survey ranked the leadership role of the principal at 56% and suggested that successful principals were instrumental in assisting teachers in the development and implementation of decisions and policies, establishing clear goals, and advocating and speaking on behalf of the school and its stakeholders.

Participants in this study ranked Instructional Climate of a school building at 47% in terms of principal leadership and suggested that their principals rewarded individual accomplishments, were aware of the details of operating a school, and ensured that faculty and staff were aware of the most then-current theories and best practices for educating students. The importance of the principal's role in improving instruction ranked highest at 58% and suggested that principals ensured effective use of instructional time, provided materials and professional development, monitored implementation of

best practices in a number of ways, and were well-informed about then-present day curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

The seven study schools were considered successful, based on AYP, which included student achievement on standardized state assessments, as well as attendance and demographic data. Principals and teachers who participated in this study agreed that a building principal must be both an advocate and a spokesperson for the school. He or she must be cognizant of best practices and establish clear goals, based on a strong knowledge of formative and summative assessments, as well as curriculum and instruction. On the principal questionnaire, respondents rated the following indicators at 50% or higher:

1) The critical importance of the need for collaborative leadership with clear decision-making parameters between all groups.
2) Leaders are many things but being a servant was number one on the questionnaire.
3) Relationships are vital and a leader has to devote a considerable amount of time to fostering positive relationships.
4) A good leader has to be a good listener and know when to speak and offer problem solving advice.

According to survey data, teacher involvement increased when teachers were more instrumental in the design and implementation of significant decisions and policies. Principals could promote teacher involvement in the following ways: (a) publicly acknowledge the teachers' accomplishments and efforts, (b) encourage others to work at their maximum proficiencies, (c) utilize school newsletters and written notes to

acknowledge individual accomplishment, (d) ensuring that faculty and staff are mindful of the most current theories and practices, (e) ensure that faculty and staff are aware of the latest theories and practices and, (f) facilitate a discussion of best practices a regular aspect of the schools culture.

The qualitative method was used to evaluate surveys for this study regarding areas such as: (a) use of instructional time, (b) effective school management, (c) overall awareness of school climate issues and, (d) knowledge of curriculum and instruction and assessment practices. The researcher also gathered and analyzed data related to: (a) AYP, (b) student demographics and, (c) assessment tools. Finally, data from principal questionnaires provided insights into the principal's perspective and perceptions.

Teachers and principals participated in this study; their responses to the survey suggested both responded by stating that leadership was key to school success, student achievement, and effective instruction. Additionally, specific kinds of activities that defined leaders such as involvement in decision-making and policy as well as the ability to establish goals emerged from the surveys. According to the survey results, leaders were the spokesperson for all stakeholders and provided the necessary materials and tools to do the job, while protecting the time necessary to accomplish the goal.

Edmonds (1982) and Marzano (2003) supported the conclusion that leadership was key in making a difference in well-performing schools. They both strongly agreed that the actions of district and school leaders could have a substantial effect on student achievement. Results from the survey conducted for this study collaborated those views. They also agreed that school effectiveness and student achievement both were valuable and had one thing in common, the fact that the effectiveness depended heavily on the

quality of school leadership. According to the survey conducted for this study, one of three main factors contributing to an overall healthy school climate was school leadership.

The salient point made in the study was that common administrative practices that were present in effective schools included active supervision, (walk-throughs, observations, attention to grade level meetings) and the knowledge base of principals in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, with the ability of the school leader to share, implement, and actualize this knowledge.

The findings from this research indicated that leadership was an important, critical, a supportive aspect and necessary. However, this study focused on two significant views held by two stakeholders: principals and teachers. Generally, school efficacy studies focus on test scores and the characteristics of the leader. In this study, the perception of teachers was added. In my estimation, this distinction was necessary as a full validation of the initial research questions which were:

1) Are there consistent leadership practices in successful schools?
2) What aspects of principal leadership impact achievement?
3) How do principals sustain success in their schools?

The outcomes of this study may impact schools serving similar populations. It may provide professional development opportunities that focus on enhancing principal leadership, development, and maintenance. The data provided an opportunity for society to take a closer look at the educational field, especially schools serving urban and suburban populations. It is important to note that the information gleaned might be

generalized, but the researcher did not use rural or similar school configuration in the study.

Benefits from the study were that the findings may influence all stakeholders, including, students, administrators, teachers, staff members, community leaders, and parents. Students may have the opportunity to receive excellent instruction from supported teachers. Administrators may better understand their roles in what they need to do to be more effective. As teachers deliver classroom instruction they may feel more supported. Staff members may benefit, because this study may allow them to gain more insight on what impact leadership had on student achievement and provide necessary supports. The benefits of this study, as it relates to community leaders may result in better schools that are the heart of their respective communities. Parents may benefit as a result of the wide variety of information related to academic success for their child or children.

Based on this study's data, leadership was not the only factor that impacted student achievement. Effective teaching also played a role in student achievement. Research showed the influence of leadership had a tendency to be highest in schools where the learning needs of students were critical. The survey revealed that quality leaders had a great impact on teachers by: (a) outlining a well-defined course that everyone understands, (b) establishing high expectations, using data to record progress and performance and (c) equipping teachers and others in the system with the needed support and training to be successful. Quality leaders made certain that whatever conditions and incentives were in place support, rather than hinder teaching and learning.

Results from this research study suggested that quality leaders had character and knew how to build strong relationships with all stakeholders. They were passionate about

their vision for their school. Strong principals who lead others are responsible and lead through their positive attitude, initiative, and good decision-making skills. It is important for the effective leaders to create more leaders by creating opportunities for others to learn and grow. The underlying goal is to create a chain of responsibility and cohesiveness within a school.

This study may influence the researcher in several ways. These ways include developing an awareness of the leadership role and its impact on school effectiveness. The researcher's awareness was also sharpened as to what teachers look for in their leaders. The study will affect other leaders because it will allow them to examine and evaluate their own leadership skills and understandings. The future decisions that are impacted by this study include the type and intensity of professional development for principals and teachers. Principals will have the opportunity to reflect and self-evaluate their leadership philosophy and practices. Distributed leadership among principals and teachers will be increased, creating opportunities for a positive effect on student achievement.

Recommendations for future research

Future researchers may consider correlating teacher respondents with their specific schools by implementing an anonymous numerical coding system when analyzing survey results. The outcome of the study may have been different if additional questions regarding teacher success had been included. Future researchers may consider changing the focus of the study by including additional stakeholders, such as parents, central office administrators, community leaders, and students in the survey and interview process. Also, Smart Balanced Assessment and Partnership for Assessment of

Readiness for College and Careers could be used to improve student achievement.

Conclusion

This topic was chosen because over the years having effective leadership was vital for the success of students in the researcher's own classroom. Eight years as a classroom teacher was a joy and credit has to be given to the leaders who made the job fulfilling. It was instilled in me that leadership is an attitude not a position; this became evident not the first or second year of the researchers' career, it was the third and fourth years when it became clear that having the right person in the right place at the right time made a difference.

Working under three different leaders for eight years, each of them displayed different leadership characteristics. Two of the leaders were warm, caring, approachable, respectful, fair, honest, helpful, and open to new ideas and a role model for teachers and students. On the other hand, the third leader was shrewd, controversial, disrespectful, and lacked social skills. Being afforded the opportunity to step into higher education, leadership continued to make a difference. While completing this doctoral program, leadership continued to surface as an area of interest. The effect of leadership continued to be explored.

As early as 8th grade the researcher began to develop an interest in school leadership. She was influenced by early kindergarten and third grade teachers who presented themselves as nurturing and caring role models. The researcher's high school principal was a genuine person, yet he was firm, and his leadership was top notch. He had an awesome sense of humor and a big heart. The superintendent was one of the most effective, fair, and well-rounded individuals to encounter. All of these individuals

instilled in the researcher the ability to believe in herself and the courage to follow her dreams. The bonds formed from these experiences are still shared.

During the researcher's eight-year tenure as a classroom teacher, the opportunity to work under principals who displayed phenomenal leadership skills presented itself and that aided the researcher in doing an effective job. Credit for most of the researcher's own success and accomplishments goes to individuals, such as her first administrator and cooperative teacher. The results of this study may impact other educational practitioners by enlightening novice principals and teachers about the importance of school leadership. The study noted the skills needed for effective leadership. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) reported that 50% of teachers left within the first five years, due to lack of support. Effective leadership was paramount to creating a stable teaching environment.

The study revealed the researcher's belief that principals' leadership styles, philosophies, and goals do have a positive effect on student achievement. Leadership comes from several sources, not just superintendents and principals. Individuals who served in positions of leadership in school systems were the ones with the most influence. As a result of this research and personal experiences, the researcher's opinion is that efforts to better recruit, train, evaluate, and provide ongoing development should be considered highly cost-effective approaches to successful school improvement.

The objective of this study was to add to the body of information regarding renewed efforts towards developing a better understanding of the links between leadership and student learning. District and school leadership provided a critical bridge connecting a good number of educational reform initiatives and their consequences for students. These efforts will become more useful as research continues to support the

understanding of what makes a leader successful. A leader's ability to effectively answer to external policy initiatives, as well as local needs and priorities. These practices become part of the educational system by refining its overall quality and significantly adding value to students' learning.

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Appendix A

Principal Survey Questions

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school?
2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal?
3) Describe your philosophy of leadership?
4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so,
   what is it that you believe makes the difference?
5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced?
6) What (3) words describe your leadership style?
7) What do you believe makes your school successful?
8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met?
9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful?
10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement?
11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership?
12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

Appendix B

Teacher Survey Questions

1) How does your principal protect you from issues and influences that detract you from your teaching time or focus?

2) Explain how your principal is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and does your principal use this information to address current and potential problems?

3) In what ways does your principal provide you with the necessary materials and professional development for the successful execution of your job?

4) How is your principal an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders?

5) Describe how your principal establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines?

6) Is your principal knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices? Explain.

7) How does your principal monitor the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning?

8) Describe how your principal ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture?

9) In what ways does your principal recognize and reward individual accomplishments?

10) How does your principal establish clear goals and keeps these goals in the forefront of the school's attention?

11) Explain how your principal involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

Appendix C

Parkwood Elementary School
Mrs. Gini Folk-Principal
3199 Parkwood Lane
Maryland Heights, MO 63034

Dear Mrs. Folk:

Dr. Pecoraro has given permission for you to participate in a study that will examine the leadership practices of Missouri school principals within St. Louis, St. Louis City and Madison Counties, as part of my ED.d studies at Lindenwood University. Along with this letter, is a questionnaire that needs to be completed and returned to me. Please be assured that your responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential with no report identifying specific schools or principals involved in the study.

Along with this letter you will find a questionnaire for you to complete. Please be assured that your responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential with no report identifying specific schools or principals involved in the study. I am also asking that your teachers fill out a survey and the link for them to retrieve the survey is: http://www.surveymonkey.com/educator01.

The results of this study will assist the state's educational leaders in assessing the leadership practices of the school principals as they lead their schools in meeting the accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Furthermore, the results may be used as a guide to determine the types of resources and supports needed by the state's principals as they lead their schools, strive for continuous improvement and meet the needs of all students. Copies of my research will be made available upon request.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Please contact me via email at educatorshalom@yahoo.com if you have any questions regarding the research or via telephone at 314-610-7840.

Sincerely,

Tisha G. Glasper

Tisha G. Glasper
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix D

Dr. Marsha Chappelow
Superintendent
Ladue School District
9703 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63134

Dear Dr. Chappelow:

I am a student at Lindenwood University and I am in the final stages of completing my Doctoral Research. I am requesting your permission, for your principals and teachers to participate in a study that will examine the leadership practices of Missouri & Illinois School Principals, as part of my Ed.D. studies at Lindenwood University. The title of my research project is, "An Analysis of Research Based Leadership Practices and the Principal's Impact on Student Achievement." Research suggest there is a strong relationship between successful schools and leadership. The purpose of this study is to explore successful schools and investigate their principal's leadership style, philosophy and goals. For the purpose of this study, a successful school can be defined as a school where student achievement met or exceeded the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets set by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The results of this study will assist educational leaders in assessing the leadership practices of school principals as they meet the accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. Furthermore, the results may be used as a guide to determine the types of resources and supports needed by the state's principals s they lead their schools strive for continuous improvement and meet the needs of all students. Copies of my research will be made available upon request.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the research, please feel free to contact me via email at educatorshalom@yahoo.com or by phone at 314-610-7840.

Sincerely,

Tisha G. Glasper
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Principal Interview Question Responses (School A)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school? 4 years

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal? District Special Ed Coordinator

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership? A good leader has good people surrounding them. To hire the best and work as a team. Trust the people you work with and get the best person for the job and have weekly meetings.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference? Yes, there is. A leader has to have expectations for everyone in the building. Students can sense if there is a high level of expectancy.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced? Teamwork-the way the teachers work with each other. They voice their opinion. Students also feel the connection.

6) What (3) words describe your leadership style? Fair, never satisfied, respect

7) What do you believe makes your school successful? Everyone believes in the mission.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met? Understanding by design. The Backward Design, Learning Communities, Weekly Team Meetings, Goals and Objectives and long term and short-term goals.

9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful? One on one, team teacher up with a mentor teacher and provide additional professional development.

10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement? Curriculum assessments and Informal observation and documentation.

11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership? Professional development is so important for teachers. Teachers have to have the proper tools in order to improve instruction. Professional development allows teachers to find out their strengths and their weaknesses.

12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

The PTO is very strong and parents are very involved in school wide activities. Parents are always seeking ways they can become more involved in the school. We have a group of parents that volunteer on a weekly basis and it is great to have parents so engaged in their child's education.

Principal Interview Question Responses (School B)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school?

Four years.

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal?

Four years.

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership?

A leader is a servant. A leader is one who desires to make a positive difference for others.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference?

Yes. The leadership of a school can affect, or impact, student achievement by making choices and decisions that in turn will have a direct effect on the students.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced?

By the quality demonstrated in student work, improved and consistent procedures and communications, maintaining discipline, making curriculum choices, improving teacher quality, and attaining superior standardized assessment scores.

6) What (3) words describe your leadership style?

Motivator, approachable, and team-builder.

7) What do you believe makes your school successful?

The teaching staff, parent's volunteers, and School Board members who are dedicated to our students' success.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met?

Curriculum mapping, regular lesson plan and grade book checks, test reports, teacher meetings and collaboration.

9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful?

I appoint a mentor teacher to work with the struggling teacher and to model possible solutions. I hold regular meetings with mentor teachers and with those whom they are mentoring. I conduct regularly scheduled and unscheduled classroom walkthroughs and observations.

10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement?

Curriculum assessments, teacher-developed assessments, informal observation and documentation, standardized assessments, and required test reports. Our teachers fill out a test report form after each test they give in any class letting me know how many students received As, Bs, Cs, DS or FS and if a student was deficient by scoring below a C, the report requests the teacher's thoughts on how they will help that student improve.

11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership?

Teachers are exposed to new and different perspectives. Teachers are also able to stay current in educational trends and resources through professional development opportunities. At our school, the teachers who have received extensive training in one area are asked to lead a teacher in-service each year to share the knowledge and insights they have acquired through their experience and specialized training.

12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

Parents are involved at the School Board level, we also have a parent organization, and our school requires that each family contribute at least 4 hours of volunteer work for the school year. Monthly newsletters with opportunities for service are sent out and our school also participates in several annual community events such as the First Day Convention, National Day of Prayer at City Hall, the Italian Fest, Progressive
Taste of Collinsville, and this year we will help promote a community-wide Mud Run. Our school also invites community servants such as police officers, fire fighters, librarians, and pastors to speak to our students on various educational topics. http://www.surveymonkey.com/educator01
(Link for teachers)

Principal Interview Question Responses (School C)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school? This is my second year.

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal? Zero. Was a Site Coordinator in another district that lead one Early Childhood/Special Education Site and the district's ELL Program.

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership? I strongly believe in shared leadership and utilizing the individual strengths of those in the building, regardless what written responsibilities staff members have. This means that all stakeholders (staff and parents) must have trusting relationships, willing to collaborate, and willing to collaborate with others who may not have expertise in a specific area. I also believe in building capacity among the staff. I am not the keeper of knowledge. I need to provide opportunities for staff members to learn and act upon their knowledge. This does not mean that staff members are focusing their efforts in different places. It is quite the contrary. I believe the school is more productive when we develop and believe in a common vision. As the principal, I do have to provide directions and guidance but after we all believe in a common mission and vision and I have clearly stated my expectations I need to have trust in the staff to utilize their strengths.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference? I most certainly do. I believe that that as a principal I can allow staff ownership in their jobs. The more I provide growth opportunities and empower the staff, the more experts I have working with students. In addition, I believe staff members begin working with students as I work with them. Staff members build trusting relationships with students where students feel safe to take risks.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced? First we have a shared mission and vision. I also expect staff to question everything. It is important to engage in constructive feedback. I believe teachers question their own practices, each other, and my decisions. The result is that we have in-depth discussions about student learning and have good reasons why we do the things we do.

6) What (3) words describe your leadership style? Collaborative, facilitator, fair

7) What do you believe makes your school successful? High quality and invested staff members. Well-educated and involved parents. Great students who want to learn.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met? We are just beginning to use a benchmarking assessment throughout the district, Discovery Education. Other than that I provide much time for grade level PLC teams, vertical teams, and professional development on essential skills and assessment.

9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful? I would need to be sensitive but honest with the teacher. Hopefully we would discuss the concern until we have a common understanding of the concern. Then the teacher and I would develop a plan together to help him/her improve. If there is a concern that the teacher and I do not agree then unfortunately I have to be more assertive. This may mean requiring certain steps to be taken. However, I put much time and effort into developing relationships and feel confident that I can work with most all of the staff.

10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement? DRA, IRI, SRI, GatesMacGinitie Reading Tests, Discovery Education, District Common Math Assessments, Math Investigations end of unit assessments,

11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership? PD is essential. I believe that we must provide teachers the tools needed to improve instruction but we need to provide the reasons behind any change that is invoked. Not all teachers will buy in immediately, or at all, to change. However, having an understanding of the reasons behind an initiative helps teachers deal with change. Leadership comes in many different forms. As we educate teachers they lead in different ways. Some become presenters, others role models, and others serve or do the things needed to get things accomplished.

12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement? Parents volunteer frequently in the primary grades. They do not volunteer as much in the intermediate grades because of teacher preference. This is an area that will be addressed in the future. I am blessed to have a very involved parent population. The parent group is very organized and takes initiative. Therefore, it is my job to explain the needs of the school and work with the parent organization to address these needs. Many of the current committees are either made up of all staff members or all parents. I have been working the past year to integrate the committees. Currently, I am working with the staff and parents to develop a new school strategic plan. Parents are involved in this planning process. The district's

evaluation program expects staff members to research and utilize parent and community resources. We also work with OASIS volunteers and Junior Achievement.

Principal Interview Question Responses (School D)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school? 5 years

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal? 21 years

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership? / believe in collaborative leadership where there are clear decision-making parameters between al/ the groups involved. Questions about authority, accountability, final decision, and input are all critical parameters to be clear about for collaborative leadership to be successful.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? Yes If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference? I believe it is leadership of a collaborative team toward a common vision and the willingness to do the hard work, honest reflection, and difficult conversations around student and teacher work.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced? Leadership is not something you necessarily see it is what you feel. It's how people (staff, students, parents) feel, relate, and work that tells you if there is a productive model of leadership. No one style fits everyone but that's my vision of leadership. l believe evidence of my leadership is in the structures and routines that support teachers and students to do their best work. In some cases that is following the leads provided, sometimes its being ahead of the curve, and sometimes it's staying out of the way.

6) What (3) words describe your leadership style? Collaborative, reflective and efficient

7) What do you believe makes your school successful? Collaboration and maintaining the balance between practical and forward thinking.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met? Frequent observation and dialogue with teachers about those observations and monitoring the qualitative and quantitative data that is available in bucketful's.

9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful? Same answer as #8 - Frequent observation and dialogue with teachers about those observations and monitoring the qualitative and quantitative data that is available in bucketful's. Then providing the coaching that

can help that teacher move forward or move on to something they are more successful at doing.

10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement? Curriculum assessments and informal observation and documentation.

11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership? Just as with any other skill we learn, their needs to be equal parts input, guided practice in authentic embedded activities, and independent practice with specific feedback. High quality PD provides that in the context of leadership activities.

12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

Trained parent volunteers in literacy, active parent advisory groups in safety, diversity and curriculum, active PTO, application and connections with community groups like garden clubs and civic organizations, parent education nights co-facilitated by parents and staff are a few that come to mind.

Principal Interview Question Responses (School E)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school?

This is my tenth year as a principal.

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal?

I have been at Bridgeway Elementary for ten years.

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership?

> I feel as though a leader is someone who is visible in his or her building and in the trenches with their teachers. Someone who is positive and a problem solver, who can support teachers while pushing them forward. Relationships are key and a leader has to devote much time to relationships. They need to be vigilant in this area. A leader also needs to be a good listener and know when to not talk or solve the problem for them. Building trust is key, without it you will not succeed.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference?

I do feel that there is a strong relationship between leadership and student achievement. If you look at the work that MCREL has done on leadership the research clearly supports this premise. A school cannot have high student achievement without a strong principal leading them along the way. There will be bumps in the road but that is to be expected.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced?

As you walk through the halls you will notice that everyone you meet will have a smile on their face and say Hello. They will be helpful and care about kids. You will be able to feel the calm and positive energy as you enter the doors.

We are very focused on student achievement and all decisions are based on kids and data. The data leads us in our work towards increasing student achievement.

6) What (3) words describe your leadership style?

Visible, Problem Solver, and Positive

7) What do you believe makes your school successful?

Relationships are what make our school successful. The relationships I have with teachers, students, and families and the relationships that staff has with students and families. We also have high standards for our students and each other. If you don't have positive relationships, a school will not succeed academically.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met?

I meet at least twice a month with each grade level to discuss curricular issues. We follow our Data Team process, where we pre-assess students on particular skill, teach it for 2-3 weeks, post test, and then discuss the results. WE also talk about strengths that teachers see and obstacles that are getting in the way of their achievement. All of this work in tied in to the CLE's. Our staff development is also tied in to the GLE's that we are weaker in. We discuss ideas to remediate students not achieving and how we can move them forward. I am also very visible in the classrooms for the purpose of supporting teachers, knowing what is going on, and supporting students.

9) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful?

I would first try to pinpoint the specific area; I would then have a conversation with the teacher. I like to know where he/she is at and if he/she feels it is a problem. I would tie it into student achievement and things I have observed in the classroom. From that point we would write a plan of action to remediation the issue. I would provide any type of PD that is needed. Perhaps have him/her work with our Instructional Specialist or observe other teachers. We would continually meet each week to discuss progress.

If I do not see progress at any point I would then write him/her up using our Teacher Evaluation Process. His/Her progress would be documented, along with all communications and data. My goal would be to help him/her grow as a teacher and support him/her along the way. However, if there is no growth over time, I would begin the progress of termination.

10) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement?

Our students are assessed a variety of ways; classroom/teacher assessments, DRA's, Gates, AIMSweb assessments in reading and math, and MAP

11) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership?

In our school we have various sub committees and teachers take turns presenting to staff on specific topics. Right now we are working on Steven Covey's 7 Habit work and teachers have provided PD for staff.

I believe it is important to give teachers an opportunity to be a part of professional development to ensure buy in and effective implementation.

12) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community

involvement?

We have a very active PTO at our school. They provide a variety of opportunities and events for parents to be involved in our school. We also have parent representation on our School Improvement Team and other sub committees. We host an ELL Parent Night each year to reach out to our ELL Families. This is a very successful evening and a high level of participation.

Principal Interview Question Responses (School F)

1) How many years of experience do you have as the principal (not assistant principal) at your current school? 6 years

2) How many years of experience do you have as the principal at any school and not assistant principal? 6 years

3) Describe your philosophy of leadership? I believe in developing strong teacher leadership capacity in the school to help lead any initiatives that come along the way. The school is a community that needs to function like a family. All parts need to support each other. I need to empower, support and be a model to the teachers and students in the school.

4) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference? When teachers have opportunities to be leaders they believe in their power to do well. The teachers involved in leadership in the school have the opportunity to be part of the big picture of the vision of the school. They tend to use data more efficiently and feel more responsible for student results. Other teachers are encouraged to be part of changes to improve student leadership when their peers feel strongly about it and model successes to them.

5) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced? In my absence, the school runs efficiently. There are common beliefs in the building with both the teachers and the students. Our test scores have improved each year, and we are making progress toward reducing the achievement gap. We have a character education theme, pledge and song that is part of what we do each day. As a staff we believe in the Love and Logic philosophy to help teach students to be responsible for their behavior. We have also trained the parents so they understand what we are doing. Our school is a happy welcoming place for everyone to work and learn. This is something I am very proud of. 6) What (3) words describe your leadership style? Facilitator, cheerleader, listener.

7) What do you believe makes your school successful? Common vision- Whatever it Takes, "It takes a village to raise a child" philosophy — teachers cannot be held responsible for meeting all needs of every child- we need to support each other. Behavior problems are learning opportunities, and students need practice learning the right ways to react, respond, and care for others. Students need to be in school to learn with the exception of dangerous actions, suspension should not be an option. The best thing leading to success is that those who work at the school, love what they do.

8) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met?

Frequent walk-throughs in classrooms, meetings with grade level teams, common formative and summative assessments being used for all essential skills, data used to give extra interventions as students need them.

9)A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful?

Observe the room multiple times to see what the major concerns are. Offer to have a mentor teacher work with them. Offer time for them to observe other teachers who are strong in the areas the weak teachers is not. Meet with the teacher on a weekly basis to discuss progress. Encourage the teacher to use their strengths in their teaching. It is important to not focus solely on the weak areas.

10)What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement?

Teacher made formative assessments, pre and post tests to measure progress on essential skills, district benchmark assessments, AimsWeb for intervention progress monitoring, Number Worlds for math interventions with weekly assessments to measure progress.

11)How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership?

It is the heart of learning. Teachers need to be given professional learning opportunities that empower them to grow. When teachers are trained to be leaders, they take the knowledge back to the staff and the excitement they bring gets the teachers involved in the fun of the new ideas. It is also important to match opportunities for professional growth to the interests and strengths of teachers so they will value the learning and share it with others they work with.

12)What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

Love and Logic Parent Institutes, Spanish Speaking Parent Night, Passport Night, MLK activities, Veterans Day celebrations, student council activities to benefit others — the Shoe man Project, Kids with Cancer, Autism Walk, Jump

Rope for Heart, Food Drives, involvement with Litzinger, a local ecological center, Reading is Hot- with the Firemen, Community Cares Winter Holiday Giving- we adopt students and their families who would benefit from help, Fall Family Fun at Thies Farm — a free opportunity for all families , Welcome Back Ice Cream Social, School Picnic — all free, parent Stakeholder's meetings, newsletters and website information.

Principal Interview Question Responses (School G)

) Describe your philosophy of leadership? Collaborative with final decision-making with Principal
) Do you feel there is a relationship between leadership and student achievement? If so, what is it that you believe makes the difference? Yes, supervising teachers in curriculum usage and strategies
) How is the impact of your leadership in the building evidenced? "Hands-on" and visible in building & classrooms; groups & individual professional development
) What (3) words describe your leadership style? Collaborative, Humanistic Decisive
) What do you believe makes your school successful? Relationships between staff, students and constituents.
) How do you ensure grade level expectations are being met? Constant observations continual inservice, educational leadership.
) A teacher in your building is having difficulty in the classroom. What steps would you take to help the teacher be successful? Analysis of data, observing situation and providing constructive feedback & follow-up and support.
0) What assessment tools are used to ensure student achievement? ISEL, AIMSWeb, some curriculum specific testing.
1) How can professional development help teachers gain a capacity for leadership? Teachers-teaching-Teachers; Developing classroom leadership
2) What programs do you have in place to promote parental and community involvement?

PTO
Parent Orientation Night
Curriculum Night
Math & Reading Evening Inservices
District Quarterly Parent Classes
Fundraising for Community Projects

Vitae

Tisha Georgette Glasper currently works as the supervisor for Healthy Families-Healthy Moms Illinois. Her previous work experiences include: Regional Homeless Liaison for the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Program for the Madison County Regional Superintendents Office. Teaching experiences have included grades 2nd and 5th grades. Work experience also includes, Admissions Advisor for Kaplan University and Sanford Brown College.

Educational studies have resulted in a Master of Science Degree in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University, a Master of Arts Degree in Elementary Education with an Emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction from Maryville University and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education Degree from Harris Stowe State University.