PROMOTING CRITICAL IDEAS OF LEADERSHIP, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

THE 2010 YEARBOOK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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Promoting Critical Ideas of Leadership, Culture and Diversity

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The 2010 Yearbook, *Promoting Critical Ideas of Leadership, Culture and Diversity,* is dedicated to the membership of NCPEA—our colleagues, friends, role models, fellow researchers and mentors.

It has been a privilege to work on the 17th and 18th editions of the NCPEA Yearbooks, first as Associate Editor with Dr. Chuck Achilles, who was Editor in 2009, and currently as Editor with Dr. Betty Alford, the Associate Editor for 2010. My work with Dr. Achilles was a dream come true. I never thought in a million years that in 1996 when he came as a part of a visiting team to review the potential of a doctoral program for the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling at Sam Houston State University that I would ever be able to work so closely with him. It was truly a humbling experience and an honor to learn from him. Also, I would be remiss in not acknowledging the lessons learned from Dr. Rosemary Papa, Editor in 2008, especially her techniques of editing. There are several other people who have been instrumental in the completion of this 18th Yearbook—our Assistant Editors, Dr. George Perreault and Dr. Luana Zellner; all of our wonderful reviewers; our Publisher, Dr. Joe Eckenrode, and our Production Director, Steve Spangler.

Finally, the work on this 2010 Yearbook would never have been possible without the dedication of Dr. Betty Alford, a fellow Texan and close colleague. She is a brilliant leader who is always kind in her interactions with others. Above all, it is her diligence in working with all of the authors that has produced the quality of what you will be reading in the following pages. Though we had fewer submissions this year, those we received were outstanding. In fact, in this yearbook your colleagues share a wealth of information that contributes to a dynamic knowledge-base related to leadership preparation, as well as general school leadership, management, and curriculum.

This year, the Living Legends Chapter is unique. Dr. Ted Creighton took his outstanding 2009 Living Legends speech, delivered in San Antonio, and asked past NCPEA Living Legends recipients to participate in the development of the chapter. Providing us with excellent advice, along with Ted Creighton (2009), are the following Living Legends: John Hoyle (the first person named as Living Legend in 1999), Chuck Achilles (2001), Martha McCarthy (2002), Rosemary Papa (2003), Robert Beach (2004), Louis Wildman (2006), and Marilyn Grady (2008). When Ted suggested to me that he had planned the Invited Chapter in this manner, I was excited. But to read the completed work was beyond my expectations. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. The chapters that follow the one by our Living Legends are equally engaging.

We all have positions that are demanding of our time and energy, but I can think of no one I ever met in NCPEA who did not also have a love for our profession. As we prepare the future leaders in the field of administration, it is my hope that the excellent scholarship and words of your colleagues contained within these pages will illuminate your path.

Enjoy!

Beverly J. Irby, Yearbook Editor
Texas State University System Regents' Professor
Associate Dean for Graduate Programs
College of Education
Sam Houston State University

INVITED CHAPTERS

President's Message: Critical Issues in Leadership

Joe Pacha

These are extraordinary times; there is unprecedented turmoil throughout the nation and the world. Change is happening at an increasingly rapid pace. To address these changes and turmoil, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) emphasized:

> What is needed from a leadership perspective are new forms of improvisational expertise, a kind of process expertise that knows prudently how to experiment with never-been-tried-before relationships, means of communication, and ways of interacting that help people develop solutions that build upon and surpass the wisdom of today's experts. (p. 2)

This is a tall order but absolutely necessary if we, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), the educational administration experts, look to the future and the fulfillment of our mission. The mission of NCPEA, as a professional academic organization, is to advance the field of educational administration, both in leadership and management, through research, teaching, and service as a means to prepare aspiring and practicing educational administrators.

So, what are we doing to prepare aspiring and practicing educational administrators with the kind of expertise needed to experiment with new relationships and new means of communication and interaction that will develop solutions to the educational problems of both today and the future? The years of reform and renewal have passed with not much change in the way we conduct school business. My mother, who passed away three years ago, could come back and visit a high school today, and it would look very much like her high school days with school starting in late August and finishing in late May; bells that signal the beginning and ending of each class; class times approximately 50 minutes in length; academic feedback in the form of letter grades; four quarters and two semesters; desks in rows with the teacher's desk at the front of the room; textbooks for curriculum and pencils and paper for tools; and the list can go on and on….

The point I am trying to make is that the world has changed immensely since 1937 when my mother was in high school; but, unfortunately, our schools have not foundationally changed in the last 100 years. It is a time for change. It is a time for moving past reform, redesign, and renewal to complete change in the way schools function and do their business. That can only happen when new leaders bring new ideas and practices into being. It is our job to help pave the way.

We, NCPEA, can no longer be guardians of the "industrial age" system of education that we have today. We can no longer perpetuate the system that has reached its capacity and continues to educate generations of children with huge achievement gaps that relegate them to lives with dreams and hopes unfulfilled.

Joe Pacha, Illinois State University

As Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) explained, "The hardest part of this work might be finding the courage to identify and claim what is most important to us, those goals and challenges for which it is worth taking on the pains and risks of leadership" (p. 3). NCPEA must begin now before others make the changes for us.

REFERENCE

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

IT'S NOT THE BICYCLE, IT'S THE RIDE: EIGHT NCPEA LIVING LEGENDS RESPOND

Theodore Creighton, 2009
Marilyn Grady, 2008
Louis Wildman, 2006
Robert Beach, 2004
Rosemary Papa, 2003
Martha McCarthy, 2002
Charles Achilles, 2001
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INTRODUCTION

My 2009 Living Legend presentation highlighted the fact that the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) is currently experiencing "lightening speed" issues that need to be addressed sooner rather than later in the scheme of things. Using the metaphor in the title, I suggested that we really can't wait until the "bicycle is finished," but we need to get on and "build the bicycle as we go." Further, I borrowed a phrase from Roger Martin (2007) who in discussing the innovative Amtrak Acela Railcar stated, "The salient issue is the ride, not the railcar" (p.83).

I used another metaphor when discussing my scant qualifications for the Living Legend Award. In my research and writing, I have come to believe, "An author is essentially the PEN through which significant others write." I further concluded, "Whatever accomplishments bring me this recognition has resulted from that which significant others have contributed."

So, as I began to think about how to approach this invited chapter for the *2010 NCPEA Yearbook*, it occurred to me that I was facing the same metaphor once again. My accomplishments have really been dependent on the accomplishments of significant others, and more specifically, the Living Legends who came before me. How could I capture the connection between my accomplishments and those before me? I concluded the only way was to invite them to coauthor the chapter with me, and we would "ride this (under construction) bicycle together."

The task has not been an easy one. How do we blend together the thoughts and ideas of eight Living Legends who span a decade and a year? We decided to focus on three pressing issues that we feel NCPEA is currently facing—and three pressing issues needing immediate attention from both our organization and the profession of educational leadership preparation. We further decided to present one issue at a time, with all our responses together.

Issue #1 Concerns, Cautions, and/or Recommendations

NCPEA has moved from a once-a-year face-to-face organization (i.e. one conference in August) to a 24/7 operation and has developed what Executive Director Elect Jim Berry calls a Virtual Presence. Monthly NCPEA Board meetings are now held online, and we are

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Note: Michael Martin (2007) and Clarence Fitch (2005) were not able to join us for this chapter. We lost our colleague and 2000 Living Legend Jack Culbertson, who passed away two years ago.

initiating monthly Webinars for members across the country. Even our Connexions Project, though a dynamic assembly of a knowledge base, is really only part of a larger whole. What might this larger whole look like in a decade? More importantly, what might be some of the Living Legends' *concerns, cautions, and/or recommendations* for the organization as we face a whole new frontier?

Robert Beach, Alabama State University

Without doubt, NCPEA has made real progress in creating member benefits by adapting programs to developing technology. Many opportunities have opened for member publishing. This has resulted from the efforts of several members—Outstanding! With concerns of saturating our presence and losing affective interaction aside, this virtual expansion looks like a powerful trend. NCPEA could become a virtual organization, all efforts electronic and all meetings by interactive TV. However, should we reflect also on what we value and might have valued that could slip away, each of us could provide a list of candidates. Mine looks like this: a few hours yearly with friends; talking with, maybe even helping, young professors—and getting help; friendly, warm, yet professional meetings; and providing experiences for students in a non-hostile environment. As a curmudgeon, my reflections include remembrances of two annual meetings, now down to one. Perhaps, the affective side should not be forgotten.

Charles Achilles, Seton Hall University

NCPEA has not only moved ahead with technology and printing, but in costs. It may become too costly for young faculty and families to attend either regularly (best option), or irregularly (when NCPEA is in a convenient location). Convenience could conflict with the goals of diversity, youth, and growth, factors that costs influence substantially. Recommendations seem to be: still focus on youth (new members), diversity, and think more seriously about location. We need to consider new sources of income to keep pace with inflation, or better yet, to beat inflation a bit.

Rosemary Papa, Northern Arizona University

In years past, individuals could earn degrees and/or credentials of sorts by taking a series of courses at home and sending in completed skill sheets. Those correspondence courses offered specific skills and/or information based courses/programs to those who could not attend on-site classes or preferred learning at home. As universities and community colleges grew and became more affordable, correspondence courses became scarce.

Over the more recent years in teaching, the cries of content in lieu of experiences and the notion that repeatable skills could be listed, observed and counted has led to a resurgence of the correspondence course format. However, at this time, it is being cloaked in the package of anywhere, anytime digital learning, and referred to as on-line education with possible professor access 24/7. Instead of a certificate of completion, the individual is given a university degree!

NCPEA as the premier professional organization for professors of education administration/leadership must focus its efforts on using the information deluge through social

networking venues while helping faculty understand their changing role in both synchronous and asynchronous universities.

Louis Wildman, California State University, Bakersfield

My 2006 Living Legend Lecture (available at http://www.csub.edu/~lwildman) criticized an over-emphasis on scripted, direct instruction of pre-determined standards. I recommended a balance with creativity-developing investigatory, project-based instruction. Fortunately, more educators now agree.

Yong Zhao has just written *American Education in the Age of Globalization* (ASCD, 2009) which describes how China is moving away from standardized, high-stakes testing toward more investigatory education. Similarly, Linda Darling-Hammond (2010), from her study of instructional practices in better schools, recommends guided inquiry—the coaching of independent research, projects and experiments.

NCPEA's Connexions project should provide free access to web-based pre-programmed on-line instruction pertinent to the teaching of pre-determined standards. However, without a balanced curriculum, the availability of such instructional technology will tempt students to turn education into a race to graduation.

Martha McCarthy, Indiana University

With the rapid pace of technological advances, we can only speculate as to what will characterize the "new frontier" that NCPEA soon will face. Possibly, universities may not be key players in the preparation of school leaders within a few years, and universities already are not the *only* players. It would be counterproductive for NCPEA members to close ranks and act like competition from private providers and school districts growing their own administrators will simply go away. It will not. NCPEA needs to influence the criteria used to evaluate these alternative providers as well as our university programs to ensure a pipeline of excellent school leaders.

A related development is that on-line courses and video conferencing are quickly becoming the preferred way to provide leadership preparation as well as many components of K-12 education. Not only do technological advances allow diverse parts of the world to be connected instantly, but also technology is changing the concept of "school" from bricks and mortar to wireless connections. The jury is still out regarding whether the long-term impact of some of these developments will be positive or negative. Thus, NCPEA has an important role to play in influencing standards for distributed education; designing strategies to assess the quality of materials on the Web; exploring implications of the Internet-generation's socialization through MySpace, blogs, Twitter, etc., instead of face-to-face communication; and numerous other technology-related issues. The only thing we know with certainty is that rapid change will be the norm. NCPEA needs to be at the forefront in helping school leaders and those preparing them to thrive in continually changing circumstances.

Marilyn Grady, University of Nebraska Lincoln

Professors of educational administration often come from roles as principals and superintendents. As principals and superintendents, they report the best part of their work is the relationships they form with the different people they encounter. The person-to-person, human dimensions are the keys to their satisfaction.

The work of professors as writers will be challenged by the demise of publication houses. As fewer books and journals are printed, what impact will this have on the lifespan of scholarly works?

The decline in memberships in professional organizations continues to be a challenge. NCPEA serves a membership that spans many generations. We must:

- Keep in touch with all the generations.
- Identify the problems that exist with NCPEA that need to be addressed.
- Identify the goals that the organization seeks to achieve on behalf of the membership during the next decade.
- Use these goals to guide future innovations.
- Examine the demographics of the membership.
- Examine the demographics in relation to membership trends during the past 20 years.
- Examine the geographic location of members.
- Survey members concerning their use and facility with a variety of technology tools.
- Survey members concerning their personal behaviors during Webinars.
- Balance the virtual with the personal aspects of the organization.
- Identify how many members are participants in the virtual aspects of NCPEA.
- Be attentive to the membership numbers of NCPEA.
- Examine the membership of other professional associations that attract professors of educational administration as members.

John Hoyle, Texas A & M University

NCPEA members have always reached out to each other, but now with a well designed "Virtual Presence," we "reach out and touch each other" any time or any place. Veteran professors struggle to adapt their teaching and research to on-line technologies and find it difficult to work in more than one medium at a time. Baby Boomer professors tend to seek isolation to conduct research while our younger Millennial professors born since 1982 thrive on multi on-line information systems, and they are highly collaborative networkers internally wired to the world. Millennials linked to MySpace etc., and Blackberrys view the once-a-year NCPEA conference merely contiguous to their wired world. Thus, while traditionalist professors of educational administration are more comfortable sharing papers and ideas in face-to-face presentations, the Millennials share ideas with the virtual world. I am concerned about the yet to be determined standards and measures of academic authenticity in an "open world warehouse" of research/inquiry. Regardless of the problem of authenticity in a "Virtual Presence," it is "the now," and NCPEA has talented colleagues ready to connect our community of scholars 24/7 that will provide instant data to enhance our research and share the best ideas to prepare exemplary school leaders.

SUMMARY OF ISSUE #1

Theodore Creighton, Virginia Tech University

There seems to be wide agreement among the eight Living Legends that NCPEA has already entered a "New Frontier" (Grady & McCarthy). We have very quickly moved from a 1 to 2 conferences per year organization to one whose "virtual presence" is in operation 24/7/360. Some suggest we monitor closely and not lose our equally important focus on maintaining the "affective interaction" among members (Beach & Achilles).

The Living Legends feel strongly that NCPEA needs to "influence the criteria used to evaluate these alternative providers as well as our university programs to ensure a pipeline of excellent school leaders" (McCarthy), and "focus its efforts on using the information deluge through social networking venues while helping faculty understand their changing role in both synchronous and asynchronous universities" (Papa).

In addition, attention is drawn to the need to "balance" web-based, pre-programmed instruction with the need to offer "investigatory, project-based instruction" in the preparation of future administrators (Wildman), and attention is drawn to the recognition that NCPEA has talented colleagues ready to connect our community of scholars 24/7 in order to provide instant data to enhance our research and share the best ideas to prepare exemplary school leaders (Hoyle).

As this chapter is written, NCPEA member Bonnie Beyer and her committee have finalized their *Guidelines for the Submission of Instructional Modules*—truly one of our next explorations of the "new frontier." In addition, the NCPEA *Education Leadership Review* (ELR) will be housed on its own website offering both printed and online options for members and subscribers.

Issue #2 Recommendations for Guidance to Developing Programs

What guidance, if any, should/could NCPEA provide to developing programs—especially virtual ones? This will sound like a standard's question, but it is an important issue if NCPEA is to have any input into the development of the profession. What should we say to those who are developing programs about basic expectations for reasonable levels of resource support? Can just anyone offer programs? Can one get by without presenting the qualifications of faculty? What do we, as an organization, recommend?

Achilles, Seton Hall University

Clearly, theoretical perspectives should continue to inform the field of Education Administration (not just leadership, but management as well). Thus, NCPEA professors need to work not only on theories that may inform the field of Education Administration, but also on developing a process that the professors can put in place to allow (help) NCPEA professors to make changes in the field: this process would provide changes in the Knowledge Dynamic (KD) that would accommodate the teaching and learning changes that are becoming the new KD. Instead of a Knowledge Base (KB), the field is progressing to a Knowledge Dynamism (KD) that has a way to replenish the KD to get rid of the stagnant content and build on the dynamism of an alive field. The "Good NCPEA Professors and Programs" will do and use dynamic research and results.

Unfortunately, although I have taught some courses using SKYPE and participated in NCPEA Board Meetings using SKYPE-like Eluminate (which is not dynamic yet), the work was not refereed and is not part of the Knowledge Dynamic (KD). Only my vision of quality teaching and learning was presented. Thus NCPEA professors need not to "politick", but strengthen the traditional teaching/learning role in traditional education administration programs.

If Connexions is to count as a research/theory outlet, how is Connexions to be refereed? Achilles has written much on "The Human Side" of Education Administration.—management as well as leadership, (but to little avail) including the following:

- Humanities and Values Interest Group of NCPEA
- Helped Ron Lindahl in "Dispositions" in the Cocking Lecture (notice ISSLC dropped Dispositions in its framework)
- The Humanities in Education Preparation (Monograph)
- The Humanities Seminar with Dr. Charles Keller (from Columbia and Williams College) 4 years as part of a large grant from USDOE to prepare principals and central office staff for students in Appalachian Schools
- The Administrator as "Man" (Pre Title IX), a monograph for R. Blackmon, (NCPEA).

McCarthy, Indiana University

NCPEA can provide guidance in the development of leadership preparation programs on a number of levels, and I'll limit my comments here to program assessment practices. As noted in my response to the first issue, NCPEA should play a leadership role in identifying criteria to assess the merits of leadership preparation programs, including traditional and virtual university-based, for-profit, and school district programs to prepare school leaders. All of these programs should be judged on the basis of the success of their graduates as effective school leaders. NCPEA can assist in broadening and refining the assessment strategies used to make such determinations. Currently, high stakes testing is the dominant strategy to assess whether school leaders have mastered standards, usually ISLLC or state-created standards. A number of states are using the Education Testing Service (ETS) School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) to determine if the standards are satisfied (Murphy, 2007), and SLLA has been faulted for not sufficiently addressing leadership characteristics such as creativity and imagination, ethical behavior, and commitment to social justice (English, 2008).

NCPEA should work with other professional associations to expand program assessment strategies and ensure that they consider factors linked to success as school leaders. It has been difficult, but not impossible, to identify the school leader's impact on student outcomes (see Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), and even more challenging to link successful school leaders to specific components of their preparation (see Pounder, Orr, & Black, 2006). But, simply because the task is difficult does not mean it should be avoided. We must address the outcomes of leadership preparation, because without evidence regarding which types of preparation produce the most effective leaders in terms of graduates' impact on student learning and social development, inferior leadership preparation alternatives that are less costly may become the norm. NCPEA, in cooperation with other professional organizations, can raise the bar in establishing standards that ALL leadership

preparation programs must meet, which should result in the much-needed elimination of some current programs.

Beach, Alabama State University

Should NCPEA consider providing guidance on best practice? Is there a role for an organization such as NCPEA relative to assisting in the improvement of our profession? By profession is meant our preparation programs and, specifically, the support required to see these programs flourish. If such a role exists, would we accept that we have a responsibility in this area? Probably, most of our members would agree with the proposition that a professional organization should be concerned with providing at least minimal guidance to the profession, i.e. an obligation toward professional improvement. It can immediately be pointed out that NCPEA has accepted such a role and made real efforts toward improving the preparation of educational leaders. Our members have served and are serving on the National Policy Board (NPBEA) in the development of the ISLLC and Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards.

Organizations external to ours provide such guidance. The majority of our colleges fall under the auspices of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and our members assist in the facilitation of NCATE and regional accreditation agency standards, such as, those promulgated by the Southern Accreditation of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This seems appropriate as it should be. However, on reflection, the existing standards begin with stems such as: *An education leader, Candidates, The institution ensures-publishes-has,* etc. These are typically exhortations focused on what, in general terms, the overall institution must provide or do and, in the case of preparation programs, statements relative to what competencies their graduates should evidence. These standards capture, in general terms, how the institution should operate or, at the programmatic level, they are statements of output. We are informed that we must have an appropriate curriculum and that graduates will be capable of performing in relation to that curriculum. This also is as it should be. However, guidance as to how that curriculum is to be developed and how it is to be delivered is notably lacking. Consider, what is an appropriate range for student faculty ratios, or what is a reasonable workload, and how many faculty members should minimally be in place for small programs? Our standards are in fact largely well meaning but insubstantial pontifications, creatures that serve, are largely created by, and managed by agencies external to NCPEA—our professional group!

The growth and evolution of preparation programs at the masters, specialist, or doctoral levels, whether site-based, virtual, or hybrid, and existing at a time of reduced institutional resources, has created some justification for exploring:

- How and should NCPEA make available guidance on best practice for concerns such as what is an appropriate program resource base—inputs and operations?
- How would such an internally created role be defined and promulgated?
- How would we develop an understanding or consensus that captures what we believe to be best practice for the development and operations of our programs?

This is not a call for a standards' movement. It is not thought of as something compulsory. It is not a call for placing strait jackets around flexibility, and one of our strengths is program diversity. Few members would accept these constraints or more standards. We would not and could not police such things. Rather, this is just a series of questions that we may wish to examine. These are questions about the role of a professional organization and its willingness to offer guidance to interested members on what best professional practice in program support and operation is considered to be.

Grady, University of Nebraska Lincoln

> If you could step into a time machine and travel back fifty years to the time of your parents or grandparents, you would find the world much changed. There would be no computers and television would be quite new. The cities would appear small and provincial, with only the occasional car and a few big retail chain outlets. Travel back another fifty years and cars disappear from the streets, as do telephones, washing machines and vacuum cleaners from our houses and airplanes from the air. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.11)

When I consider one aspect of the issue presented for comment, I wonder if the proliferation of graduate programs in educational administration makes many of the traditional graduate programs part of Hofstede and Hofstede's time machine analogy. The undergraduate campuses that have embraced the allure of graduate programs are everywhere. Even in the heartland of the United States, the number of colleges that have become universities, seemingly overnight, is astounding.

The attraction for higher education institutions is obvious—revenue, credit hour production, an available market niche, the apparent ease of distance delivery of courses, an online environment that can accommodate large enrollments, inexpensive staffing of courses through use of adjuncts who can be paid minimal stipends, no costly investment in tenure-line faculty, and no need to maintain office space for adjuncts.

The allure for students may include--ease of admission (entrance requirements may not include standardized test scores or demanding grade point averages), accessibility (programs offered online, flexible or minimal class meetings, emphasis on field-based experiences), and accelerated timeline for program completion.

When the institution "owns" the course, syllabus, and class activities, then the course can be taught by "anyone" once the initial development has been completed. If the course is delivered as a very structured experience with limited student—faculty interaction, without development of a community of learners, and without significant research and writing opportunities, course delivery is a management issue not a teaching issue.

Educational administration professors who once said they would have no involvement in online learning have been surprised when they discovered their institutions were proceeding to develop online programs. In these instances, the professors have not been leaders in the change but, often, unwilling participants in making the programs work.

The professoriate is forced to change in response to the proliferation of these programs. Pursuit of student enrollment and meeting student demands for flexibility and accessibility, while maintaining high standards for faculty and program excellence, are clear contemporary challenges. Professors of educational administration must define their work and their programs in powerful ways to compete in the contemporary graduate education marketplace.

Papa, Northern Arizona University

What is a 'virtual program?' Is it simply electronic submission of information? Is it complying with a check list of skills via self-verification? The mission, and goals and objectives of such programs need to be clear and valid. That is, does the program enhance the teaching and learning and research processes?

NCPEA must continually help members explore, the new world. Traditional university preparation, for now, comprises the majority of membership though, perhaps, not so over the next ten years. For the traditional university, the core question might be, "Can only university research produce and expand on theoretical perspectives that continue to inform the field?" The fulltime faculty that meet (synchronous and asynchronous) and research together shape the experiences that drive the practices that develop the new theories.

Today, we are under siege as traditional, scholarly faculty by the professional organizations (NCATE, Secretary of Education, etc.) in support of a broader field that includes for-profit programs. I prefer to not have NCPEA take professional positions as other national organizations are doing to have a voice in Washington politics (NASSP, NAESP, AASA, etc.) as that will further politicize the field. NCPEA, which represents the individual faculty member, must lead in asking all faculty to continue to provide on-going research that informs school practices. The online, pre-shaped one-size curriculum that meets the NCATE standards solely is not acceptable as the final preparation program for school leaders. Today, we know that 20% of all Ph.D.'s defended in 2006-2008 were from for-profit online universities (English & Papa, 2009). Educational leadership faculty must address the question of online for-profit programs or go the way of the dinosaurs.

Wildman, California State University, Bakersfield

Harvard Business Professor Clayton Christensen and colleagues (2008) predict that six years from now computer assisted instruction will be providing individually appropriate instruction for half the K-12 students. Probably, virtual educational administration programs will provide half of the education administration instruction, too. Christensen stated that on-line education is in the early stage of the history of similar "disruptions," such as, when Apple disrupted Digital Equipment Corporation, Toyota disrupted General Motors, Sony disrupted RCA, Canon disrupted Xerox, and Sony disrupted Kodak.

In education, Christenson (2008) sees virtual programs first offering specialized courses (e.g. Arabic) on-line to small, rural, and urban schools, to school districts where budgets have been severely cut, as well as to home-schooled students. Initially, the disruptive pace is slow; then, it steepens dramatically.

As university budgets are cut, on-line programs are seen as a way to cut costs. While a good on-line course takes at least as much faculty time as a face-to-face course, some universities are already running very large numbers through former graduate seminars that had 12 to 15 students, creating a downward spiral in quality.

NCPEA's Connexions project should provide examples of excellent on-line courses, but unless educators and the general public recognize the two sides to education (direct and investigatory), the pressure to replace traditional educational administration programs with on-line test preparation will overwhelm us. In California, a teacher can now read a small booklet, take a test, and get an administrative credential without taking any course work.

Hoyle, Texas A & M University

There remains a growing need to prepare greater numbers of effective school administrators, but observers are concerned about the perceived standardization of both traditional and on-line programs. This penchant for standards/objectives driven leadership education may be diminishing the quality among the 371 programs taught by over 3,000 professors. With a greater number of degree outlets, rigor and quality have become more suspect. Critics contend that the growing number of on-line administration degrees and licensure programs emphasize credit counting rather than crucial practical and theoretical knowledge and skill acquisition. While this critical picture may not be accurate, little research exists in the area of leadership education programming quality to refute such claims. The competition for student enrollments is a primary reason for the growing number of online degree and alternative certification programs. This rapid, uncontrolled growth in cyber leadership preparation has prompted program planners to question the quality and integrity of online degree and licensure programs. Graduates of online programs may be successful in passing the ISLLC licensure examination, but some question if they will be prepared to work in a team setting and grasp the dynamics of school politics and organizations. The unanswered question is, "Can we adequately prepare school leaders by wire?"

In an effort to answer this question, this writer recently served as consultant to a mid-western university's leadership education program for principal preparation. Their enrollments in the master's degree program for principals had slowly dropped, primarily due to other regional universities offering the degree and licensure completely online. Thus, in response to this cyber competition, the following new program is underway. It is a balance of face-to-face on campus and hybrid classes (i.e., one-half online, the other half on campus) and a few select classes are offered only online. The new program is grounded in the standards-based curriculum and research methods, and foundations and supported by an influential advisory team consisting of area school leaders (i.e., superintendents and principals). These area administrators are invited to campus for meetings, dinners with faculty and students, to teach classes, to serve as mentors and to provide internship experiences during the two year program. Each new cohort of students begins in the summer with a three-day academy. The academy includes barbecues, seminars taught by professors, advisory team members and hands-on projects that emphasize building learning communities. This hybrid leadership education model is attractive to prospective students because of the personal attention and mentoring by the faculty and strong collaboration among university faculty and school administrators. These valuable contacts with area school leaders can lead to possible administrative positions upon graduation. Valuable contacts are rare in most online degree or licensure programs.

SUMMARY OF ISSUE #2

Creighton, Virginia Tech University

Achilles and Papa argue for attention to the individual faculty member in providing ongoing research that informs practice (Papa) and strengthens our traditional teaching and learning roles (Achilles). McCarthy warns that without research-based evidence on outcomes and on which types of preparation produce the most effective leaders in terms of graduates' impact on student learning and social development, inferior leadership preparation

alternatives that are less costly may become the norm. All Living Legends repeated their call for NCPEA action:

- NCPEA, in cooperation with other professional organizations, can raise the bar in establishing standards that ALL leadership preparation programs must meet, which should result in the much-needed elimination of some current programs. NCPEA should work with other professional associations to expand program assessment strategies and ensure that they consider factors linked to success as school leaders (McCarthy).
- NCPEA professors need not to "politick," but strengthen the traditional teaching/learning role in traditional education administration programs (Achilles).
- NCPEA, which represents the individual faculty member, must lead in asking all faculty to continue to provide on-going research that informs school practices (Papa).
- NCPEA's Connexions project should provide examples of excellent on-line courses, but unless educators and the general public recognize the two sides to education (direct and investigatory), the pressure to replace traditional educational administration programs with on-line test preparation will overwhelm us (Wildman).
- NCPEA professors of educational administration must define their work and their programs in powerful ways to compete in the contemporary graduate education marketplace (Grady).
- NCPEA should make available guidance on best practices for concerns, such as, what is an appropriate program resource base of inputs and operations? We should develop an understanding and consensus that captures what we believe to be best practices for the development and operation of our programs (Beach).
- NCPEA needs to conduct research on the growing number of on-line administration degrees and licensure programs emphasizing credit counting rather than crucial practical and theoretical knowledge and skill acquisition (Hoyle).

Issue #3 Educational Administration Projection Progress

What are the essential qualities our preparation programs need to consider at the master's level, such as the accoutrements of leadership? What roles and responsibilities should NCPEA have in addressing Levine's (2005) criticism of a proliferation of master's degrees in education administration? Do we believe university research can produce and expand on theoretical perspectives that continue to inform the field?

Papa, Northern Arizona University

I offer six necessary features of good leadership preparation that are beyond the tests and standards set by accrediting bodies or professional organizations. These should be vigorously pursued through continuing theoretical study.

1. Adult Learners
Leader preparation needs to be grounded by theory and practice.
2. Human Agency
We must ensure the future school leader has a varied repertoire. When real life situations need answers for complex issues, our *theories* can guide leaders into the situational, contextual world of real schooling.
3. Ignored Intended Skills
We need to mentor our students, meshing the experience of real school settings where we can learn what not to do, but may not know exactly what to do, and, have the understanding that it is ok and normal to wrestle with complex issues.
4. Intellectual Curiosity
Curiosity in learning and how it is fostered in the school environment is critical for school leaders to develop, understand and apply.
5. Futurity
Our leaders-in-preparation must be exposed to learning frames that go against the grain of current wisdom. Going against the grain may just be the best hero trait we encourage.
6. Imaginativeness
Creativity, inspiration, original, resourceful, visionary, artistry, inventive, ingenuity, clever, are the synonyms to exceptional and effective leadership that no single test can capture and make these human traits accountable in one-size-fits-all approaches.

We must be the inspiration for leaders we are preparing. It takes recognition and commitment to reframe our programs to what we know will deliver the inspiration all students should have.

Achilles, Seton Hall University

At the master's level, Levine (2005) may have, in his haste to advocate for a master's level course following a "new" idea from Great Britain omitted a citation to Paul Pouland's "The Return of the Mayflower" from *Leaders for America's Schools* (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988). So, Levine (2005) in his quest for speed of change may have sacrificed citations for ideas he used.

Wildman, California State University, Bakersfield

Consider what is happening in teacher education. Major foundations, including the Broad Foundation, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education are funding "Teach for America" type programs which include very little foundational education course work and de-professionalize teaching. The National Education Association, as well as the administrator associations should be very concerned and recognize that they need to prioritize the good of their members over their desire to increase their staff development business.

In summary, the problem is much larger than NCPEA. Higher education needs to launch a major public relations effort to inform the public about what faculty do. The public needs to recognize the importance of teaching pre-determined objectives as well as instruction that develops the talents of each student. The public needs to recognize the importance of

faculty research, including research pertinent to the professions which otherwise remain stuck in current procedures.

McCarthy, Indiana University

To produce graduates who can successfully lead schools where students are learning and developing into socially conscious and engaged citizens, leadership preparation programs need to focus on this outcome from recruitment practices through program completion. The importance of rigorous admission standards cannot be overstated. If the pipeline has outstanding and intelligent individuals who are committed to improving education and student learning, the likelihood of producing exemplary school leaders is greatly enhanced. However, far too many educational leadership graduate programs basically have open admissions for those interested in pursuing administrative licensure and/or use criteria that have very little relevance to performance as school leaders. States in conjunction with professional organizations need to support policies that call for the elimination of leadership preparation programs that do not employ selective admissions with the criteria linked to success as school leaders.

In addition to a rigorous admission's process, leadership preparation programs should be outcomes oriented and mission-driven, and the mission should permeate all components of the program. To illustrate the disjunction that often occurs between mission statements and program elements, many preparation programs that assert a mission of promoting leadership for learning actually give little attention to how students learn or to the school leader's role in enhancing student learning. This is disheartening, because the program mission should provide the scaffolding upon which all aspects of the program are built (Murphy, Moorman, & McCarthy, 2009).

Also, it is critical for preparation programs to link coursework with meaningful field experiences to provide practical relevance to what has been learned in the classroom and to facilitate the synthesis of discreet courses into a "coherent, integrated whole" (Murphy, et al., 2009, p. 2194). Authentic field experiences should provide opportunities for candidates to practice moral and ethical dimensions of leadership and to explore various models to achieve meaningful school change.

In their leadership preparation reform efforts, most programs privilege traditional coursework; whereas, they should take all courses off the table and build their curriculum based on their mission, objectives, and outcomes they are trying to achieve. This means that fundamental changes, not modest revisions, are needed in many current leadership preparation programs. I am hopeful that our field can rise to this challenge.

Hoyle, Texas A & M University

NCPEA: In a New Voice (Hoyle & Estes, Eds, 1993) is the title of the first Yearbook of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and the first in our field of study. The introductory chapter set the stage for 26 others written by several "legends" in our discipline. Among these leading authors are Chuck Achilles, Louis Wildman, Jim Guthrie, Mike Martin, David Erlandson, Mike Richardson, Ken Lane, Paul Bredeson, Diane Newby, Henry Peel, Ed Chance, Marilyn Hirth, and Tom Valesky. In Chapter One, Dwaine Estes and I presented four proposals to advance our discipline and the image of educational administration. They are as follows:

1. Promote quality in administration.
2. Stress ethical behavior among NCPEA members and its clients and the students and practicing administrators they serve.
3. Promote quality use of technology.
4. Become builders of dreams for American children.

While these four tenets are just as viable today as they were in 1993, I will focus on tenet three-"Promote quality use of technology." We wrote that school districts are spending an increasingly large amount on technology to improve student performance, but unfortunately, these dollars have not resulted in expected gains. The reasons for this dilemma in 1993 are the same in 2010—little involvement by teachers in the selection of the technology. This lack of buy-in on the part of teachers results in wasting available valuable assets. Also, training is insufficient (Hoyle & Estes, 1993). In 1993, we challenged professors to teach principals how to provide leadership to incorporate technology in their schools. Also, we urged teachers to learn the appropriate instructional goals for students to learn through the use of technology and establish benchmarks and assessment techniques to ascertain whether students are actually learning. Finally, we charged our professional colleagues in educational administration to lead their graduate students toward quality implementation of technology through modeling new virtual methods.

We closed the chapter by writing:

> It is clearly a time for optimism about the discipline/professional field of educational administration and for NCPEA. More and better students are enrolling in preparation programs. Research reveals an overall positive student perception of the quality of administrator preparation, but it is imperative that NCPEA members take the lead in reforming the ways in which school administrators view themselves as change agents. (Hoyle & Estes, 1993, p. 8)

Today, professors must embrace the latest and best applications of technology to enhance on-line and classroom teaching and add virtual/global knowledge to enrich research agendas.

Optimism was high in 1993 to make educational administration a proud and powerful field of study. It remains high in 2010, but the overwhelming demand to manage virtual leadership preparation is perhaps the greatest challenge faced today. We must find the "golden mean" to balance our teaching strategies for future school leaders with unconditional love in a virtual world.

Beach, Alabama State University

Upon graduation, few of our master's level students will walk directly into a true leadership position. With this in mind, and remembering that one of Rosemary Papa's (nd) "Accoutrements of Leadership" attributes speaks to futurity and going against the grain, it may be appropriate to consider how our programs address the future. This seems to make sense for several reasons. First, the role that each student will play will be different from state to state, district to district, and from now into our graduate's future. Also, many graduates are entrenched in the district in which they will provide leadership services and may practice for two or more years prior to obtaining any administrative appointment. It will likely take years

before they are awarded their initial principalship or central office position. During that hiatus, most graduates who genuinely seek administrative positions are aware that they must "go along to get along," which can mean that going against the grain can be quite counterproductive. The ability to hold one's values patiently until an appropriate opportunity for their expression arises, even when being immersed in a counter culture, may be a good candidate for a preparation program goal—an accoutrement.

Second, at this point in time, education appears to be undergoing a financial retrenchment mitigated by short-term applications of deficit spending. While, as a nation, we are not about to collapse, our schools and colleges may lose a year or more in development. Many young, untenured teachers have been put at risk, with further retrenchments likely. We can expect a rise in class size and reductions in elective courses as curriculum contractions respond to fiscal concerns. Our programs may well be producing graduates for fewer positions, in somewhat diminished institutions. Would a contracting future strangle program expansion and development, limiting opportunities for university graduates, and thereby, inadvertently mitigate Levine's proliferation concerns or/and just speed up the race to the bottom? Are we adjusting programs and preparing leaders to handle such uncertainty or change?

At the same time, and a third issue noted above, the nature of education seems to be refocusing away from the affective dimensions of learning and toward more technologically-dependent instruction. In the 2006–2007 academic year, approximately 70% of 4 year institutions offered online degree programs and postsecondary education "offered 11,240 complete online degrees and enrolled over 12,156,000 students" (NCES, 2008, pp. 9–11). What does this data imply regarding future teacher preparation programs? If this approach to instructional delivery descends extensively into P-12 education, what will educational leadership become if half of our P-12 students are no longer physically at the school? Is an itinerant assistant principal's role coming? Will teaching become far more dependent on the teacher's role being a facilitator from afar, pointing the way to online media resources that become an Orwellian version of direct instruction? What implications does this have for supervision and evaluation of those teachers who also may not be physically present in the school during instruction? What does educational leadership become when the classroom gives way to an Internet-based information exchange? Here, I disagree with Dr. Papa. Such frames will not go against the grain of current practice; they will likely eclipse this practice. Are our candidates being made ready?

Grady, University of Nebraska Lincoln

It may be time to take a few pages from the past as guides for the preparation of educational leaders. One old, but valuable, source is the *Flexner Report*. It was prepared by Abraham Flexner (1866–1959) who spent 19 years of his career as a secondary school teacher and a principal in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1910, he completed *Medical Education in the United States and Canada* (known as the *Flexner Report*). The report was prepared for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. At the time Flexner completed the report, many medical schools were "profit centers" rather than "education centers." Medical schools, at that time, did not have clear goals and standards. The publication of the *Flexner Report* is linked to the reform of medical education. Many medical schools closed their doors after the publication of the report.

The transformation that occurred following the publication of the *Flexner Report* led to the emergence of medicine as a profession. Aspects of the profession include: a profession

has an organized body of knowledge; professionals police their own membership and set their own standards; there is a means of enforcing the 'rules' of the profession; professionals continue to advance their knowledge of the field throughout their careers; and, professionals have autonomy (Grady, 1993). Admission to medical school became highly selective following the publication of the *Flexner Report*.

Perhaps, we should host a reading circle using the *Flexner Report* or possibly Flexner's biography, *Iconoclast: Abraham Flexner and a Life of Learning*, as our guide. The contemporary proliferation of master's programs in educational administration certainly resembles the "profit center" approach to education that plagued the medical schools before 1910.

SUMMARY OF ISSUE #3

Creighton, Virginia Tech University

The Living Legends' responses to the sudden increase in numbers of programs (proliferation) though varied, were more similar than different. Beach went right to the data reporting the extent of such proliferation. In the 2006–2007 academic year, approximately 70% of four year institutions offered online degree programs and postsecondary education offered 11,240 complete online degrees and enrolled over 12,156,000 students. With a reference to how the medical field faced proliferation in their field, Grady posits that the contemporary proliferation of master's programs in educational administration certainly resembles the "profit center" approach to education that plagued the medical schools before 1910. McCarthy sees as most problematic that far too many educational leadership graduate programs have open admissions for those interested in pursuing administrative licensure and/or use criteria that have very little relevance to performance as school leaders.

Though written in 1993, Hoyle and Estes could easily be referring to the current state of affairs when they stated:

> It is clearly a time for optimism about the discipline/professional field of
> educational administration and for NCPEA. More and better students are
> enrolling in preparation programs. Research reveals an overall positive student
> perception of the quality of administrator preparation, but it is imperative that
> NCPEA members take the lead in reforming the ways in which school
> administrators view themselves as change agents. (Hoyle & Estes, 1993, p. 8)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In my 2009 Living Legend address to the NCPEA membership, I made reference to Roger Martin (2007) and his theory of "integrative thinking." Let me suggest that the eight Living Legends, who you read here, are truly integrative thinkers. By refusing to accept unpleasant trade-offs and conventional options, integrative thinkers are able to find creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Furthermore, these eight see the *ride* as the salient issue.

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Cohort Cohesiveness or Collective Chaos?
Groupthink Phenomenon in the Preparation of Educational Leaders

Marla Susman Israel
Judith Docekal
Beverly B. Kasper

INTRODUCTION

The cohort model of preparing educational leaders purports to establish collaborative, collegial learning communities and empower individuals to form future cooperative partnerships in the schools that they hope to lead (Basom & Yerks, 2001; Browne-Ferrigno, 2001). However, the literature does not speak to one possible negative side of cohorts—groupthink. Groupthink results in: overestimations of the group's power and morality; closed mindedness; and pressure toward uniformity (Forsyth, 2010; Janis, 1972; 1982; 1989; Sunstein, 2009). Just as established school personnel may find transformational change difficult (Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2003), so, too, might cohorts who spend upwards of 18 months to three years working and learning together. Through a qualitative on-line survey, full-time and adjunct faculty, at one private midwestern university, were asked to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort model and the non-cohort model in the preparation of future educational leaders. Data were analyzed for emergent themes and patterns using Janis' (1972; 1982; 1989) definition of groupthink as a conceptual framework. Data suggested that groupthink is common and can be quite problematic for optimal leadership preparation. The cohort model is a popular instructional delivery model for leadership preparation in universities. By using the conceptual framework of groupthink as a way to understand possible problems within this leadership preparation model, this study suggested strategies to address groupthink in cohorts strengthening the promise of this leadership preparation model's capacity to support student success.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Cohort Delivery System as a Model for Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The cohort delivery system has become the model of choice for delivering university leadership preparation programs at both the master's and doctoral levels. The reasons for this model development are driven by both economics and pedagogy (Murphy, 2002). Cohort programs with their structured course sequence and predetermined start and end date provide students and universities with an efficient and economic mode of delivery. With a fixed beginning and ending point and a fixed sequence of courses, the cohort course content can be customized to fit the students' future career goals.

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Additionally, in a desire to forge partnerships between universities and local school districts, leadership preparation cohorts are an organizational delivery structure that can provide natural linkages (i.e., location, selection of students, and customization of curriculum) between a university and a partner school district, as well as, provide the partner school district a source for internally grown administrators (Hatch, 2009). Furthermore, cohorts, by their very nature of being a fixed group of students learning together over an extended period of time, provide ample opportunities to create a true learning community that is built upon a constructivist approach to learning where theories of adult learning serve as the foundation for the learning communities (Basom & Yerkes, 2001; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many; 2006). For purposes of this study, the following definitions applied:

     A cohort is a group of students admitted at the same time to a program leading to a degree with a predetermined beginning and end. Cohorts are not fluid; the same students begin and complete their coursework at the same time. The schedule is planned. New students are not admitted to a cohort once classes have begun.

     A non-cohort program is comprised of students who apply for entrance to the university through the general admission and acceptance procedures. Students determine their own course sequence. Using these aforementioned definitions, these researchers sought to understand the perceptions of faculty who had taught in both cohort and non-cohort models to understand the strengths and drawbacks of the cohort instructional delivery model for preparing educational leaders.

     Work burden and separation from university life are often cited as challenges within the cohort model (Donaldson & Petersen, 2007). Research has also briefly mentioned that the cohort can take on a "life of its own" and challenge the faculty's method of instructional delivery (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). The researchers wanted to explore the meaning behind the term "a life of its own" using the conceptual framework of groupthink.

Groupthink as a Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Benefits and Drawbacks of the Cohort Instructional Delivery Model

     The culture of an organization is the pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems (Forsyth, 2010; Schein, 1992). A positive organizational culture reinforces the core beliefs and behaviors that a leader desires while weakening the values and actions the leader rejects (Collins, 2005; Gronn, 2003; Kaufman, 2002). Hopefully, over time, the leader can transform the organizational culture in such a way that the organization positively achieves its goals. In educational institutions, this transformation should optimally lead to increased student success (Rown, Correnti, Miller, & Camburn, 2009). The research literature details ample accounts of transformational change in schools where the educational leader builds a learning community based upon shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Schmoker, 2006;).

     One of the premises for the cohort model has been this idea of organizational culture and learning communities. Research details that the cohort experience produces greater interpersonal relationships, reflective abilities, and group learning skills—hallmarks of a successful learning community (Barnett et al., 2000; DuFour et al., 2006). Additionally, Maher (2005) suggested that the cohort format has the ability to fulfill students' need for affiliation in an educational context, and the development of strong emotional ties resulting in positive student outcomes and an increased sense of emotional support. Miller and Irby (1999), in one of the first few doctoral cohort studies published, found that the cohort structure provided empathy, support, camaraderie, and produced a noncompetitive

environment through which all members could gain strength. They determined that individual cohort members served various roles such as encourager or energizer, and of particular relevance to our study, Miller and Irby discovered that when competition was set aside and feedback was provided, a strong cohesiveness among the cohort members began to emerge. Other studies, however, noted that some students had difficulty collaborating with certain personality types over a long period of time and that sometimes group members were intellectually mismatched. Furthermore, while cohorts may provide an initial "comfort zone" in the development of roles, these same roles may eventually result in stagnation where students are no longer challenged to grow and become boxed into intellectual and social characters that are sanctioned by the cohort members (Drury & Reicher, 1999; Teitel, 1997).

In a school learning community, an important factor for sustained change is an effective, consistent educational leader (Fullan, 2001; Reeves, 2006; Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004). However, in a cohort, the leader (i.e., the course professor) changes with every new course. Might these aforementioned positive effects of building a learning community within the cohort experience produce challenges to learning when the leader (the course instructor) changes every semester? Could this "life of its own" phenomenon be understood using the conceptual framework of groupthink? Furthermore, if this challenge within cohorts could be understood through the conceptual framework of groupthink, might this conceptual framework provide some resolutions to this problem?

Janis (1972) stated that groupthink occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because group pressures lead to a deterioration of "mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment" (p. 9). Examples of groupthink occur in politics (the numerous ill-fated decisions to go to war), science (the Challenger disaster) economics (the stock market crises), and in public schooling (the questionable compliance activities of educational administrators with high-stakes testing). Groupthink manifests itself within the individuals in the group through the following behaviors: illusion of invulnerability; collective rationalization; belief in inherent morality; stereotyped views of out-groups; direct pressure on dissenters; self-censorship; illusion of unanimity; and, self-appointed mindguards (Alhlfinger & Esser, 2001; Baron, 2005; Janis, 1972; 1982; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Kamau, & Harorimana, 2008; Moorhead, Neck, & West, 1998; Street & Anthony, 1997).

Janis' work on groupthink has been both exemplified and vilified within the literature (Esser, 1998; Paulus, 1998; Peterson, Owens, Tetlick, Fan, & Martoraana, 1998; Turner & Pratkanis, 1998). Many have tried to replicate the work by applying the conceptual framework to more recent events in politics and world-affairs (Hart, 1998; Kramer, 1998; Raven, 1998). Often, researchers concluded that it is difficult to strictly apply Janis' constructs of groupthink behavior to the actual decision-making processes and outcomes of the group (Ahlfinger & Esser, 2001; Fuller & Aldag, 1998). Yet, for purposes of this study, especially when attempting to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort model, it is appropriate to specifically delineate the antecedents that may pre-dispose a group, cohort, to the groupthink phenomenon. Schafer and Crichlow (1996) specifically developed and refined a set of operational definitions of the antecedents of groupthink to consider when analyzing a group and its subsequent information processing assumptions and outcomes. Schafer and Crinchlow postulated that these antecedents of groupthink are the following: "group insulation; lack of tradition of impartial leadership; lack of tradition of methodological procedures; group homogeneity; short time constraint for decision-making; recent failure; high personal stress; overestimation of the group; close-mindedness; and pressures toward uniformity" (p. 418).

When reviewing these antecedents, the issues of group insulation, group homogeneity, close-mindedness and pressures toward uniformity speak to the issue of diversity of the group

or more specifically, the lack thereof. This issue of diversity of membership and experience is one of great importance in educational leadership research within the domain of human resources (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Norton, 2008; Stronge, Gareis, & Little, 2006; Young, 2008). The need to specifically recruit and hire a diverse teaching staff and then provide this staff with professional development for a diverse student body has been described as a best practice for meeting the needs of an ever-diverse society. Additionally, as leadership preparation programs continue to be re-constructed, the need for diversity within student composition and field experiences are seen as necessary components for a 21st century leadership preparation experience to be meaningful (Illinois School Leadership Task Force, 2008). One wonders if safeguarding for these antecedents of groupthink, in particular when looking to issues of diversity of the group and field experiences, might be beneficial for leadership preparation programs that use a cohort model for instructional delivery.

Therefore, this research study used the conceptual framework of groupthink—along with the notions of groupthink's antecedents and subsequent outcomes—as a conceptual framework for categorizing participants' responses to a qualitative questionnaire concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort delivery model for educational leadership preparation.

RESEARCH STUDY

Research Questions

The researchers sought to understand the perceptions of faculty who had taught in both cohort and non-cohort models to understand the following:

1. What are the strengths of the cohort instructional delivery model for preparing educational leaders?
2. What are the drawbacks of the cohort instructional delivery model for preparing educational leaders?
3. What suggestions do university faculty have for strengthening the cohort instructional delivery model for preparing educational leaders?

For purposes of this research question, the following definitions were employed: *A cohort* is a group of students admitted at the same time to a program leading to a degree with a predetermined beginning and end. Cohorts are not fluid; the same students begin and complete their coursework at the same time. The schedule is planned. New students are not admitted to a cohort once classes have begun. *A non-cohort* program is comprised of students who apply for entrance to the university through the general admission and acceptance procedures. Students determine their own course sequence.

METHODOLOGY

An on-line questionnaire was developed based upon Janis' (1972; 1982; 1989) aforementioned definition of groupthink. The ten-item instrument and procedures were approved by the university's Internal Review Board. The questionnaire was then sent via e-mail to both full-time and adjunct faculty (n = 48) in program areas that prepare students for educational leadership at the master's and doctoral levels. Of the 48 professors invited to participate, 30 responded, for a response rate of 62%. Of that group, 23 (48%) provided

responses to all questions while seven provided responses to only a portion of the questionnaire items. Twenty-eight of the 30 respondents or 93.3% reported having taught classes that were of the cohort design. The discussion will be based on the information obtained from the aforementioned 28 respondents.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire first defined a cohort group and a non-cohort group. Based on these definitions, the participant was then asked to reply to a series of open-ended questions. In particular, the participant was asked to identify and give examples of the strengths and drawbacks of both the cohort and the non-cohort model of leadership preparation. Participants were then asked three direct questions as to whether or not they had experienced or observed specific behaviors in a cohort model that were identified as indicators of groupthink using Janis' definition of groupthink with specific criteria, i.e., an overestimation of the group's power and morality, demonstrate closed-mindedness, and demonstrate pressure toward uniformity. A sample of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.

Data Presentation of Respondent Characteristics

Twenty-eight respondents (university instructors) reported having taught classes that were part of a cohort group; 26 respondents had also taught classes that were not in a cohort group. As illustrated in the following graph, the largest number of respondents, 8, taught between 1 and 3 classes each, while 6 respondents taught between 3 and 5 classes each. Four respondents taught between 5 and 7 classes each, and 3 respondents conducted between 7 and 9 classes each. Two respondents taught between 9 and 11 classes each, and two respondents taught between 11 and 13 classes each. Finally, one respondent indicated that he had taught 14 classes to cohort groups. The number of classes taught in a cohort by the individual respondents ranged from 1 to 14, and totaled 134 classes, as itemized in Table 1.

Table 1. Total number of classes taught in a cohort.

Classes	Professors	Classes Taught
1–3	8	12
3–5	6	21
5–7	4	22
7–9	3	23
9–11	2	19
11–13	2	23
13–15	1	14
Total	26	134

Questions 3 and 4 asked the participants to identify the strengths and drawbacks, respectively, when teaching in a cohort model, and questions 9 and 10 asked the participants to identify the strengths and drawbacks, respectively, when teaching in a non-cohort model.

The responses provided themes that were then categorized into the areas of "General," "Student Oriented," "Advantage/Drawback to the University," and "Advantage/Drawback to the Professor." One may note that the "Student Oriented" category could be further analyzed as either academic or affective in nature.

Strengths Identified by University Instructors

Strengths of the cohort model identified by university instructors were attributed to the predetermined class schedule with a set program of courses and timelines, which lent itself to better academic counseling. This allowed students to schedule their other personal and professional commitments well in advance so as to not interfere with their schedule of classes. One of the strengths of the non-cohort model was that students could schedule classes at their own pace and in a time frame that could consider their other personal and professional responsibilities. Thus, one can see that depending on the individual student, each model had its own set of scheduling advantages.

Strengths of the Cohort Model and Non-Cohort Models

While there where many student oriented strengths in the cohort model were noted by the university instructors, some strengths were noted by multiple respondents. The most frequently expressed characteristics were that students were supportive of one another; they assisted and learned from one another; and they were comfortable working in groups with each other. Similar statements made by two or more instructors were: they formed a cohesive group; they were able to build relationships; they knew each other well; they developed a sense of community; and they were more comfortable speaking in class. Additional interpersonal strengths expressed were that there was a predictable culture and that camaraderie developed as a unique group identity was built.

Student oriented strengths of an academic nature that were noted included: students felt more connected to the university as they progressed in their program; the students had a common knowledge base as they progressed in their program; students became more comfortable asking professors for help; the effort of the students was consistent; and the students were able to apply theoretical concepts from class to their work setting.

The strengths cited of the non-cohort model by multiple university instructors were: new students brought new thoughts and ideas, and a better variety of ideas; the diversity of students from other disciplines (counseling, psychology, or special education) allowed all students to have exposure to differing experiences in the field of education; and, new students added to the insights of the group. It was also felt that students in a non-cohort model had ownership and took responsibility for their own education. In addition, new (different) students set a higher bar in student projects and presentations, and the class as a whole benefited from this. One instructor noted that non-cohort students tended to be stronger students in that they were not looking for the path of least resistance.

Because there were more class sessions in a non-cohort model, instructors felt that the non-cohort format gave students more time to complete readings, assignments, and be able to collaborate on group projects. Also, it was stated that students did not fatigue as easily with shorter, more frequent classes. Class sessions were typically two and one-half hours in a non-cohort model and ranged from four to seven hours in a cohort model. In addition to scheduling, another general strength noted was the ability for students to have increased networking opportunities by meeting more students from other school districts. It should be

noted that at this university there were two different cohort models in use. One cohort scheduling model consisted of two courses per semester with each course meeting for four Friday night/Saturday morning sessions per semester. The second model also consisted of two courses per semester with each course meeting for one three-hour session for twelve weeks. On campus courses at this university typically met 2.5 hours once each week for a 14 or 15 week semester. The questionnaire did not ask the respondents which type of cohort model or models they taught.

Drawbacks of the Cohort and Non-Cohort Models Identified by the Students

With regard to scheduling, drawbacks of the cohort model were also identified, such as, a lack of individual course choice or choice in the time. In addition, length of classes was typically longer because of a compression of the schedule and fewer class meetings. Students became easily fatigued as a result of the longer class time. Another issue identified by the instructors had to do with students consistently being late to class due to work commitments and travel times. This interfered with the progress of the class and student learning.

Additional general drawbacks that were identified in the cohort model had to do with interpersonal relationships and the lack of diversity within the class groups. Specifically, networking opportunities were greatly reduced because students did not meet a wider group of peers who offered differing opinions and made broader contributions to discussions. When students in a cohort group were from only one or two districts, there was less diversity with respect to professional experiences, and the outlook of what other districts had to offer became too narrow. What was clearly expressed as a drawback was the fact that students met frequently (twice a week for two years) and that they became too familiar with one another, and they knew each other's districts too well.

Instructors noted that interpersonal situations could become a drawback within the cohort model. Student opinion-makers emerged and could dominate the group. Additionally, if a difficult student dominated the cohort, this could minimize the learning of the other students. When this occurred, the group dynamics for the entire sequence of the program was difficult. The dynamics of some groups were such that if one or more people did not get along with the group, they were excluded, even shunned. Three years of shunning was considered by the university instructors to be a hardship for a student to endure. Toward the end of the program, students grew tired of each other and character traits that were previously ignored became extremely annoying. In situations where students worked in the same school and there were conflicts from that environment, those conflicts could carry over into the cohort class, which disrupted the group.

The drawbacks of the non-cohort model were articulated by the respondents as a perception that group support was generally absent. Also, students might have a lower comfort level in classes because their peers changed from class to class.

Strengths to the University

Cohort model. Beginning with a group of students for prescribed courses and a defined timeline was and is an efficient model for the university. Because the schedule is determined, enrollment is guaranteed, and the university can appropriately plan for instructors and classroom space. Specialized faculty can be hired to teach to their strengths. When classes were held off-campus, the host school district could provide additional resources and field experiences. The university was able to tailor the curriculum and support structures for

each group. It was noted by instructors that degree completion rates of cohort groups were above the national average.

Non-cohort model. Only one response was categorized as a strength to the university in the non-cohort model. The strength was that on-campus classes offered greater opportunities for technology use and library resources.

Drawbacks to the University

Cohort model. Inability to use university resources was cited as the major drawback of the cohort model in this category. Students rarely visited the university library and did not avail themselves to the vast array of materials and reference opportunities. Often instructors perceived that the cohort groups did not view themselves as part of the university when classes were held off-campus.

Non-cohort model. One drawback for the university within the non-cohort model had to do with scheduling of classes. Because of inconsistent advising, students might take classes in the wrong sequence or have to wait an extra semester to take their final class due to departmental scheduling. The other drawback cited by the university instructors was the possibility that there might be lower degree completion rate when students plan their own coursework.

Strengths for the Professor in Cohort Versus Non-Cohort Models

Instructors completing the questionnaire listed that a strength of the cohort model for the professor was that the professor knew that there was a common knowledge base among the students. The professor could promote common writing and research skills. Case studies used as applications of content could be customized to fit the particular "niche" of the group. When the professor taught more than one course to the same group, he or she gained a greater awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the cohort group and could tailor the curriculum appropriately. Students were also more comfortable in asking for help from the professor.

University instructors noted that with a non-cohort model, the professor could establish the tone of the class—there was not a pre-existing underlying climate. The professors appreciated the challenge of developing camaraderie and community among the classmates that did not previously exist. In the non-cohort model, with the variety of students in classes, students typically did not know each other or had only limited contact. Due to the variation in classmates, students could not predict ahead of time what those classmates would contribute in a discussion. One instructor noted that with a new mix of students, high course expectations could be communicated with a positive response from the students.

Drawbacks for the Professor in the Cohort Versus Non-Cohort Models

Multiple university instructors responded that a drawback to the cohort model was that students had already formed an identity as a group and that it could be difficult to change the dynamics of the group. With this identity, students had a system of working in groups or dividing work that did not allow for new understandings of the content or one another. It was a challenge for the professor to mix students for group work. Also noted was that as the cohort's time together increased, students grew tired of working with the same colleagues.

Drawbacks of the cohort model for the professor also included scheduling issues. Because of the time structures of the courses, there were incidences when there was not sufficient time to do the personal construction of meaning that was needed to grow and gain knowledge in graduate level coursework. This was exacerbated when students allowed personal or professional obligations to interfere with timely arrival and/or attendance.

Multiple participants responded that a drawback of the non-cohort model was variation in experiential levels of students, which impacted the professor's instructional strategies. For another respondent, compensating for the time it took a non-cohort class to meld as a group and be able to work and learn together was noted as a drawback of the non-cohort model. Enrollment posed two issues to the professor: one was that class sizes were generally larger in the non-cohort model, and the other was that the very occurrence of the class was directly dependent upon student enrollment.

LIMITATIONS

Denzin (1998) wrote that the researcher faces the difficult and challenging task of making sense of what has been learned and calls it the art of interpretation. He further stated that the writer attempts to stay out of the way and allow the data to speak for itself, but that it is impossible, for all writing is interpretive. Experience and its meanings are filtered through the researchers,' not the subjects' eyes.

Each of the authors has taught leadership preparation courses in both the cohort and non-cohort models. Because of their experiences, the conceptual framework for this study was formed. With that being said, the authors acknowledge that to remain totally unbiased is difficult at best. However, it should also be said that the authors are aware of the potential for bias and took steps to counter this by having discussion about the initial questionnaire and the subsequent responses. This type of self reflection and self-awareness is an integral part of making claims to knowledge (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2009).

DISCUSSION

Groupthink manifests itself within groups through the following behaviors: illusion of invulnerability; collective rationalization; belief in inherent morality; stereotyped views of out-groups; direct pressure on dissenters; self-censorship; illusion of unanimity; and self-appointed 'mindguards' (Alhlfinger & Esser, 2001; Baron, 2005; Janis, 1972; 1982; 1989; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Kamau, & Harorimana, 2008; Moorhead, Neck, & West, 1998; Street & Anthony, 1997; Sunstein, 2009). This research study used groupthink as a conceptual framework for categorizing participant responses to a questionnaire concerning the strengths and drawbacks of the cohort delivery model for educational leadership preparation. While Janis enumerated eight behaviors as components of groupthink, this research examined only three: overestimation of the group's power and morality; closed-mindedness; and pressure toward uniformity. The characteristics of the other components blend and can become intertwined with the characteristics of the three components that were examined. Using inductive analysis to generate contextually relevant themes grounded in the conceptual framework of groupthink, a majority of instructor respondents listed groupthink behaviors as challenges to teaching within the cohort experience that were not evident in their non-cohort experience.

These data suggested that groupthink behaviors, manifested in an overestimation of the group's power and morality; closed-mindedness; and pressure toward uniformity, do

occur in cohort delivery models. These behaviors are not productive for building robust, engaging adult learning environments (DuFour et. al.,2006). Furthermore, these groupthink behaviors, exhibited in the cohort delivery model, could prove to be extremely discouraging to aspiring leaders in educational leadership preparation programs. Professors should acknowledge this possibility and help the group to understand determents of group think.

IMPLICATIONS

As the profession of educational leadership preparation critically examines current educational leadership programs, the use of the cohort model will be part of this discussion, as it has for the last several years (Barnett et al., 2000; Basom & Yerkes, 2001; Covey, 2009; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Donaldson & Petersen, 2007; Norris, Barnett, Basom, & Yerkes, 1996). The majority of the research points to the strengths of the cohort model for preparing school leaders (Barnett et al., 2000; Hatch 2009; Fullen, 2009; New Leaders for New Schools, 2008). Indeed, Norris, Barnett, Basom, and Yerkes (1996) studied the viability of the cohort model as a training ground for building transformational leadership skills in future school leaders. Basom and Yerkes (2001) continued this discussion suggesting that theories of adult learning serve as the underpinnings for the cohort model. This collective research views the cohort model as an effective vehicle in which future school leaders experience, learn, and practice the craft of establishing a learning community—a necessary skill of an effective school leader.

However, if universities and programs of educational leadership preparation are to serve their constituents well, this research suggests that when the cohort model is used, professors should be aware of the possibility of groupthink occurring within their cohort groups. The research findings further suggest that consideration of this phenomenon be included in departmental discussions when planning for the implementation of a cohort program. Implementing the cohort model is more than simply assigning faculty to teach a course or two to a group of students who happen to meet at an off-campus site and have a prescribed sequence of courses. The success of the implementation and the teaching of the cohort cannot be left to chance (Greenlee & Karanxha, 2008; Young, Fuller, Brewer, Carpenter, & Mansfield, 2007). Teitel (1997) highlighted the need for increased collaboration among faculty to help professors understand what the cohort has done before a new class starts. This could also result in a greater sensitivity to classroom dynamics and also be more responsive to the students.

Faculty assigned to cohorts should read and discuss the body of research on cohorts in educational leadership preparation programs, both the strengths and drawbacks, and develop an overall learning plan for the cohort, both students and faculty. Faculty should become fully informed about their academic development from the student's perspective, in that they may better predict and respond to potential difficulties experienced within the cohort (Illinois Council of Professor of Education Administration, 2008; Maher, 2005).

Use of the cohort model is an opportunity for the faculty involved to collaboratively work as a team modeling both the content and the process of a learning community (Basom & Yerkes, 2001). In preparation for new classes within a cohort, Maher (2005) suggested that faculty obtain feedback from students regarding previous classes and on the cohort as a whole. This type of communication would reinforce the role of the instructor having responsibility for the delivery of course content, and, perhaps, diminish the tendency for students to negotiate the length or number of assignments, thus circumventing the possibility of the group developing an overestimation of their power or becoming close-minded.

Additionally, planning for cohort instruction is an opportunity for faculty to learn the signs of groupthink as well as how to use groupthink breaching strategies to provide optimal learning for future educational leaders. Within groupthink literature, strategies are provided for breaching this mindset of overestimation of the group's power and morality; closed-mindedness; and pressure toward uniformity. Such strategies include but are not limited to the following:

- Schedule regular debriefing sessions with students to discuss cohort interactions, identifying and addressing such issues as unproductive group patterns and what type of decisions should be made at the cohort level (Maher, 2005; Teitel, 1997);
- The leader should assign the role of critical evaluator to each member;
- One or more experts should be invited to each meeting on a staggered basis and encouraged to challenge views of the members;
- The leader should make sure that a sizeable block of time is set aside to survey warning signals of groupthink (Griffen, 1997).
- At least one member should be given the role of devil's advocate (to question assumptions and plans)

With the current proliferation of educational leadership cohorts, it behooves the leaders of university school leadership preparation programs to look closely at the research and be mindful of the strengths and the drawbacks of the cohort model. If we do not, then rather than "fix" the problem of preparation of ineffective school leaders, we as a profession will exacerbate it, for as Quintilian said in 94 AD, *imitatio*, modeling is the strongest form of teaching.

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Appendix A

Cohort Experiences Questionnaire

For purposes of this study, the following definitions apply:

A **cohort** is a group of students admitted at the same time to a program leading to a degree with a predetermined beginning and end. Cohorts are not fluid; the same students begin and complete their coursework at the same time. The schedule is planned. New students are not admitted to a cohort once classes have begun.

A **non-cohort** program is comprised of students who apply for entrance to the university through the general admission and acceptance procedures. Students determine their own course sequence.

Using the above definitions, please respond to the following questions:

1. In your teaching experience, have you taught a class that was part of a cohort? _____Yes _____No

2. If the answer to #1 is "Yes", how many cohort groups have you taught? _____

3. In thinking about your teaching experiences, and using the above definitions, what strengths would you identify when teaching in the cohort model?

4. In thinking about your teaching experiences, and using the above definitions, what drawbacks would you identify when teaching in the cohort model?

5. When teaching in a cohort model, have you observed/experienced the students demonstrating an overestimation of the group's power and morality? If so, please give examples.

6. When teaching in a cohort model, have you observed/experienced the students demonstrating closed-mindedness? If so, please give examples.

7. When teaching in a cohort model, have you observed/experienced the students demonstrating pressure toward uniformity? If so, please give examples.

8. Have you taught non-cohort classes?   _____Yes   _____No

9. In thinking about your teaching experiences, and using the above definitions, what strengths would you identify when teaching in the non-cohort model?

10. In thinking about your teaching experiences, and using the above definitions, what drawbacks would you identify when teaching in the non-cohort model?

Revisiting and Redesigning a Faculty-Developed
Team Instructional Model

Patricia Ann Marcellino

At the 2009 Annual Conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), Dr. Fenwick English (2009), a Distinguished Professor and former superintendent and principal, advised academicians and administrative practitioners in his keynote speech to widen the scope of their scholarship by including perspectives from other disciplines in their research. Dr. English claimed that currently there is stagnation in the field of education leadership, and debate among scholars is almost non-existent. The concepts of prediction, control and rational models are emphasized, while research explorations that delve into the complexities of human agency are only minimally considered.

Academically, education and business share a similar knowledge base. Concepts developed by Deming (1994), Drucker (1999); Katzenbach and Smith (2003) and Senge (2006) are cross-disciplinary and accepted in both fields. Senge (2006), a business academic, has written about the complexity of human agency, and he recommends expansion into the development of teams or professional learning communities among school stakeholders. A myriad of team variables has been researched at the university level, primarily within business disciplines (Allie & Beam, 1998; Bacon, Stewart, Stewart-Belle, 1998; Baldwin, Bedell, & Johnson, 1997; Bolton, 1999; Freeman, 1996; Goltz, Hietapelto, Reinsch, & Tyrell, 2008; Klimek, Ritzenhein, &Sullivan, 2008; Lightner, Bober, & Willi, 2007; McKendall, 2000; Nowak, Miller, & Washburn, 1996; O'Neil & Hopkins, 2002), which seems to be transferable to the field of educational leadership.

Pink (2005) claimed that students need to learn leadership skills that are based on the concept of "right brained thinking." The right brain focuses on big picture concepts, creativity and holistic application. Houston, Blankstein and Cole (2007) stated, "Teachers need to stretch their students' thinking and "get out of the box!" (p.5). Rather than focusing on a single individual as leader, research studies on leadership now have been widened to include the sharing of leadership among individuals who are working in a team format (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Polzer, 2003). Green (2010) stated, "School leadership is becoming more facilitative and distributive in nature, necessitating the sharing of power and responsibility" (p. 57). Citing Gardner (1990), Green noted that the idea of shared responsibility is becoming "the key to effective leadership in schools" (p.57).

According to Kline (1999) and Thompson (2000), teams should be formed when the objective is to problem-solve and develop creative solutions. The Internet allows students to interact in virtual teams (Lipnack & Stamps, 1997). Moreover, academics posit that individual growth will occur more quickly in teams as adults interact, discuss and influence one another to adapt and change (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Senge, 2006). Therefore, if one follows the advice of the prognosticators listed, then university professors who teach leadership need to become aware of other disciplines, harness the power of the Internet, work with groups and teams, emphasize human agency in their research and instructional practices, and highlight the skills of problem-solving, creativity and shared responsibility in their university classes.

Patricia Ann Marcellino, Adelphi University

PROBLEM

When the team process works, team members feel a sense of satisfaction, energy and camaraderie that is a testament to the extraordinary power of teams. They become "hot groups" as they are propelled beyond the capability of each individual team member (Leavitt & Lipman-Blumen, l995). But when adult individuals interact in teams, they do not always have positive team experiences (Bolman & Deal, l997; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Kline, 1999; Kling, 2000; Marcellino, 2006; Pacanowsky, l995; Senge, 2006). An individual versus team tension seems to be at the core of problems concerning an individual's self-identity and identification with the team (Kling, 2000). Sometimes, adults are hesitant to embrace the team unit because of mixed messages that are communicated in society. Teamwork is lauded, yet individuality is rewarded; cooperation is touted, yet competition is emphasized (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003).

Furthermore, even though the use of teams and the development of professional learning communities has proliferated in recent years (Dufour, 2004; Prichard, Bizo, & Stratford, 2006; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009; Senge, 2006, Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008), teams have been researched since the 1930s. Yet, there is no unified team development model (Kline, l999); this is because ambiguity exists in teams (DeMeuse & Liebowitz, l981). When team tensions exacerbate, they can lead to a myriad of problems, such as, alienation or withdrawal of members, emotionalism, communication breakdowns, misunderstanding among team members, dissatisfaction, and lack of team identification (Marcellino, 2006; Pacanowsky, l965) sequential model of team development, which outlined a "storming" phase (i.e. forming, norming, storming, performing) is still the focus of research (Goltz, Hietapelto, Reinsch, & Tyrell, 2008). To offset problems, O'Neil and Hopkins (2002) recommended that teams be limited in size (i.e. no more than 4 or 5 members). Lightner, Bober and Willi (2007) maintained that students working in a technology-enhanced classroom with team-based activities preferred 3-person teams. Bolton (l999) and O'Neil and Hopkins (2002) recommended instructors coach students when they work and learn in teams.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to conduct an action-research investigation of 30 diverse teams that were formulated in 10 leadership courses composed of 101 administrators, aspiring administrators and teacher leaders who worked in Kindergarten through 12th grade private and public schools in the New York metropolitan area. The study was conducted within a five-year period at a private university located on Long Island, New York. Participants were enrolled in the university's nationally accredited Education Leadership Master of Arts degree program in order to acquire New York State public school certification as a school building leader (i.e. principal, chairperson, assistant principal and department head).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary theoretical model applied in this study was derived from the work of business and education theorists, such as Johnston (l996, l998), Katzenbach and Smith (2003), Osterman and Kottkamp (2004), and Senge (2006). Their concepts are compatible. Reflection,

interaction and relationship-building formed the basis of the model. Johnston (l996, l998) provided an inventory that is useful in constructing diverse teams based on learning pattern theory. Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) and Senge (2006) emphasized reflective practice. Senge's systems approach was applied in this study. For example, each of the 101 participants came into this study with their own personal mastery (i.e. individual identity and skills) and based on their diverse mental models (i.e. assumptions, beliefs, perceptions and values), they shared their team visions (by devising team contracts with their teammates) and proposed learning as a team. Katzenbach and Smith's (2003) model of team development completed the theoretical framework. Their model explored a team continuum through, "various evolutionary stages (i.e. working group, pseudo-team, potential team, real team and high performance team), which enabled team members to evaluate and assess their teams" (p.84).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study was action-research, and Mills' (2003) qualitative action-research model was its focus. The Mills model revolves around reflection. Methods were triangulated to ensure credibility and dependability. Action-research is a continuous process as an instructor applies it to each course that is taught. Because the investigation of teams can be unwieldy, the structured guidelines of Miles and Huberman (1994) were followed in the collection and analysis of data. The "words" of the team members were the unit of analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, l992). Data were collected and analyzed from 30 teams. Therefore, this study was based on repeated measures. Methods included field notes, observations of team members' interactions, signed team contracts, peer evaluated technologically integrated presentations, team policy papers, pre-tested questionnaires, periodic updates, summative essays, follow-up discussion questions over the Internet, and selective interviews in-person or over the telephone. These methods were the data sources. Data analysis involved creating categories based on the number of participants who mentioned a theme or pattern and whether the information was applicable to teams. Surprises, commonalities and contrasts were examined.

Researcher's Perspective

In this study, the instructor was also the action-researcher. According to Mills (2003), instructors who engage in action-research try to improve their own learning and their expertise as instructors. The instructor's intention in engaging in action-research was to (a) broaden her knowledge base regarding the development of teams in the education leadership classroom; and to (b) update and improve instructional techniques in her "action plan" or syllabus in order to increase her students' team skills. The instructor began working with Master's of Business Administration (MBA) teams in the business management classroom and later transitioned to facilitating education leadership teams. Based on research into team development, her previous experience in the MBA classroom, and then her initial transfer to the education leadership classroom, the instructor knew there could be tensions and problems in some teams (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kline, l999; Kling, 2000; Marcellino, 2006; Pacanowsky, l995; Polzer, 2003; Senge, 2006). However, hopefully, there would also be demonstrations of unique team products and evidence of teamwork and relationship-building.

The instructor knew that teams had to be monitored and supported if team learning was to occur (Bolton, l999; Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Marcellino, 2006; Pacanowsky, l995; Senge, 2006). The role of teacher would have to be expanded to team coach (Bolton, l999;

O'Neil & Hopkins, 2002). According to O'Neil and Hopkins (2002), coaching is defined in the "classroom environment as working with students to increase their self-awareness and capacity for self-discovery, while motivating them to begin a process of continuous learning and development" (p. 402). An instructor is not a member of a team and is not privy to all that is happening on a team. Therefore, an instructor might have to devise alternative methods to gain access to a team. The instructor's self-developed team model was based on a series of reflective assignments and instructional techniques that would hopefully facilitate self-discovery, open communication, interaction and team learning (Marcellino, 2006).

Participants

Approximately, half of the 101 students (n=52), who participated in this study were characterized or self-identified as minority students, while 49 were characterized as Caucasian. In regard to the minority students, 32 were African-Americans, 8 were Caribbean-Americans, 6 were Hispanic-Americans, 2 were Middle Eastern Americans, 3 were Asian-Americans and 1 was European-American. There were 79 females and 22 males. Of the 101 participants, 65 represented public schools, and 36 represented private schools. Most of the schools they represented were located in New York City (59), while 42 were located on Long Island. Administrators primarily from private schools comprised 19 of the participants, while aspiring administrators and teachers comprised the majority of the participants (82). In the 1st year of the study, there were 24 participants; 13 in the 2nd year; 23 in the 3rd year; 22 in the 4th year; and 19 in the 5th year. Depending on the size of each class, teams ranged from 2 to 5 members. There were 5 teams of 2 members; 11 teams of 3 members; 12 teams of 4 members; 2 teams of 5 members. The number of teams and the number of students on a team were dependent on the total number of students registered for the leadership course. Teams of two to five individuals were formulated to facilitate instructional coaching (O'Neil & Holkins, 2002).

Team Context

This leadership course was a required course in the education leadership program. Five of the courses were taught in a traditional 15-week semester, and 5 courses were taught in a fast-track 8-week weekend venue. All courses took place in a technology-enhanced classroom. Blackboard (8 courses) and Moodle (last 2 courses) were used as network platforms. Team members engaged in negotiating and signing team contracts (Aranda, Aranda, & Conlon, 1998; Marcellino, 2008), which outlined a team's purpose and goals, team meetings, and included team members' assumptions about teams (see Model A). Team members chose topics, which were based on education problems or conditions in their schools. Students in each of the 30 teams conferred and wrote one team policy paper. Technologically, they formally presented an overview of the team's recommended initiatives and solutions to the problems apparent in their schools. These team presentations were peer evaluated and rated by class members and the instructor. At times, outside evaluators were invited by the students. When the team interventions ended, teams received class members' anonymous written feedback as well as the instructor's evaluation of the presentations. Rubrics were used to evaluate the teams. Topping (1998) maintained that class members can reliably assess the work of their peers. Team papers were primarily evaluated by the instructor.

Model A: Team Instructional Model

PROBLEMS   **GOALS:**   **STUDENT**   **and**   **INSTRUCTOR**

Universal:

    Communication Breakdown and Team Tensions

Apply a business & educational teambuilding model to gain skills in team performance and team process development.

Learn about the team process from students and redesign the syllabus or "action plan" based on student and team feedback.

Team Performance:
Team Project
(Policy Initiative based on 1 Unified Team Paper & Unified Technological Presentation)

Fully explain the Difference between Fragmented and Unified Team Products.

Spend more time Laying a Team Foundation regarding team purpose, goals and structure.

Activities:
1. Foundational Readings (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003; Senge l990) including Business articles.
    Visit Let Me Learn /LCI© Websites (Johnston, l996, l998; Johnston & Dainton, l997a, l997b).
2. Teams Structured With LCI©
    Guide team members toward initial team roles based on learning patterns.
    Limit Size to 4 members (if possible for clarity of roles).
3. Establish a Communication/Trust Support Structure
    E-mail Messaging
    Moodle Discussion Groups
    Team trust exercises & LCI Demonstration
4. Expansion of In-Class discussions of Previous Team Experiences and more Instructional Guidance in Setting a Team's Purpose and Goals.
5. Formal Team Contracts are signed
    *More time spent on team contracts and team assumptions before contracts are signed to prevent contractual problems.
    *Signing of Team Contracts (Aranda, Aranda & Conlon, l998)
    *More time spent on Discussion & Comparison of Team Contracts
    Revisiting and re-negotiating of team contracts. Viewing contracts as fluid documents that can be changed and updated.
6. One Integrated Team Presentation and Policy Paper
7. Reflective Exercises (Johnston, l996, l998; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).
    Shared Management Platforms
8. Periodic Updates include metaphors; increased to 5 within a team intervention.
9. Peer evaluative questionnaires and Summative Reflective Team Process Essays.

Goal of Team Process:
Interaction and communication of all team members with positive team closure.
1. Instructor diligently monitors the team process through an increase in periodic updates (2). Some questions are tied to metaphors for indirect access. Instructor tries to guide teams, and apply instructional coaching to prevent team member withdrawal if alerted.
3. Discussion questions posted to the *Moodle* network regarding general team issues.
4.Team Contracts are regarded as fluid instruments that can and should be revisited and revised if needed by team members.

Team Construction

Teams were constructed utilizing a research tested inventory, the Learning Connections Inventory © developed by Johnston and Dainton (l997a, l997b). Johnston's theoretical learning model (l996, l998) features four learning pattern preferences: sequence, precision, technical reasoning and confluence (Let Me Learn Website: www.letmelearn.org). Diverse teams were composed of students representing each of the four learning patterns. The instructor introduced students to Johnston's Learning Model and directed them to her website. Engaging in reflective practice and developing a learning contract is also recommended by Johnston (l996; l998). Students were guided by the instructor to assume initial team roles that were consistent with their use-first or lead learning pattern (Marcellino, 2005).

For example, a sequential learner became the initial organizer; the precise learner became the initial researcher or communicator; the technical learner was asked to be the initial team problem-solver; and the confluent learner was asked to be the initial idea-generator. If there were a fifth team member, the student was asked to assume the role of a facilitator at the first team meeting. If there were two or three-member teams formulated, these initial roles were shared. Students received a copy of each team and class members' learning pattern scores. A team's mean score was derived for each of the four learning patterns and compared to a class' mean score in each learning pattern. Student teams were structured around the class mean so as to balance teams and not give one team an advantage over another team. Previous learning pattern scores regarding students in this education leadership program indicated that students led by sequence, followed by precision and technical processing with confluence (initial creativity) ranking a distant fourth (Marcellino, Eichenholtz, & Sosin, 2007). The instructor's pattern was categorized as use-first confluence, followed by precision, sequence and technical processing.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The main question asked in this study was: How can an instructor improve a team instructional model and develop the team learning skills of education leadership students? Throughout this study, the instructor sought ways to improve her teaching practice so that there would be team learning and positive team closure on each of the 30 teams. The instructor engaged in an adaptation of Lewin's cyclical model, which was outlined in Mills (2003), as a process of "rethinking, reflecting, discussing, re-planning, understanding, and learning" (p.16). Based on feedback and discussions with students, the instructor gained a broader perspective regarding the team process. She monitored and compared teams, and expanded several instructional techniques. Most participants reported they were able to widen their team skills, while sharing leadership on their teams. A number of themes emerged, which were as follows: (a) the first year teams serve as benchmarks; (b) teams get the job done and demonstrate the *Wisdom of Teams*; (c) teams mirror changes in the leadership program; (d) teamwork experiences and technological expertise expand; (e) external and internal factors impact teams; (f) team identification and sharing leadership are displayed; and (g) the instructor influences the teams.

Theme 1: The first year teams serve as benchmarks.

When the instructor started facilitating education leadership teams, students seemed to need additional support in applying the team model. Even though the cooperative education

model was widely applied in school classrooms (Antil, Jenkins, Wayne & Vadasy, l998), education leadership students surprisingly seemed to have few actual team experiences. In effect, they seemed to lag behind their business management counterparts. The first year of this study continuously served as a benchmark for the instructor. Disappointingly, both positive and negative team characteristics were displayed by several teams in the first year, which set the standard for both a positive and negative range of team interactions and experiences. In the first year, there were two teams that were categorized as *high performance teams*. They displayed high goal orientation, cohesion and a high degree of commitment (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). According to Katzenbach and Smith, team members on *high performance teams* help one another "to achieve both personal and professional goals" (p.65). Unfortunately, there were also students on three teams who alienated team members, withdrew from the team, displayed dissatisfaction with team members, exhibited intense emotionalism and submitted fragmented team projects, which indicated limited team interactions. Students said:

- I see two of our members as lemons; the other three made lemonade by doing the work.
- Don't judge a book by its cover. I was judged from the outside, not from within. I had a lot to contribute; however, it was just never accepted. We never set a working forum where we would be able to exchange ideas and information.
- When a select elitist group takes off on its own, and feels that they must accomplish everything on their own, they do not solicit nor really want input from the other team members. Three people on this team became and acted like an elitist sub-team.

But as the study evolved, education leadership students demonstrated that they could catch up with their business management counterparts. On questionnaires and in Internet discussions, they indicated past team experiences at their schools and in their university classes. A majority of the teams demonstrated that they could develop innovative team products and perform extraordinarily well. Popular project choices included problem-solving initiatives in the areas of: Increasing Parent Involvement; Marketing and Promotion; Professional Development of Faculty; and Integrating Technology into the Curriculum. Some teams were especially unique and innovative in their choice of a team topic. In the second year, a team member declared:

- Dream it. . . think it. . . build it!!! This basically is what we did. We dreamed of the ideal school, drew upon our colleagues at work to help us with their thoughts and brainstormed ideas in organizing it, and then we built it. . . literally-an architectural model of our ideal school!

Theme 2: Teams get the job done and demonstrate the *Wisdom of Teams*.

As the study evolved, education leadership students did their jobs well. One said, "We were the little engine that could because we were able to work together and get the job done." In the final assessment, class members applied Katzenbach and Smith's (2003) team continuum model to their education leadership teams and wrote:

- I would compare us to the *high performance team* that Katzenbach and Smith discussed in their book, *The Wisdom of Teams*. Our team is a highly motivated team that is in pursuit of excellence. I believe that we utilize the talents of every member to his/her full potential.
- I would compare us to the Hewlett Packard team in Wisdom of Teams. We are a high performance team. We concentrated our efforts to achieve a specific goal. We have a shared vision.

Participants and the instructor rated 12 teams as *high performance* and 8 teams as *real teams*. There were also outside evaluators that were invited by students who assessed five of the teams. According to Katzenbach and Smith (2003), a *real team* consists of "a small number of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 92). On these teams, members displayed cohesiveness, and identified with their teams and their team members. Sometimes, teams in the same class became competitive, and this factor enabled these teams to develop into highly rated teams. In spite of tensions or problems, *high performance* and *real teams* went beyond the capability of each individual team member and delivered highly rated products with creative initiatives. Team members were able to problem-solve, and work through their team issues. Sometimes, this was done without direct coaching from the instructor. Students were able to solve their own team problems. Team members on five teams surprisingly reported feeling *no tensions* on their teams. Students stated:

- We were all juggling several things at once, but somehow, it all came together, and we became a *real team*.
- I don't feel stressed working with my team members. We are a *real team*.
- We got off to a rocky start. At first, I felt my ideas were radically different from the rest of the group, and I was dissatisfied. But, we kept at it. We became a *real team* instead of a group.

Applying Katzenbach and Smith's (2003) team model, there were four teams that were assessed as *potential teams*. According to the authors, a *potential team* is one that displays a "significant, incremental performance need, and that really is trying to improve its performance impact. . .[but] it has not yet established collective accountability " (p. 91). Team E was characterized as a *real team* for the presentation, but when the paper was assessed, they were labeled a *potential team*. The paper was disjointed and fragmented and indicated little team interaction regarding the paper. In addition, two teams did not go far enough in their initiatives, but seemed to replicate what was already standard practice in education administration. Another team had a conflict between two members, which was resolved satisfactorily, but nevertheless, affected the team, its members and the project.

Three teams were assessed as *pseudo teams* by a majority of its members. A *pseudo team* according to Katzenbach and Smith is a team that "has not focused on collective performance and is not really trying to achieve it" (p. 91). Two teams had members who did not fully participate in the team project because of alienation or withdrawal issues. Two team members who withdrew from their teams subsequently left the leadership program. One student wrote, "We are stalled; we are a *pseudo team*." Another member said, "I think that we have back-tracked to a *pseudo team*. We have fallen out of tune with each other." Members

on one team were never able to completely coordinate their efforts because of outside commitments, and their presentation and paper fell short. Their team project resembled three separate projects rather than one coordinated effort.

Last, three teams never got beyond a *working group*. This was mainly due to time constraints regarding work and family issues as well as miscommunication among its members. A student noted, "Throughout, we remained only a *working group*." Within a *working group,* according to Katzenbach and Smith, "There is no realistic or truly desired 'small group' common purpose, incremental performance goals, or joint work products that call for either a team approach or mutual accountability" (p.91).

Theme 3: Teams mirror changes in this leadership program.

In the first year of the study, participants were teachers and aspiring administrators primarily from the public schools; there were no administrators included. But in the succeeding years, practicing administrators were participants in the study. The program was impacted by a contingent of students representing private schools located in New York City. This was the result of a grant that sought to upgrade the credentials of teachers and practicing administrators, who were located in the private sector, such as secular and religious private schools (i.e. Christian, Jewish, Moslem).

By the third year of the study, program participants comprised 50% from the private schools and 50% from the public schools. By the end of the fourth year, students who were from the public schools were doubling their courses and hastening to finish their degrees before implementation of the New York State School Building Leader Examination. In the fifth year, there seemed to be an over-representation of students from the private schools. The representation of private school students seemed to lead to professional, ethical and more respectful interactions among team members as well as varied viewpoints, broader discussions and diverse initiatives for team projects. The make-up of the teams and the classes were impacted positively by changes in the overall system, which in this case was the leadership program itself (Senge, 2006). Three teams were composed of only private school students, while one team consisted of only administrators.

In this study, five of the leadership courses were taught in a traditional 15-week semester, and five courses were taught in a fast-track 8-week meeting venue. Students were able to complete their team projects within the allotted time period regardless of the venue. Students in the 8-week semester did not delay in setting up their team projects. They knew they had a limited time period to complete their projects, and they were able to adjust accordingly. They were focused immediately on the task (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). One member in the fast-track wrote, "We waste no time or energy. In short, we work well together; we're efficient and I am proud to show off our work." Students in the 15-week semester worked more slowly than their fast-track counterparts in starting up their projects, but as they neared the project deadline, they quickly picked up speed. Students in the 15-week semester said:

- Things are progressing, but just at a slow rate.
- We slowed down to a good speed, and I don't feel rushed.
- Slow and steady wins the race. . .We are working slowly.
- We were on a rollercoaster, slow to start, but once we got moving, we picked up momentum, and it was exhilarating.

Theme 4: Teamwork experiences and technological expertise expand.

In the first and second years of the study, students made similar statements, such as, "I honestly haven't had a lot of team experiences," or "Even though I use teams and groups in my own class, I have never been part of a team at my job." These types of statements were almost non-existent by the fourth and fifth year of the study. Initially, students also demonstrated little knowledge of technology upon entering the program. Statements, such as, "I have no knowledge of technology; that's why I entered this program," or "We don't use computers at my school," seemed widespread the first few years of the study. At the beginning of the study, leadership students seemed to need more help from the instructor in laying a team foundation. The instructor offered more guidance to teams regarding setting their purpose and the goals of the teams. For example, students stated:

- We are still a work in progress. We are working toward our goal, but we have not fully realized it yet.
- We would have honey now if all the bees worked toward the queen—our goal, but we don't.
- Our team started out hitting rough spots, but eventually, we made it after learning new tricks and new ways to complete our goals.

However, as the study evolved, leadership students reported more team experiences at their work sites and in their graduate courses. Leadership students declared:

- I have had both positive and negative team experiences . . . I believe that one's attitude about the situation can help or hinder the experience.
- We're working well together. Things are going smoothly, but I know based on past teamwork I have done that there will be roadblocks as we proceed.
- I like to work on teams. I have been working on teams for most of my life, on sports teams and at work, and as long as everyone does their part, the team will be successful.
- I have found working in teams at work to be a very positive experience. My co-workers care very much about their jobs and the completion of their tasks.
- I have been co-teaching with a colleague at my school, and it is wonderful.

Furthermore, as the study progressed, leadership students demonstrated increased technological expertise upon entering the program. Leadership students reported:

- We each injected some information or contributed something at the particular moment it was needed over the Internet, and it made the team move forward.
- We have become a virtual team meeting over the Internet.
- My first master's degree was in instructional technology; I did it on-line. At first, this was scary because we worked in different states . . . , but it worked out.

Theme 5: External and internal factors impact teams.

Because the team process was monitored from beginning to end, there was an individual versus team tension displayed by certain individuals in the study that moved team members at various times toward or away from their team units. This is consistent with work developed by Tompkins (1994). This individual versus team tension was pronounced in some teams, but generally seemed to be representative of teams and team members who were impacted by overly stressful situations at home or at their work sites. These external factors sometimes threatened to derail a team. For example, some teams had members that were impacted by serious life issues that needed to be addressed that took precedent over the team project. In these cases, the other team members assumed additional responsibilities and covered for their "missing" team members until they could come back to the team. Besides work responsibilities and pressing family matters, members had to contend with divorce, illness, the birth of a child, or the illness and death of family members. In one instance, a team member dropped out of the team and the course because of illness. This factor affected the team and its members adversely. The affect of various external and internal factors caused members to comment:

- Losing a team member didn't help us. We seem to be running in place.
- Our team is like a rubber band. We are connected, but stretched.
- I am proceeding with caution as I continue on our team.
- There's a lot on our plates. I feel like I am constantly swimming upstream.

In the first year of the study, internal team problems were highly evident, such as team member alienation and withdrawal, intense emotionalism or lack of identification to the team. As a result, the instructor was required to intercede more often and guide team members to positive team interactions and team closures. However, in the later years of the study, even though there were internal problems that were evident, such as, product fragmentation due to limited group interaction or misunderstandings among team members, successful team experiences far outweighed problematic team situations. Even though there was evidence of team problems, such as, the temporary withdrawal of team members (because of external factors), issues were resolved amicably and members were able to unify themselves, and come to successful team closures without the instructor directly interceding. Team member alienation problems seemed non-existent as the study advanced. One student summarized this factor and stated, "We are adults and experienced educators; we should be able to resolve our team problems ourselves and try to unify our teams." Overall, in spite of difficulties and stressful influences, students reported that they learned about the team process whether it was fraught with tension or problem-free. Even with stressful factors impacting teams, projects were always completed within the allotted time period. A female member noted, "The heavy fog has lifted away, and we made it to our destination from strong will and determination."

Theme 6: Team identification and sharing leadership are displayed.

Each of the 30 teams told a different and unique story. Because of the dynamic interaction of complex and diverse individuals, each of the 101 participants lived a different team experience. This is consistent with constructivist learning principles (Lambert, et.al, 2002). A majority of the students reported that they shared leadership on their teams. Team

learning and self-discovery evolved as team members unified and identified with their teams. A team member from a private school who worked with two team members from the public schools stated, "Each one of us has had a leadership opportunity working together, and I think that shared power helped us work well as a team." Other leadership students documented:

- Leadership was always shared by all of us.
- We are working as a family. We all worked diligently for the betterment of the whole team.
- There were no arguments or conflicts. We functioned as a unit and were flexible enough to accommodate one another.
- We put the puzzle pieces together and became one creative mind.
- I would love the opportunity to work with this team again because of the chemistry we had when we came together. We all supported each other and helped each other especially when a team member needed the extra push. Dynamite!
- We helped and supported one another throughout. We met [at a team member's house], laughed, had fun and worked well together. We critiqued and evaluated one another with respect. We achieved our goals, shared leadership and achieved victory for all our members together.

On four teams, however, there were members with strong personality traits that seemed to dominate the team project and influence the performance of team members. A team member stated, "Our team is small [with three members]. For that reason, I believe the strongest-minded team member took over." Nevertheless, the dominance of these individuals enabled team members to perform better. The individual may be the weakest link in the team system, but the individual can also be the strongest link in the team system. Differences within teams were not traced to gender, racial or ethnic differences among members. Some differences could be traced to whether members were from the private or public schools or whether they had administrative experience. There were 19 administrators and 82 aspiring administrators in this study. Sixty-five were from the public schools, and 36 were from the private schools. These varied school and job orientations seemed to affect the teams positively and lead to wider project choices as well as multiple viewpoints being exchanged. Surprisingly, administrators did not dominate the teams. Perhaps, it was because of their varied and increasing responsibilities at their work sites, but administrators did impact the teams positively. Teams were accorded the opportunity of using an actual private school site as the focus of their initiatives as administrators opened their schools to their team members. School administrators utilized their team members as consultants to develop creative solutions to their schools' problems. Team members were also afforded access to school stakeholders. They were able to survey or interview faculty and parents. More importantly, sometimes the team developed initiatives that were adopted at the private school. One administrator said, "When we launched our team project at my school, the cost of the initiative was priceless!"

Theme 7: The instructor influences the teams.

There were 101 participants in this study. The instructor as the action-researcher was also a participant in this study so in actuality, there were 102 participants. According to Senge (2006), a leader is a designer, teacher and steward. The instructor in this study designed the syllabus, taught it, and served her students by trying to develop and expand their team skills.

The instructor as the action-researcher was able to document her changes to the syllabus or "action plan" (Mills, 2003). For example, there were three distinct instructional techniques that were expanded and changed as this study evolved. These changes focused on: (a) team contracts; (b) periodic updates from all team members; and (c) the use of metaphors.

Instructional Technique One: Team Contracts

In the first year of the study, signed team contracts were mostly ignored by the students. Students claimed, "Except for formulating our contract, we did not refer to the contract as the project evolved." By the second year of the study, the instructor spent more time in class on laying a foundation for the team contracts (Aranda, Aranda, & Conlon, l998; Marcellino, 2008). Signed team contracts were compared openly in class, and students were encouraged to go back to their original contracts if problems developed on their teams. By the third year of the study, team members were claiming more contract referrals, changing and even updating their contracts as the team process evolved to reflect the needs of their teams. Team contracts became acceptable negotiating vehicles to discuss team problems if one or more members were violating previously agreed-upon contract conditions. When this was done, problems were discussed, diffused and solved so that team members could continue their team interactions and concentrate on their team projects. Students reported:

- We are following our contract, and we are committed to it.
- I think the team contract was a great idea. It gave us a clear picture of what our goals and expectations were for our team.
- I think a team contract is good because you can always look back at it if there is a problem or question regarding what we should be doing.
- The team contract was a first for me. I'd like to think that it wouldn't be necessary, in that we would all work together to get the job done even without the contract, but I see that it could be a preventative method to head off any potential problems.
- Contracts in schools are a hot topic including when to use them, what they say, and how to interpret the wording or language.
- Contracts make everyone accountable. The team has input into the contract, and the team members know what is expected. Then we live up to it.

Instructional Technique Two: Periodic Updates from all Team Members

The instructor was able to monitor the teams more diligently by increasing the number of updates she required from each team member. Instead of relying on one team reporter submitting updates or asking for two updates (i.e. at the beginning and end of the team intervention similar to a pre and post), in the second year of the study, the instructor increased the number of updates to five per team member. This offered the instructor multiple perspectives of what was happening on each team, and also updated the instructor regarding the emergence of team tensions and problems. Team members were repeatedly asked several open-ended questions, which gave the instructor a wider perspective regarding what was happening on each team. From the information received, the instructor could assess team member interactions and a team's viability in regard to strengths and weaknesses. When teams were smaller (i.e. two and three members), the instructor was able to monitor the teams more closely, delve deeper, and garner more information.

Instructional Technique Three: The Use of Metaphors

In order to gain access to what was happening on each team without appearing intrusive, one of the questions in each of the periodic updates usually asked students to describe in metaphor, "what was happening on the team" (Couger, 1995; Greenlee, 2007; Ivie, 2003; Kemp, l999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Marcellino, 2007; Pink, 2005). This instructional technique widened the instructor's perspective regarding the evolving team process, the viability of teams, and alerted the instructor indirectly to possible team problems that might be developing. If a team problem surfaced, students usually were willing to compose metaphors about it, rather than explicitly stating what was actually happening on their teams. For example, the following metaphoric updates indicated that teams were progressing positively at various stages:

- [We are] *connecting the dots*, and putting our ideas together to create a plan.
- Our team is like *glue*. We are a very cohesive team. We are working very well together bouncing ideas around, accepting good ones and casting aside the bad ones.
- We are like *puzzle pieces* finding our proper place. We started out as individuals, but now we are pulling together as one.

From the instructor's perspective, if one or more students indicated a problem was developing, the instructor could gain access to the team and intervene by referring to the metaphor. Further questions could be probed, and suggestions and guidance would be given to team members. For example, the instructor was alerted to team problems early-on with the following statements:

- [We are] a *cake without the icing*. The icing on the cake is what makes it shine and attract others. This team still needs more time to blend as one.
- Although a *working family* is a unit functioning together for specific goals, we are too busy to spend enough quality time together as a family.
- I feel like we are *chickens running around with our heads cut off*.

By repeatedly having the students update her, the instructor could monitor team changes and the evolving team process. For example, the following metaphoric updates were two weeks apart, yet changes were indicated in the team process that was evolving:

- We are a team of *synchronized swimmers* getting ready for a big competition (Update 1)
- We are still like a *synchronized swim team*. But at this time, some of the swimmers have come down with colds, broken bones and personal issues (Update 2).

These two statements enabled the instructor to intervene, question team members more closely, and offer suggestions to help the team. Overall, students indicated that they benefited from the team experience. They wrote:

- I usually just '*go with the flow.*' But my team members depended on me to initiate the task. Because I have been in the program for awhile, I was [considered] the

experienced group member. Both my team members helped build my confidence because they respected what I had to say and took my ideas, and together, we formed our own.

- We are a *sponge*. The reason I chose this metaphor is that the team absorbs each other's ideas very well. . . . Once the topic was chosen, we just forged ahead, taking in all the wonderful ideas. I've never seen such collaboration before.
- We are a *tree with many branches*. This is applied to our team because we each represented a different perspective and idea. . . We all identified different aspects within our research. This represents the branches of a tree; they are off in different directions. However, even with the various differences, all of us were able to come together, decide on one topic area, and bring information together to create a team project that benefited us all. This is represented by the tree as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this action-research study, education leadership students interacted in diverse learning teams in 10 courses; 30 teams were compared and analyzed. According to Mills (2000), action-research is "done by teachers, for themselves" (p. 3) primarily. By monitoring each team, and receiving updates from all team members, the instructor was able to devise multiple perspectives of what was happening on a team. The instructor's team performance model changed and was refined in its application regarding three distinct areas: (a) team contracts; (b) periodic team updates; and (c) utilizing metaphors (see Model A: Changes to the Instructor's Team Instructional Model). Whether the team experience was positive throughout or fraught with tensions, leadership students were able to increase their team skills. One student commented about the course and the team experience by stating, "Being in this course was like going to 'boot camp.' But we all survived and learned about ourselves and our team-mates."

Because the instructor and the 101 participants in this study were the action-researchers (Mills, 2003), certain aspects of this study may not be generalized to the broader population and may only be applied to the participants in this study. However, in regard to team building and the team development process in the educational leadership classroom, there are aspects of this study based on the examination of teams in ten educational leadership courses that may be generalized to a wider audience, such as:

- In regard to educational leadership students, team and team work experiences both on the job and in the classroom have increased appreciably over the last five years.
- External and internal factors do impact team cohesion, team commitment and team identification in the educational leadership classroom.
- Rather than a single leader emerging, team members primarily shared leadership on their teams.
- Instructors do influence the teams that are formed in their classrooms (in regard to how these teams are formed and the team members that interact on these teams).
- Adult students can solve their own team problems without direct coaching from the instructor provided the proper team foundation is laid.
- Educational leadership teams produce creatively and can problem-solve effectively.
- Technological integration is readily applied by educational leadership students, and team members utilize technology for team interaction.

- Educational leadership students are as proficient in team development and relationship-building as their peers in the business disciplines.

This study may broaden team understanding and influence the development of additional action-research team studies by educational leadership instructors. This study did attempt to delve "outside the box" (Houston, Blankstein & Cole, 2007; Pink, 2005) and combine precepts of another discipline (i.e. business management) with education leadership in exploring human agency (English, 2009). The instructor's team instructional model will continue to be refined, redesigned and revisited as she continues to engage in reflective practice and applies the action-research model (Mills, 2003) to improve her own learning and the learning of her students as they interact and work in educational leadership teams. Educational leadership instructors are invited to replicate this study or aspects of it in order to add to the knowledge base and understanding of the team process. Because of the complexity of human nature, studies that delve into the complexity of team development and team member interactions or relationship-building are ripe for further research study.

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Developmental Skills Assessment for Future Superintendents

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Faculty members in the Department of Educational Leadership at East Carolina University (ECU) have a long history with assessment center methodology, but this effort has been strongest in our principal preparation program. Currently, a developmental assessment center for future principals is one of the first courses in the Master of School Administration program, and students participate in a second simulation focusing on instructional leadership before beginning their year-long internship. The results of both activities are used to guide individual and group skill development. The leadership skills and competencies are aligned with the New North Carolina Standards for School Executives/Principals. Performance evaluation, preparation programs, and licensure of school leaders focus heavily on demonstrated skills and products. This "outcomes" orientation has affirmed the value of developmental assessment with principal candidates and motivated us to develop similar experiences for superintendent candidates.

This paper describes the creation, pilot administration and some outcomes from a developmental assessment center for future superintendents. The process required us to differentiate between the skills and competencies needed by principals and those needed by superintendents and to develop a developmental assessment opportunity focused on district leadership. We define *developmental assessment* as a process that helps students create a behavior-based assessment of their leadership skills through self, peer, and professor analysis of their behavior in job like simulations. Once the data from those simulations are created in the form of documents, videotapes, feedback from role players, and participant reflections, faculty guide students in using the data to reflect on and assess their leadership skills. The skills learned through this process are transferable to leadership activities in schools and districts, and they also support lifelong learning and skill development.

Rationale for Adding Assessment Center Methodology to Superintendent Preparation

Doctoral programs in educational administration became the "de facto" superintendent preparation programs in most states (Andrews & Grogan, 2002); however, limited research has investigated their efficacy (Peterson, Fusarelli & Kawalski, 2008). It is, therefore, difficult to produce performance-based evidence to counter recent challenges to doctoral study as the most appropriate preparation for future superintendents (Levine, 2005). Recent state actions have confirmed questions regarding the value of the doctoral degree as preparation for district leadership. Nine states have removed superintendent licensure requirements, and many allow waivers, emergency licenses, and alternative routes to licensure outside of traditional doctoral programs (Feistritzer, 2003). There appears to be a clear need to link doctoral study to the realities of the work place and provide evidence of student proficiency. Anecdotal evidence suggests the novice superintendent experiences some of the same feelings of uncertainty,

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anxiety, and isolation novice principals have felt (Cegralek, 2004;Yeoman, 1991). As yet, no research clearly identifies essential factors for district leadership preparation (Young, Peterson, & Short, 2002); however, it seems reasonable to assume that preparation linked closely with practice would produce opportunities to demonstrate evidence that students are being prepared to deal with the uncertainty, anxiety, and isolation they will encounter in the real world of district leadership. Further, the need to provide a framework for continuous reflection on and growth in essential district leadership skills appears to be supported by the velocity of world and school districts' change.

Assessment center methodology provides opportunities to address many of those concerns. A well designed assessment center simulation creates the realities of the work place and provides opportunities to produce evidence of student's ability to effectively deal with those realities in a safe environment in which additional learning and skill development may occur. The developmental assessment center targets essential leadership skills and allows students to use those skills in authentic district leadership simulations. Their behaviors in job-like simulations are used to identify strengths and areas of weakness as a "superintendent." This process allows them to be "on the job" before they are officially "on the job." They are able to learn about the realities of district leadership and about the skill areas where they have demonstrated strengths and weaknesses. Through the analysis of their behavior, they also learn to use data to support decisions.

Putting individuals in authentic situations to measure their capacity is not new. The formal process known as the *assessment center method* originated almost forty years ago with an article in the *Harvard Business Review* titled "Assessment Centers for Spotting Future Managers" (Byham, 1970). Since the publication of that article, major corporations and public agencies worldwide have used assessment center methodology to identify and develop managers and leaders (Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1977; Hunter & Hunter, 1984; Schippman, Prien, & Katz, 1990; Schmitt, Gooding, Noe & Kirsch, 1984; Thornton & Byham, 1982). In the mid-1980s, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) brought assessment center methodology to educational leadership through the creation of a principal assessment process which they developed in collaboration with the American Psychology Association. Later, NASSP, in cooperation with the Association of School Administrators (AASA), created a superintendent assessment center for Kentucky which that state used to support and develop its district leaders. NASSP worked with several universities to help them establish assessment centers to be used in the preparation of school leaders, but the majority of NASSP's work was with school districts. Most of the preparations programs that used assessment center methodology failed to sustain them because of the requirement to train and contract with outside assessors. Currently, few school leadership preparation programs use assessment center methodology.

Faculty members at ECU had been involved in the assessment of principal candidates using the NASSP assessment center methodology through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) Assessment Center in during the late 1990's. They saw the value of using assessment center methodology with school leadership candidates and worked with NCDPI and NASSP to make assessment a part of their preparation of some school leader candidates (Buckner & Bradshaw, 2001; Lane, Rouse, McFadden, Clay, & Buckner, 2008). In 1998, the NASSP Director of Assessment and Development joined the ECU faculty, and efforts to integrate leadership skills assessment into the preparation of school leaders intensified. Over the next decade, school leader skill assessment evolved from the use of NASSP's Development

Assessment Center to the creation of an assessment center for future principals developed by faculty members and reflecting the challenges of the program's service area in eastern North Carolina. It also addressed the challenges of using trained, paid assessors by creating a process that integrates training the candidates in using data to determine leadership skills with candidate, peer and professor review of simulation data. This program's major strength is its ability to link preparation with practice through a simulation of a new principal's first day on the job. The result is a behavior-based identification of leadership strengths and areas of weakness for each student.

Assessment centers can also contribute to the preparation of superintendents by providing opportunities for candidates to test themselves against the realities of the work place and to obtain feedback on how well their skills enable them to meet district leadership challenges. Data from assessment centers for future superintendents can serve to challenge program faculty to examine criteria for effective district leadership and to evaluate the preparation of candidates to demonstrate those skills. Simulation activities provide opportunities for candidates to encounter authentic district leadership situations and demonstrate that the preparation program is relevant to practice. Assessment center data also provide valuable program evaluation data that can be used in responding to outcome based accreditation documentation criteria.

Identifying Targeted Skills

There are three essential elements in an assessment center. The first is a list of skills and key behaviors to assess. North Carolina (NC) has developed new performance standards for superintendents (NC State Board of Education, 2007), national standards are being revised (e.g. ISLLC, 2008), and the 21st Century Standards continue to receive attention. The first step in creating a developmental assessment center for future superintendents in a doctoral cohort was to identify skills aligned with current standards that could be demonstrated in a simulation.

The new NC Standards for Superintendents include suggested artifacts to be used to demonstrate skills described in each of the seven standards, and many artifacts are repeated for several standards. For example, the strategic plan for the district, school improvement plans, student performance data, and Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) survey data appear throughout all seven standards. Determining the skills superintendents "will" demonstrate when working with these suggested artifacts led to the identification of ten themes across the seven standards (see Appendix A). Next, these themes were aligned with 21 competencies included in the NC Standards and two other sets of standards or skills: Future Ready Students for the 21st Century and ISLLC 2008. A matrix comparing the lists of standards and skills is included in Appendix B. The resulting list of targeted superintendent skills consisted of 43 skill behaviors in 9 skill areas (see Appendix C).

Creating the Assessment Activities

Once the targeted skills were identified, the next essential step was the creation of a simulation in which the skills could be demonstrated. We elected to create a "day in the life" type simulation in which our students were placed in the role of a new superintendent in his or her first day on the job. Their day began with an in-basket which included background materials, information about the district, action items, and materials to support a small group meeting with other superintendents (students) and a meeting with their board chair (a trained role player). We

modified materials from actual situations that superintendents had encountered by eliminating activities not related to current standards, and we added items to address themes from state and national standards needing additional attention.

Students found an agenda for their day in the in-basket materials, and, except for scheduled meetings, used their time as they saw fit (see Appendix D). Two meetings (one with other superintendents to address high school reform and another with the board chair) were videotaped so participants could observe themselves, analyze their behavior and collect evidence to support their skills' assessments (see Appendix E). The third meeting, a professional development panel, was not videotaped. Once students began their three-and-one-half-hour day, they received no additional direction. Data from the simulation (responses to in-basket items, video tape from meetings, self reflections for all activities, peer feedback from meetings, and feedback from the role player) were used in the final step of the assessment center process.

Teaching Students to Self and Peer Assess

The final essential step was to teach participants to use the data to make decisions about their strengths and potential derailers and to support those decisions with examples of behavior during the simulation. This self assessment approach is similar to the approach we used successfully with principal preparation students at ECU for over ten years and consistent with ethical considerations for assessment center operations (*Monograph XVI*, 1989; Buckner & Bradshaw, 2001; Lane et al., 2008).

With no one "correct" way to handle the challenges of district leadership, a major challenge is to help students understand that effective and ineffective leadership behavior spans a wide range of possibilities. For example, handling a board chair who has overstepped his authority in making administrative decisions may be centered in interpersonal skills or some other skill dimension and may also include relationship building with direct attention to a serious problem. Examples and discussion helped students understand this complexity, and we helped them accurately align their own behaviors with appropriate skill dimensions and assess the impact of those behaviors (positive and/or negative).

We used grading to address bias issues. Course grades were not related to assessment outcomes in any way. Instead, grades were based on student ability to support their skills assessment with data. While we eliminated any desire to overestimate their skill, we found students more likely to underrate themselves. The remedy was to hold students accountable for producing data—evidence of what they said, wrote or did that proved they did or did not demonstrate the skill.

The last step in the instructional process was the cross referencing of data among the student, a peer assessor, and the professor. Each student reviewed the work of a peer and provided feedback. This peer review provided objective opinions on the appropriateness of identified strengths and potential derailers and their ability to support their decisions with data. The stakes were raised by grading the quality of peer feedback. Finally, the professor of record reviewed the report for each activity as they were completed and provided feedback. We have learned that timely professor feedback is essential to student understanding.

The Pilot Effort

The participants in this assessment center were school and district leaders from five districts participating in the Triangle Leadership Academy. Students were nominated by their

superintendents and admitted to the EDD cohort, and ECU faculty are partnered with the districts to assure that the program was aligned with new standards and relevant to practice. The assessment center was conducted during the cohort's second semester in the EDD program, and individual and cohort results were used with other data to shape coursework and internship activities.

RESULTS

Students found the simulation activities to be realistic, but challenging. As a student stated, "The in-basket exercise was overwhelming, at first, because I could not comprehend how I would get through all the items and prepare for the meetings in the course of the day." Table 1 shows the distribution of identified strengths and potential detailers for each activity. Students were most likely to identify strengths and potential detailers in the interpersonal and administrative skill dimensions. In the in-basket activity, judgment and organizational ability were addressed most frequently. Individual reports described the assessment experiences, discussed individual strengths and weaknesses during each activity, and provided supporting evidence. Throughout those reports, students shared insights they had gained regarding the role of the superintendent and the skills needed to be successful.

Table 1. Frequencies for Identified Strengths (S) and Potential Derailers (PD) by Skill.

Skill Dimensions and Skills	Assessment Activities							
	In-Basket		HS Reform Meeting		Meeting with Board Chair		Prof Dev Panel	
	S	PD	S	PD	S	PD	S	PD
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS								
Setting Instructional Direction (SID)		2	7	1	6	4	5	3
Collaborative Leadership (CL)	3		10		5		12	
Sensitivity (S)	3	5	2	3	6	5	4	4
ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS								
Judgment (J)	12	4	1	5	10	2	2	
Results Orientation (RO)	4	2	3	1	5	1	3	2
Organizational Ability (OA)	14	3	1	1	3	1		4
COMMUNICATION SKILLS								
Oral Communication (OC)			6	1	4	1	4	1
Written Communication (WC)	1							
Development of Self and Others (DSO)				2		1	1	1

Being Ready to Lead

Students recognized that superintendents must be ready to lead. They must seize opportunities to articulate a vision for the district, state expectations, set direction—to act like a superintendent. Students commented, "I should have done a better job of speaking to my vision for the district," and "I would like to have set a stronger instructional direction from the start."

Finally, another student noted how important it was "…to do your homework on a new district prior to the first day on the job."

Being Sensitive to the Needs and Concerns of Others

In working though the in-basket, one student "…did not make an effort to elicit perceptions, feeling, and concerns from others. Time on task is important, but not as important as fostering and maintaining quality relationships." Another student "overlooked the opportunity to cancel my trip to the conference," but realized with so many pressing issues, he needed to remain in the district.

Knowing When to Lead and When to Listen

Several students spoke to the difficult balance between leadership and sensitivity. For example, one student observed, "If being sensitive and willing to learn is your predominate mode, you are not leading."

Avoiding Missed Opportunities in Group Settings

Several students recognized that when a group does not achieve its goal, each member of the group has missed opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills and stated, "Our group was off topic, and I did not do anything to get us back on track." Another students stressed, "I am too accommodating and allow others to dictate the flow of conversation." Another student "was not forceful enough" and observed, "At the time, I did not understand that my strength in Sensitivity could also be my derailer."

Caution and Politics

Students were sensitive to politics and recognized the need to establish parameters with members of the School Board. After confirming that she sometimes disregarded "all the politics around an issue" and spoke her mind, one student noted, "I think it would behoove me to be a little more cautious."

Following the assessment course, we have had several opportunities to engage students in discussions about how assessment outcomes have impacted their behaviors. We have learned the assessment experience has had a significant impact on some of the students in the pilot class, and we have made adjustment based on their feedback.

Several students have commented on the overall value of the experience with statements, such as: "I must say that it was absolutely beneficial," and "The simulation still has me thinking through how I handle certain situation."

Other students have made comments on about the specific ways they are using their feedback to be more effective in their current leadership roles. For example, one student said, "The in-basket activity solidified the importance of delegation and knowing how to quickly sort through the massive volume of paper that comes to my in-box (paper and email) everyday. It is definitely a matter of prioritizing the paper as well as my schedule."

Students feel the assessment course was a valuable part of their preparation for district leadership. For example, one student stated, "Having to identify 'evidence of a skill' was a real

strength of the assessment review. The review became more data driven and evidence based opposed to 'I believe I was strong in a particular skill' or relying on our own perception of how we believe we addressed a situation. As a part of the review, it was valuable to challenge ourselves to look for potential derailers and/or missed opportunities just as much as it was to identify strengths. Often, the potential derailers and missed opportunities present some of the most rich and lasting lessons that lead to growth." Another student stated:

> To this day, I still find myself mindful of the experiences we shared in the assessment center. I am mindful of and reflective about the 'lessons learned' as they relate to my review of my work in the simulation and the behaviors demonstrated or not demonstrated during the different activities. With this in mind, I do believe the assessment center simulation has a valuable place in the program.

Our students have also been able to provide us with valuable feedback regarding how we can improve the assessment experience and increase its value. For example, one student called our attention to a problem with her role player which limited her ability to learn from her interaction with him. Even thought we were fully aware of the importance of thorough training for role players, this feedback caused us to review our training and take steps to ensure consistency. The modifications have continued to strengthen the experience for additional classes who have participated in the assessment. Another student had a problem with the video equipment, and as a result, we recognized the need for a backup video system which is not standard practice for all our simulations.

SUMMARY

Evidence from the pilot was used to evaluate the use of assessment methodology with doctoral students who were preparing to become superintendents. It was clear from evidence in student work and comments that we successfully linked their preparation to the "real world" challenges superintendents face. Students demonstrated that they could be taught to accurately assess their leadership strengths and potential derailers. Students articulated how they were using learning from the assessment experience in current leadership roles in schools and districts and in their preparation to become superintendents. Finally, although the process will be reviewed and strengthened continuously, we found evidence that students felt this experience was valuable.

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APPENDIX A

Making Sense of the Artifacts across the NC Standards for Superintendents

NOTES:

> Artifacts are listed by placement in the NC Standards for Superintendents, but could be used for evidence for other standards.

> The development of themes and the placement of artifacts in those themes are open to different interpretations. This example is simply one way of managing the evidences and expectations.

Evidence of the ability to facilitate the development, implementation, assessment, and modification of the strategic plan (1, 2, 4, 5, 6)
1-a. District strategic plan
1-e. Staff can articulate the district's direction and focus
2-a. District strategic plans
4-b. District strategic plan
5-a. District strategic plan
6-a. District strategic plan
6-f. Partnership agreements and other documents to support collaborative effort for achieving school district goals and priorities
6-j. Community college/university partnerships, collaborative projects, and professional development initiatives;

Evidence of collaborative planning and decision making, including effective, elected School Improvement Teams, and teacher involvement in resource allocation decisions to meet needs of each student (1, 2, 4, 7)
1-b. School Improvement Plans are implemented, assessed and modified
1-c. Effectively functioning, elected School Improvement Teams
2-b. School Improvement Plans
4-i. District plan or policy defining the role of teachers in making or participating in making resource allocation decisions, such as the use of time, budgets and other resources, to meet the individual needs of each student.
7-c. Ability to confront conflict and build consensus
7-d. Shared decision-making

Evidence of the use of data in ongoing evaluation of programs and processes at all levels (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
3-b. NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey results
4-c. NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey results
3-a. Climate Survey Data
5-b. External reviews and audits (e.g., budget, child nutrition, transportation)
5-e. NC Teacher Working conditions Survey results
6-c. Survey results from parents and other community leaders
7-a. Parent, community, and staff survey data

Evidence of data-based performance assessment, goal-setting and professional development for all employees with a positive impact on student performance (1, 2, 4, 7)

1-d. Superintendent's performance plan aligned with state and local strategic priorities and objectives

2-c. Professional development plans based on data (e.g., student performance, results of the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey)

4-f. Record of professional development provided staff and an assessment of the impact of professional development on student learning

7-h. Superintendent's Performance Goals

Evidence of leadership development (4)

4-d. Number of teachers with national Board Certification and graduate/advanced level licensure

4-g. Leadership development plan

4-h. Copies of professional growth plans for school executives

4-j. District leadership succession plan

Evidence of student learning and success K-12 and beyond (1, 2, 3, 4, 6)

1-f. Student performance data

2-d. Student performance goals

2-e. Student performance data

2-f. Use of formative assessment to impact instruction

2-g. District instructional evaluation program

3-d. Student performance data

4-a. Student performance data

6-k. Student enrollment data and community college and university courses

Evidence of effective recruitment and retention of staff

3-c. Teacher retention data

4-e. Teacher, school executive, and staff diversity, recruitment, and retention data

7-b. Teacher, School Executive, and Staff retention data

Evidence that accomplishments are recognized appropriately

3-e. Awards structures developed by the district and schools

Evidence that the community is informed, involved, and supportive of schools and district

3-f. Community support of the district

5-c. Copies of district procedures and publications (e.g., student handbooks, discipline policies, safety procedures)

5-d. Communication of safety procedures and behavioral expectations throughout the school community.

5-f. District and school safety and crisis plans

5-g. Community Emergency Response Plan

6-b. Minutes from school board meetings

6-d. Business partnerships and projects involving business partners

6-e. Visible support for district goals and priorities from community leaders, such as educational foundation activities, civic club scholarships, etc.

6-g. Accounts of school and district accomplishments in various forms of public media

6-h. Newsletters and other public engagement documents designed to strengthen connections to the community

6-i. Membership and participation with community organizations

7-e. Outreach efforts

7-f. School Board policies

7-g. Minutes and reports

Appendix B
Matrix Comparing Standards and Skills for Superintendents

Themes from Artifacts NC Supt Standards	Competencies	Future Ready Students for 21st Century	Old 21st Century School Administrator Skills	ISLLC 2008	Current/Needed Superintendent Skill Dimensions
Evidence of the ability to facilitate the development, implementation, assessment, and modification of the strategic plan	Change Management Creative Thinking Customer Focus (TTI3 but needs to be stronger) Environmental Awareness – issues and trends Results Orientation Systems Thinking Visionary	Leadership to guide innovation in NC public schools	Setting Leadership Direction	Standard 1 – vision of learning Standard 6 – understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context	Taking the Initiative in Educational Reform (#2) – more emphasis on facilitating a vision for the district 21st Century Orientation
Evidence of collaborative planning and decision making, including effective, elected School Improvement Teams, and teacher involvement in resource allocation decisions to meet needs of each student	Delegation			Standard 3 – management of the organization, operation, and resources… distributed leadership technology Standard 4 – collaborating with faculty and community members	Building and Maintaining Ed Teams – but needs to be stronger and broader Collaborative Leadership

Themes from Artifacts NC Supt Standards	Competencies	Future Ready Students for 21st Century	Old 21st Century School Administrator Skills	ISLLC 2008	Current/Needed Superintendent Skill Dimensions
Evidence of the use of data in ongoing evaluation of programs and processes at all levels	Judgment	21st century systems Need more on financial planning, resource allocation, and accountability systems Technology support for operations			Analyzing and Judging….
Evidence of data-based performance assessment, goal-setting and professional dev. for all employees with a positive impact on student performance		21st century professionals Technology support for management of data, accountability		Standard 2 – culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth	Possibly Teams (#8) with expanded language and district perspective
Evidence of leadership development		21st century professionals		Standard 2 – culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth	Possibly Teams (#8) with expanded language and district perspective

Themes from Artifacts NC Supt Standards	Competencies	Future Ready Students for 21st Century	Old 21st Century School Administrator Skills	ISLLC 2008	Current/Needed Superintendent Skill Dimensions
Evidence of student learning and success K-12 and beyond	Global Perspective	Globally competitive students; healthy and responsible students (not addressed by suggested artifacts) Instructional technology		Standard 1 – promotes success of every student… vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders Standard 2 – culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth	Need a strong focus on learning/ instruction 21st Century Orientation
Evidence of effective recruitment and retention of staff		21st century professionals Technology support for operations			Need a strong focus on operations, management, etc. 21st Century Orientation
Evidence that accomplish-ments are recognized appropriately					Management
Evidence that the community is informed, involved, and supportive of schools and district					Could come under collaborative leadership – needs a separate "skill" – building school, family, community partnerships

Themes from Artifacts NC Supt Standards	Competencies	Future Ready Students for 21st Century	Old 21st Century School Administrator Skills	ISLLC 2008	Current/ Needed Superinten-dent Skill Dimensions
Competencies	Communication Conflict Management Dialogue/ Inquiry Response Sensitivity		Sensitivity	Standard 4 – responding to diverse community interests and needs	
	Communication		Written and Oral Communication		
Evidence of data-based performance assessment, goal-setting and professional development – specifically the superinten-dent's performance goals	Emotional Intelligence Personal Ethics and Values Personal responsibility for Performance		Knowledge of Self and Development	Standard 5 – acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner	Expanding Learnings
	Time Management	Organizational Ability	Organizational Ability		Need it? Pull in some of the operations, manage-ment and etc.
	Technology				21st Century Orientation - Technology

Appendix C

List of Targeted Skill Dimensions, Skills, and Behaviors

	INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
	Setting Instructional Direction (SID)
SID-1	Articulates a district vision aligned with 21st Century goals.
SID-2	Articulates high performance expectations for self and others.
SID-3	Encourages improvement in teaching and learning.
SID-4	Generates enthusiasm toward common instructional goals.
SID-5	Acknowledges academic achievement or accomplishment.
SID-6	Seeks commitment to a course of action for improved district performance.
	Collaborative Leadership (CL)
T-1	Encourages and supports the ideas of others.
T-2	Empowers others to participate in school and district decision making.
T-3	Assists in accomplishing group goals.
T-4	Seeks consensus toward strategic goals
T-5	Responds to diverse community needs.
	Sensitivity (S)
S-1	Interacts professionally and tactfully with others.
S-2	Elicits perceptions, feelings, and concerns of others.
S-3	Voices disagreement without creating unnecessary conflict.
S-4	Assures communication of necessary information to appropriate persons in a timely manner throughout the district.
	ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS
	Judgment (J)
J-1	Takes action within the bounds of appropriate priority.
J-2	Acts with caution in approaching unfamiliar persons or situations.
J-3	Analyzes information to determine important elements.
J-4	Seeks additional information when it is needed and makes decisions on the basis of information.
J-5	Sees relationships among issues.
J-6	Communicates a clear rationale for a decision.
J-7	Asks follow-up questions to clarify information.
	Results Orientation (RO)
RO-1	Initiates action for district improvement and reform aligned with 21st Century goals.
RO-2	Considers the implications of a decision before taking action.
RO-3	Relates individual issues to the larger picture.
RO-4	Takes action to move issues toward closure.
RO-5	Relates individual issues to the larger picture.
	Organizational Ability (OA)
OA-1	Appropriately delegates responsibility to others.
OA-2	Develops action plans/procedures to handle work load.
OA-3	Monitors and evaluates school and district progress.
	COMMUNICATION SKILLS
	Written Communication (WC)
WC-1	Writes concisely.
WC-2	Demonstrates technical proficiency in writing.
WC-3	Expresses ideas clearly in writing.
WC-4	Writes appropriately for different audiences.
	Oral Communication (OC)
OC-1	Demonstrates effective presentation skills (eye contact, gesticulation, etc.).
OC-2	Speaks appropriately for different audiences.
OC-3	Uses proper grammar, pronunciation, diction, etc.
OC-4	Presents thoughts and ideas clearly.

Development of Self and Others (DSO)	
DSO-1	Teaches, coaches, and supports the development of others.
DSO-2	Provides feedback based on observations and data.
DSO-3	Understands own strengths and weaknesses.
DSO-4	Seeks opportunities for continuing learning.

Appendix D

Master Schedule for the Assessment Day

1:00 PM	Arrive at Office
	Deal with mail, messages, and other communications
1:30 – 3:45	Meeting with Board Chair Chris Jenkins (as scheduled individually)
	Complete Reflection Sheet
1:30 – 3:30	Meeting "High School Reform: What are our next steps?" (As scheduled)
	Complete Self-Reflection Sheet
	Complete Colleague Reflection Sheets.
3:45	In-Basket Reflection
4:00	Simulation ends
4:15	Adjourn

Team # 1: ABCDE   Team # 2: FGHIJ

Room and Team Assignments

Activity   Room

1:00 PM All working on In-basket   Ragsdale 218 (All In-B time)

1:30	Team # 1 ABCDE Meet (25 minutes)		Ragsdale 211		
	G	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 1	206
	H	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 2	222
	I	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 3	208 A
1:45	J	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 2	222
	F	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 4	208 A
3:00	Team # 2 FGHIJ Meets (25 minutes)		Ragsdale 211		
3:15	A	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 4	208 A
	B	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 5	216
	C	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 1	206
3:30	D	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 5	216
	E	Ind. Meeting (15 minutes)	Ragsdale TBA	Prof 1	206

3:45   In-Basket reflection

4:00   Simulation completed/ends

4:15   Adjourn

Appendix E

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendent
From: Julie Long, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent
Ref: Meeting with Board Chair, Chris Jenkins

       The Chairman of our School Board, Chris Jenkins, asked to meet with you. I have made the appointment for today. He did not give a reason for this meeting, but I heard him say something about wanting to update you and talk with you about improving teaching/learning in the district's schools. I know you were hired to bring a new vision to the district and to lead it back to being considered one of the state's best school systems. I included some information about student demographics and performance data with your in-basket materials, but did not know exactly what you would want. Please let me know if you need additional data or information. You also need to know the district has been on a declining path for the past ten years. It has fallen from being one the state's highest performing districts to the middle of the pack. Some of our schools have fallen significantly in student performance and are having major problems. I think this will be the first meeting you have had with Mr. Jenkins in a one-on-one setting. I can tell you that he is passionate about the district and wants very badly to help bring it back to its former glory. You also need to know that he has stepped way over the "authority line" during the past few years as former superintendent Ward finished his twenty year career. During the last two years the superintendent was very ill, and Mr. Jenkins became the *de facto* superintendent. I have been concerned about a new superintendent's need to re-draw the lines between Board Chair and superintendent responsibilities. This meeting will be your first opportunity to do that.

       I know he advocated strongly on your behalf during the hiring process. You may feel you owe your success in being appointed superintendent, in part, to his strong advocacy. You also need to understand that things have gotten completely out of hand with regard to the way administrative decisions are made in the district. This resulted from the role he assumed when the former superintendent was ill. He held the district together during those difficult times and is not power hungry, but he views the role of the School Board Chair more as a close partnership with the superintendent on all district decisions. This special relationship that he enjoyed with Dr. Ward and his completely taking over when Dr. Ward was ill have angered several board members and members of the central office staff. I have heard some other board members comment recently on their expectation that you will "get the Chair straight." Several members of your staff have had it with not knowing who is in charge. They are willing to give you a chance to straighten things out, but several of them are already talking to other superintendents.

       I hope you don't think I am out of line telling you all this, but I really want our district to start moving forward again. I think you can do the job and I want you to succeed. If I am out of line, please forgive me.

Advocating for Quality Programs:
A Critical Issue in Leadership Preparation

Judith A. Zimmerman
Carol Engler
A. William Place
Anita Varrati

Preparation programs for PreK-12 school leaders are certainly not new to controversy. Infamous among university circles is the 2005 *Educating School Leaders* report, which called for an overhaul of university-based principal and superintendent preparation programs. The focus of that report was that school leadership programs were in critical need of redesign. The report cited several problem areas such as the lack of explicit, relevant, and practical curricula (Levine, 2005) designed to produce a high caliber of educational leader. Furthermore, Murphy (2006) called schools of education "slow-stepping elephants when it comes to leadership education—sluggishly adjusting to today's call for new blood, stronger content, more relevance, and higher quality" (p. 490). In subsequent years, national and state educational policy initiatives signified a possible reactionary movement to legislate improved practices regarding the preparation of educational leaders. Examples of such policy for the preparation of school leaders include state deregulation of administrative licensure, the wide-spread growth of non-university based options for principal preparation, and alternative pathways to administrative licensure. Therefore, the face of leadership preparation has changed so greatly in the first decade of the 21st century that university-based programs, "no longer enjoy a near monopoly on the right to prepare school principals and other administrative leaders in education" (Cibulka, 2009, p. 453).

According to Cibulka (2009), "It is unlikely that deregulation and market responses would have grown if the professoriate were able to gain more respect from policymakers and the practice community" (p. 461). Consequently, the Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration (OCPEA) has developed positions intended to inform state policymakers about how leadership quality can help schools rise to meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. According to Carter (1999), "One important way we exert our influence is by taking official positions on the education issues that matter most to our members" (p. 1). As policy makers work to support the improvement of student learning in the state of Ohio, they should be cognizant of how quality leadership impacts learning in schools and the possibilities for further strengthening school leadership and the preparation of school leaders. This chapter discusses the development of (a) OCPEA's advocacy positions, which are intended to serve as talking points in which to engage legislators and (b) OCPEA's activities to initiate a state-wide conversation with policy-makers about best practices in the preparation of school leaders.

The Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration (OCPEA) is a nonprofit organization or consortium of 22 Ohio higher education institutions committed to

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advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and students. The OCPEA membership consists of professors, adjunct professors, graduate students, retired professors, PK-12 school leaders, and other supporters of school administration preparation programs. The OCPEA Board of Directors consists of one representative from each of the twenty-two educational administration program-providing universities in Ohio. An executive director and elected officers (president, president-elect, secretary, and treasurer) from the organization's membership lead OCPEA. The organization strives to establish trust and collegiality among professors and institutions, in order to move the focus to program improvement for all institutions. OCPEA is affiliated with the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA); becoming one of the first NCPEA state affiliates in 2005. OCPEA leaders have also worked closely with the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA).

INITIAL GRANT

In early 2005 Dr. Susan Zelman, Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction, offered Ashland University a grant of $23,000 to form a consortium of the twenty-two public and private universities offering educational administration programs. Representatives from the twenty-two institutions met in April 2005 to develop an organization to bring professors of educational leadership together for program improvement, collegiality, the sharing of ideas, and to have a collective voice for those institutions in matters of school leadership preparation. The purpose of OCPEA was developed and categorized in three major areas: the sharing of issues and human resources; public policy; and developing and utilizing partnerships and networks.

A national study by Levine (2005), then-president of Teachers College-Columbia University, highly criticized educational leadership programs around the country and provided the impetus for a September 2005 conference in Dayton sponsored by the University of Dayton, Wright State University, the University of Cincinnati, and the fledgling Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration. The meeting generated initial conversations regarding the Levine study and potential changes and improvements to educational administration programs across the state. Some of the ideas/suggestions that surfaced that day included the need:

- For more discussion among school leadership stakeholder groups in Ohio;
- To develop superintendent standards, to go with the new Ohio principal standards;
- To strengthen the principal internship;
- To improve the recruitment and selection of principal candidates;
- To consolidate the multiple standards for principal preparation; and
- To improve the evaluation of the preparation programs.

DEVELOPING BELIEF STATEMENTS

As early as the fall of 2006, the OCPEA leadership already realized that it was critical to the organization's mission to develop an OCPEA "voice," emphasizing the need to become active with state-level political connections that affect decisions regarding the educational administration field and preparation programs. Hence, a goals and advocacy committee was established. Originally, the board discussed forming two separate committees—one for

advocacy and another to help define OCPEA's professional role. Finally, it was decided that since the goals committee would help provide the information to be communicated by the advocacy committee, it was best to combine the members into one larger committee. The committee was charged to begin to formulate positions on leadership, in general, in the state and leadership preparation, specifically.

During one of its first meetings, the OCPEA Goals and Advocacy Committee discussed the need to develop a list of belief statements that members could support and also talked about the importance of trying to influence policy in varied arenas: the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the state legislature and the governor's office; and national policy makers, particularly for standards. The group believed that because ODE was instrumental in creating our organization, that the organization might expect the state department of education's support in OCPEA's desire to be "at the table" when state policy issues were discussed. Furthermore, at the 2005 OCPEA organizational meeting, participants agreed on three major purposes of the new organization: sharing issues and human resources, public policy including standards and accreditation, and partnerships/networks.

The pros and cons of partnering with other state or national organizations on advocacy were seriously discussed by the committee. The group agreed that OCPEA needed to balance the need to develop its own voice with the importance of aligning itself with other organizations, when appropriate. Committee members with multiple affiliations believed that other organizations would most likely welcome OCPEA's help in their own advocacy efforts, when the groups' interests were aligned. Several committee members had participated in "days on the hill" where national organizations of which they were members scheduled meetings with federal legislators. One committee member said that her state affiliate of a national organization (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) was becoming much more advocacy-oriented. The Ohio ASCD affiliate planned to host an advocacy event at the state level ("Day on Capitol Square").

Rather than starting from scratch to develop belief statements for OCPEA, committee members decided to research those from other national and state groups for professors of educational administration (NCPEA, UCEA), superintendents (AASA) and principals (NASSP, NAESP). Committee members agreed to review the collected belief/position statements in order to draft a number of key statements for OCPEA. The statement compilation was developed into an on-line survey for the entire OCPEA membership to give its input about the draft beliefs/positions. At that time, organization members suggested, that perhaps, meetings with policy makers could be arranged to further strengthen the organization's presence and advocacy stances. The committee made revisions to the document based on the feedback from the survey, and presented a final draft to the OCPEA Executive Board for its approval at the September 2007 meeting. The board also suggested that the OCPEA positions then be posted on the organization's website and "rolled out" to the rest of the membership at the 2007 fall conference in October.

These early belief/position statements for OCPEA included, but were not limited to, issues that surrounded:

- Ensuring high quality professional development of professors of educational administration.
- Refining the knowledge base for preparing practicing administrators and professors of educational administration.

- Promoting the application of theory and research in the field to the practice of educational administration.
- Advocating for the preparation of educational administrators by active, full-time faculty who blend teaching, scholarship, cutting edge research and service.
- Collaborating with appropriate state organizations and agencies.
- Collaborating with P-12 practitioners in the field to bridge ideas and practice.
- Advocating for adequate state and federal funding for the education of all students.
- Influencing local, state and national educational policy by serving as an authority on critical issues.
- Providing voice in the development and implementation of state policy affecting educational leadership programs.

PLANNING CONFERENCES WITH A FOCUS ON INFLUENCE WORK

In the fall of 2008, the OCPEA Executive Board decided that the organization's focus for 2009 should be to continue to move forward with the work that the Advocacy Committee had initiated. The plan included developing a "white" paper, based on the positions promulgated by the Advocacy Committee, which communicated the OCPEA position on relevant issues to state policymakers, state board of education members, and other policy makers and dedicated the spring and fall 2009 OCPEA conferences to prepare and carry out the "OCPEA Day on Capitol Square." Hence, a small team volunteered to prepare a draft white paper for the organization which would be presented at the spring conference. Other plans for the spring conference included a keynote presentation on advocacy by the host university dean and an overview of the University Council of Educational Administration's (UCEA) advocacy process, by the UCEA Executive Director, Michele Young. Initial plans for the fall 2009 conference included a morning orientation about advocacy for participants and scheduled visits to legislators in the afternoon.

During its February 2009 meeting, the OCPEA Executive Board engaged in discussion about whether OCPEA, in its early advocacy efforts with policy-makers, should be more specific about legislation that it wanted state legislators to support/oppose vs. whether it was more important to establish the organization first with legislators as being a credible source of information, based on research. The board agreed that there was merit to both points of view and suggested that the discussion should continue at the spring conference, allowing the rest of the organization's members to contribute their thoughts/ideas. The board also agreed that it would "tone down" any requests for additional funding, given the current economic downturn in the state. The white paper writing team, Will Place and Anita Varrati, reviewed the UCEA white paper (Young, et al., 2007) and decided that it met OCPEA's needs with minor modifications. They secured feedback and approval from the UCEA Executive Director, Michele Young.

The OCPEA 2009 spring conference, entitled "Advocacy: Where We Stand!" was attended by over forty members of the organization. The featured speaker was Michele Young, Executive Director of the University Council of Educational Administration. Young emphasized:

- The link between effective leadership, teacher quality and student learning;
- That quality leaders are prepared in quality higher education programs and that quality preparation programs are engaged in ongoing program improvement efforts

These points were the main framework for the white paper that was utilized by OCPEA, originally developed by Young, et al. (2007) for UCEA. Young explained that the white paper was the result of a doctoral course on policy where she assigned a project to the students to prepare a mock day on the hill activity for professors of educational administration to communicate with federal policy makers. Young relayed that at the end of the course, she had charged her graduate assistants to volunteer and actually make this event happen through UCEA. Young encouraged all in attendance at the spring OCPEA conference to become actively involved in communicating with policy makers.

Subsequent breakout sessions among the conference attendees discussed the following key legislative talking points: administrative leadership is important, quality preparation is important, and continued and increased funding for data collection and research are needed. The conference received overwhelmingly positive reviews. Some of the comments from participants about the conference mentioned that it: furnished current information as background and direction for OCPEA's work; provided research/citations related to leadership and leadership preparation and its effects on student learning; and stressed the need to be more involved in the political process by contacting state and federal representatives.

CRITICAL CONCEPTS FROM THE OCPEA "WHITE PAPER"

After the conference, based on the positions promulgated by the OCPEA advocacy committee, there were a few minor adjustments made to the UCEA white paper, and permission was obtained for OCPEA to use it. This paper was useful in that it provided a research supported document that emphasized the value of educational leadership as well as the preparation programs which are involved in ongoing efforts to maintain and improve quality.

The paper's introduction noted that policy makers are certainly interested in the education of the nation's children as evidenced by their bi-partisan passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). However, a critical issue that seems to have been overlooked by legislators is investment in the quality of school leaders (Young et al., 2007). The purpose of the OCPEA white paper, therefore, was to inform legislators and other policymakers, especially in Ohio, about the impact of quality leadership on students' learning. This white paper or policy brief provided research-based information about three important issues:

1. The relationship between effective leadership, teacher quality, and student learning
2. How to prepare quality leaders; and
3. What is needed to ensure improvement in leadership preparation. (Young, et.al, 2007)

The white paper also noted that leadership preparation programs should improve the long-term evaluations of their efforts in order to provide sufficient information to both their stakeholders and to policymakers. Moreover, the brief noted that researchers will need significant amounts of funding to better examine the complex relationships between selection criteria, preparation programs, leadership behaviors, and student achievement (Young, et.al, 2007).

OHIO COUNCIL OF PROFESSORS "DAY ON CAPITOL SQUARE"

The OCPEA conference, a "Day on Capitol Square," was held on October 7, 2009, in downtown Columbus, Ohio. The purpose of the conference was to convene OCPEA members to learn about the OCPEA advocacy positions and to learn how to influence policy makers in preparation for meetings with legislators on Capitol Square. With the conference brochure, a sample legislator meeting request letter that briefly outlined the purpose of the visit was also sent to OCPEA members. Members were instructed to call their legislators directly, email, or fax their requests. They were also encouraged to begin early to schedule appointments with their state representatives and senators for the date of the event.

In addition to the nineteen OCPEA members who attended the event, thirteen educational administrator graduate students also came. During the conference morning session, two Goals and Advocacy committee members, Will Place and Judy Zimmerman, prepared the participants by not only presenting the OCPEA advocacy positions, but also by orienting them to advocacy or influence work. Their presentation emphasized that "politics" is not a bad word and that educators need to be advocates because education legislation is moving, policymakers are making decisions, and advocacy *is* happening. Therefore, participants were told that advocacy is not a spectator sport and were asked, "If you don't educate policymakers, who will?"

The presenters also reminded participants that legislators are confronted with a myriad of legislative issues, staffing selections, constituent concerns, and more. Attendees were asked, therefore, to consider the legislators' perspectives and to try to understand legislators better, so they could be better advocates for students and graduates. Place and Zimmerman provided talking points for members to use with legislators and shared other tips and suggestions including:

- Establish relationships with legislators.
- Know key messages—decide on two or three key points.
- State the case simply—tie it to personal experience.
- Realize that legislative staff are key, so demonstrate respect.
- Agree to disagree.

According to Richardson (2008), "Learning how to speak powerfully about our issues is one of the most important tools in an advocate's toolkit" (p. 4). Therefore, conference attendees also learned guidelines for getting their messages across to lawmakers, including how to prepare laser talks or elevator walk speeches. These are well-prepared two-minute talks that, if necessary, "enable the speaker to deliver a compelling message in the time it would take to ride in an elevator from the bottom floor of a building to the top floor" (Richardson, 2008, p. 3). The acronym, EPIC, (created by Results, an organization devoted to eliminating world hunger) was employed to help the participants to remember critical parts of their messages (Richardson, 2008, p. 3). The acronym stands for the following.

E = Engage your audience—get listener's attention with a dramatic fact or short statement.
P = State the problem—present causes of the problem introduced in the first section.
I = Informing about solutions—inform the listener about a solution to the problem.
C = Call to action—be specific about what you want listener to do. (Richardson, 2008, p.4)

At the conclusion of the orientation session, the attendees practiced their advocacy skills and talking points in teams. Although every participant had not scheduled legislator appointments, each team who walked to "Capitol Square" in Columbus contained at least one constituent of the lawmaker(s) visited. Each legislator or legislative aide was given a folder with the OCPEA White Paper and a one-page brief. The teams took the OCPEA key messages to policy makers and encouraged them to:

- Insist that in order to practice in Ohio, educational administrators should have come through licensure programs that have been approved and accredited by the Ohio Department of Education and/or the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR)
- Support the OCPEA/OBR effort to improve school leadership preparation in Ohio
- [this effort is described later in the paper]
- Support a biennium budget that included a specific line item to sustain the work of this group

At the conclusion of the event, approximately 21 legislators or their aides had been visited. During the advocacy debriefing, participants were asked to complete a feedback form for each legislative visit, and encouraged to share their experiences with the group. Participants agreed that they would like to try this again. On the whole, the participants reported that the legislators/aides were receptive and interested in OCPEA and its collaborative work with OBR and other partners. Selected legislator/aide comments collected by the advocates included:

- It's impressive that all 22 universities have committed to OCPEA.
- In favor of supporting future administrators and professional development
- It's hard for legislators to know everything—it's like taking a drink from a fire hose.
- Agreed to be on the OCPEA listserv
- Alternative licensure and for-profit entities should heed the same standards and rigor as state institutions and not-for-profit institutions.
- Wanted to help us by supporting whatever bill we needed
- Keeps in contact with district superintendents

ADVOCACY IN ACTION WITH THE OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS AND OCPEA

Preparations were made to enhance the organization's presence and advocacy positions. In November 2008, an initial meeting between Carol Engler, the OCPEA Executive Director and the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) Vice-Chancellor, Tom Bordenkircher, was conducted. The meeting topics included an introduction of OCPEA's beginnings, importance, and purposes. The current collaborative relationship among educational leadership preparation program providers, the Ohio Department of Education, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, and the University Council of Educational Administration was highlighted. Discussion ensued on how OCPEA and OBR could collaborate.

As a clear indication of the extent of OCPEA's burgeoning influence among policy makers in the state, OCPEA Executive Director Engler was contacted in the spring of 2009 by OBR Vice Chancellor Bordenkircher about a possible collaborative effort between the two groups. Essentially, OCPEA was invited to take a lead role in meeting specific charges to:

1. Review the current educational administration accreditation review process and develop a new system of approval using the Ohio Principal Standards and Ohio Superintendent Standards (preparation programs would then have the choice of whether to use this new system or continue with the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards)
2. Develop a data metric for annual review of educational administration programs for a Fall 2010 pilot—with implementation in January 2011
3. Develop a replacement of the state's former entry year program for principals

A core group of OCPEA executive board members met many times throughout the rest of the spring and summer of 2009 to discuss this effort, with frequent progress reports sent to all members of the organization. During this time, Vice Chancellor Gordenkircher also met with the group a number of times. Members of the group were charged with researching what other states had done to improve their administrator preparation programs and systems of both entry year support and evaluation of administrators. One core group member provided a wealth of information about Kentucky's current process.

On August 26, 2009, a stakeholder meeting was convened to begin the work. The meeting, which was well-attended, included OCPEA board members representing the majority of the 22 member institutions and representatives from OBR, the state superintendents and principals associations, and the state department of education. After a presentation of the three charges by the OCPEA Executive Director and the OBR Vice Chancellor, attendees were split into three focus groups to discuss the ramifications of the charges and to develop draft plans for addressing them. All of the participants and the absent OCPEA board members were given typed summaries of the focus groups' work and invited to attend a working dinner on October 6, 2009, to further the endeavor. During his introductory remarks at this event, Vice Chancellor Bordenkircher informed participants that Ohio had a strong chance, among four states, of being awarded one of the federal "Race to the Top" grants. Bordenkircher indicated that he needed the participants' help in outlining the key items that would form the basis of the grant. He further challenged attendees to think outside of the box and framed the focus groups' work with the following charges:

- Define for both the building and the district what effective school leadership looks like in Ohio.
- Forget NCATE/ELCC, credits and other restrictions/requirements for the moment, and consider job-embedded preparation programs and internships with research-based accountability measures.

Bordenkircher further informed the group assembled that he would be using key components of the groups' recommendations in order to apply for the grant. Breakout sessions followed the initial plenary assembly. Three focus groups continued to work on the three educational administrative preparation program initiatives. The focus groups' assigned topics were to:

- Look at the current educational administration preparation program accreditation review processes and develop a new approval system using the Ohio Principal Standards and Ohio Superintendent Standards;
- Develop a data metric for annual review of EDAD programs for fall 2010 pilot;

- Examine professional development for principals, including an Entry Year Program for principals and current practitioners' professional development. Subsequently, Ohio's initial "Race to the Top" grant application/proposal was not approved. However, at the time of this writing, the state has revised its proposal and plans to resubmit it for the next round.

BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

The Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration had to overcome a number of barriers in order to be successful with its advocacy efforts. First, OCPEA is a fledgling state affiliate of NCPEA. At the time of the partnering with OBR, it was only four years old. The primary efforts of getting the organization "up and running" from an organizational standpoint had to be coupled with the group's efforts to achieve viability at the state and national level. Furthermore, there had never been a non-profit state affiliate of NCPEA organized in Ohio. Initial hesitancy also had to be overcome by institutions that thought because of the ODE start-up grant, OCPEA would simply become an "arm" of the Ohio Department of Education, and not a force in its own right. Additionally, many professors in the state still work in a largely non-collaborative environment. To suddenly ask them to collaborate, not only with their neighbor across the hall, but also with universities across the state, was a challenge. Furthermore, with the state's current competitive educational climate and lack of funds for education, educational administration departments in Ohio universities now vie for the same graduate students, thanks to off-campus sites and the enormous increase in online programming. However, OCPEA has been able to design its programming, thus far, to include the needs of all universities.

Other obstacles that OCPEA continues to try to surmount include a perception by some that it is in competition with other state associations, including the two principals' organizations and the state department of education. In the past, the state board of regents (OBR) mostly left the designing, development and evaluation of educational administration preparation programs to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). ODE delegated much of this work to the two state principals' organizations, with little oversight or follow through, from the perspective of professors of educational administration in the state. For example, for many years, entry year principals (EYPs) in the state were required to attend successive conferences hosted by the secondary principals' organization in order to meet licensure requirements. At a time when attendance at conferences by veteran principals in this organization was declining, the EYPs helped to keep the association solvent. Therefore, in spite of the efforts of the OCPEA leadership to include other state organizations in its recent influence efforts, the current collaboration between OBR and OCPEA might be seen by other state groups as a sign that OCPEA is trying to usurp their long-standing authority and/or diminish their revenue streams in these areas.

New hurdles that OCPEA may begin to face involve the inherent reluctance of many educators to engage in advocacy work, such as the recent OCPEA initiative to visit state legislators. Another state affiliate, Ohio Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), has reported that this reluctance has become a stumbling block in its influence efforts with legislators. According to Koschoreck (2010), "Teachers and educational leaders are socialized to avoid anything that might even hint of controversy" (p. 2). While many educators are still loath to connect the term "political" to the work that they do, it is important to note that when school leaders attempt to persuade others or enlist the support of

others in accomplishing goals, they are, in fact, acting politically (Cuban, 1988). Moreover, when trying to influence policy-makers, "you don't need to be a high-ranking education official or have policy experience. All you have to do is draw on your professional expertise to communicate how our education system can be improved" (Carter, 2009. p. 1).

Koschoreck (2010) warned of other barriers to activism for professors of educational administration including current power structures, lack of time because of "pressures to publish and present," and lack of funding for projects that "take too critical a view of the status quo" (p.3). According to Koschoreck (2010), "Challenging the way we do business is a bit like biting the hand that feeds us" (p. 3). Hence, in Ohio, there was some disagreement and much discussion over whether it was "appropriate" for those who visited legislators to discuss their need for funds to help with the collaborative work with the state board of regents.

VALUABLE LESSONS

The Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Carol Engler, summarized the lessons that she has learned through the organization's political activism.

> The excitement of moving OCPEA into the forefront of state education is exhilarating, frustrating and all in all, an adventure. State politics are tricky at best, and it has and will continue to be a challenge to wade into the political waters of the Race to the Top grant, while at the same time, making sure that the needs of the organization are met at the local (university) level. I feel that I am on a constant learning curve of juggling the day-to-day operation while keeping in mind the wider view of advocacy and state and national politics.

The OCPEA board has also learned a valuable lesson as a result of its influence endeavors. It is critical that the group not assume that every professor wants to advocate personally with policy makers. As mentioned earlier, some faculty members feel uncomfortable with influence work of this nature and prefer to keep themselves separate from "politics". However, these same educators might still support the advocacy work of the organization and benefit from the information that is shared regarding state policies at the association's conferences. Participants, in turn, can distribute this up-to-date information to their colleagues at their respective institutions. Another issue that the organization has tried to be cognizant of is academic freedom. OCPEA's collaborative work with OBR has certainly necessitated a certain focus on the standardization of the development and evaluation of educational administration preparation programs in the state. Naturally, accreditation bodies such as NCATE and ELCC have driven the movement toward standardization for a number of years. However, the mission of OCPEA continues to focus on collaboration not cooptation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If your state does not have an organization of professors of educational administration/leadership, then the first step is to form one. The authors recommend contacting the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) to begin a state affiliate (Gary Martin, Executive Director—gary.martin@nau.edu). Do not reinvent the wheel - presently there are many states which have an NCPEA affiliate. Secondly the authors propose that you attend national meetings where there are conversations about the

important issues relative to educational administration and the preparation of school leaders. For example, NCPEA, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), the national superintendents' American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and principals' groups of the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) all hold national conferences at which the national dialogue is pursued.

Next, convene focus groups of representatives from the universities/colleges in your state that have school leadership preparation programs. Engage these groups in conversations not only about the content of the knowledge base, but also about "identifying appropriate structures and pedagogical approaches for best developing student knowledge, skills, and dispositions" (Jackson, & Kelley, 2002, p. 196). Naturally, initially "standards such as ISLLC provide a vehicle for professional discourse" (Jackson, & Kelley, 2002, p. 195). Other issues to raise with these initial representative groups might include:

- Balancing the application of theory and practice in educational administration
- Collaborating with one another
- Collaborating with other state organizations and P-12 practitioners in the field
- Influencing local, state and national educational policy, especially that affecting
- educational leadership programs.

While your group proceeds through these steps, you could also be developing positions that support or oppose federal (or state) policies. For example, your group might choose to take a stand against policies that blame educators and school leaders solely for students' failure. Presently, all four federal models for reform require the removal of the principal as a first step, regardless of the situation or the amount of time that the principal has been in the position. As Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) strongly suggested, "If policy-makers insist on detailed prescription of local practices, then local leaders should be held accountable for implementing those practices with fidelity and policy-makers should be held accountable for the effects of those practices on students" (p. 224).

Additional steps for your new state organization/affiliate could include hosting state-wide events that include not only faculty members, but also practitioners and representatives from other state organizations, such as, the principals' and superintendents' organizations and the state department of education. These conferences/convocations could help your organization to position itself in the state as a leader by providing opportunities for parties interested in leadership preparation to broaden their conversations and learn about initiatives and impending policies/regulations affecting the field. Finally, feel free to contact the authors of this article for assistance in developing your state organization and initiating these types of activities.

CONCLUSION

Research has demonstrated that selected program characteristics are not only more effective for the preparation and development of educational leaders, but that they also yield better graduate outcomes (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2006; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, K., 2008; USDoE, 2005). Under normal circumstances, leadership preparation programs across the country have

always needed to increase the capacity to gauge their impact, identify successes and areas for improvement, or determine how well they prepare aspiring educational leaders. However, state legislators and boards of education must be pro-active through supportive legislation and the provision of funding for increased research. These entities must be effectively engaged in productive dialogue that recognizes the impact effective school leaders have on student achievement. Professional organizations must assume this important role to leverage the impact of quality leadership. The ongoing work of organizations such as OCPEA illustrates how specific recommendations and activities frame state advocacy for the preparation of effective and qualified school leaders.

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN LEADERSHIP

Transformational Leadership: Research, Effects, and Applications

Fred C. Lunenburg

My purpose in this chapter is to examine the concept of transformational leadership. I develop this analysis in four parts. Recent research has focused on differentiating transformational leaders from transactional leaders. I begin by discussing transactional and transformational leadership and the characteristics that differentiate these two types of leadership approaches. Then, I explore how transformational leadership works in terms of how transformational leaders impact followers and organizations. Generally, four elements emerge: creativity, goals, vision, and commitment. Next, I discuss implications for theory and practice, including studies I have conducted with colleagues, the purpose of which was to test transformational leadership theory in different school settings and at different leadership levels. Most of the research on transformational leadership to date has relied on Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). I conclude the chapter with results of a confirmatory factor analysis of the MLQ based on data from two large-scale school studies.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Building on the work of Burns (1978), Bass (1985) has developed an approach that focuses on both transformational and transactional leadership. Recent research has focused on differentiating transformational leaders from transactional leaders (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The more traditional transactional leadership involves leader-follower exchanges necessary for achieving agreed upon performance goals between leaders and followers. These exchanges involve four dimensions: contingent reward, management by exception (active), management by exception (passive), and laissez faire (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

- Contingent Reward: contracts the exchange of rewards for effort; promises rewards for good performance; recognizes accomplishments.
- Management by Exception (active): watches for deviations from rules and standards; takes corrective action.
- Management by Exception (passive): intervenes only if standards are not met.
- Laissez-Faire: abdicates responsibilities; avoids making decisions.

Transformational leadership is based on leaders shifting the values, beliefs, and needs of their followers in three important ways (a) increasing follower's awareness of the importance of their tasks and the importance of performing them well; (b) making followers aware of their needs for personal growth, development, and accomplishment; and (c) inspiring followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization (Bass, 2010).

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Transformational leadership has four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These four dimensions are often called "the Four I's (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

- *Idealized Influence*: involves behaving in ways that earn the admiration, trust, and respect of followers, causing followers to want to identify with and emulate the leader. Idealized influence is synonymous with *charisma*. For example, Steve Jobs, who founded Apple Computer, showed idealized influence by emphasizing the importance of creating the Macintosh as a radical new computer. He has since followed up with products like the iPod.
- *Inspirational Motivation*: involves behaving in ways that foster enthusiasm for and commitment to a shared vision of the future. Frequently, that vision is transmitted through the use of symbols to focus efforts. As an example, in the movie *Patton*, George C. Scott stood on a stage in front of his troops with a wall-sized American flag in the background and ivory-handled revolvers in holsters at his sides.
- *Intellectual Stimulation*: involves behaving in ways that challenge followers to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions and reframing old situations in new ways. For example, your boss encourages you to "think out of the box," that is, to look at a difficult problem in a new way.
- *Individualized Consideration*: involves behaving in ways that help followers achieve their potential through coaching, professional development, and mentoring. For example, your boss stops by your office and makes comments which reinforce your feeling of personal worth and importance in the organization.

The full range of leadership model (transactional and transformational leadership) is depicted in Figure 1. As shown in Figure 1, laissez-faire is the least effective of the leader behaviors. Leaders using this style are rarely viewed as effective. Management by exception (active or passive) is slightly better than laissez-faire, but it is still considered ineffective leadership. Leaders who practice management by exception leadership either search for deviations from standards and take corrective action or tend to intervene only when there is a problem, which is usually too late. Contingent reward leadership can be an effective style of leadership. The leader attains follower agreement on what needs to be accomplished using promised or actual rewards in exchange for actual performance. Leaders are generally most effective when they regularly use each of the four transformational leadership behaviors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Effective

Idealized
Influence

Inspirational
Motivation

Intellectual
Stimulation

Transformational

Individualized
Consideration

Passive —————— Contingent Reward ———————————— *Active*

Management by Exception
(Active)

Management by Exception
(Passive)

Transactional

Laissez-Faire

Ineffective

Figure 1. Full range leadership model.
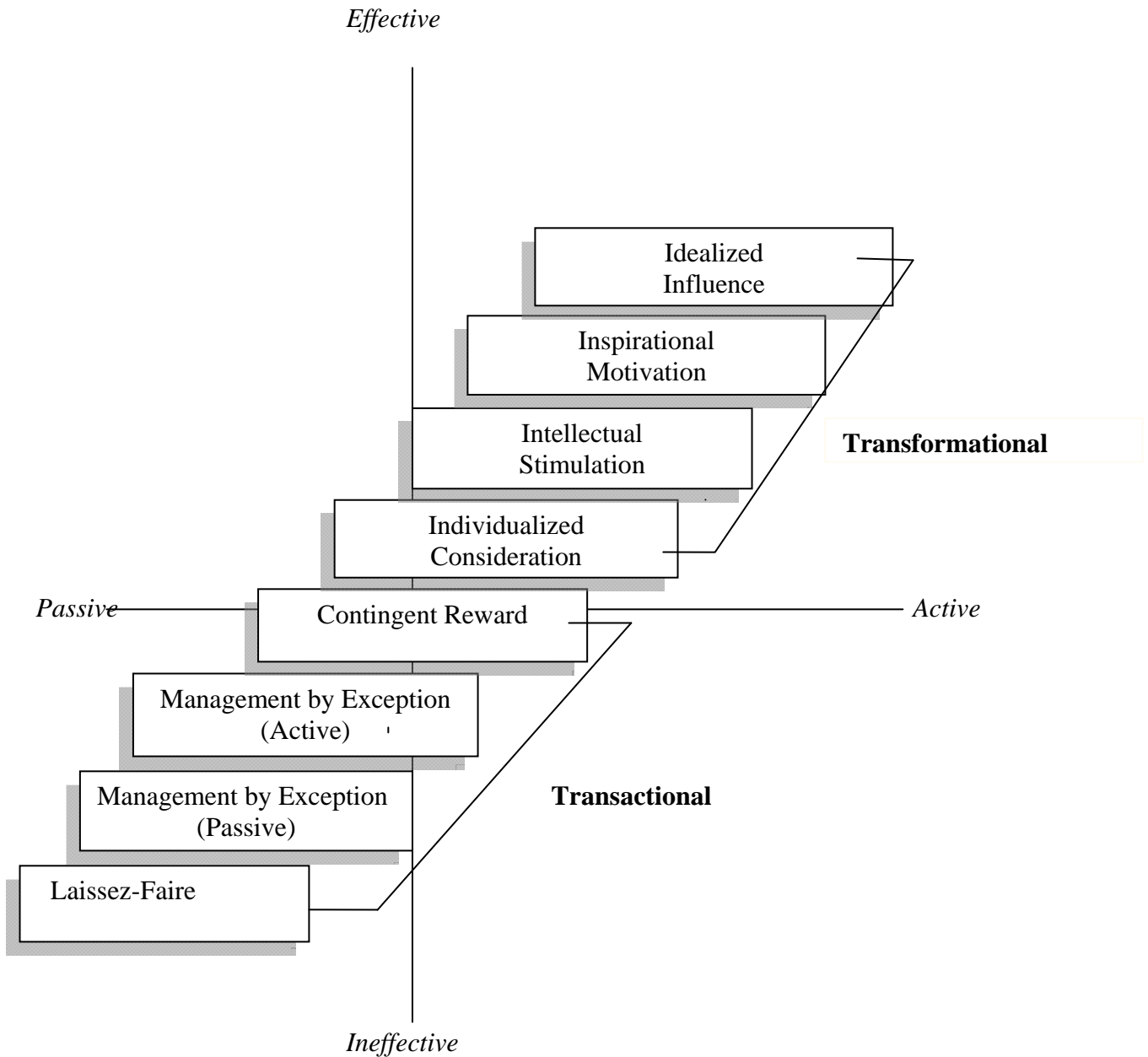
HOW TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP WORKS

A great deal of research has been done to explain how transformational leadership works. Generally, four elements emerge: creativity, goals, vision, and commitment.

Creativity

Transformational leaders are more effective because they are more creative themselves. They are also more effective because they encourage their followers to be more

creative as well (Jung, 2001; Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2003). Transformational leaders are proactive rather than reactive; creative rather than compliant; and audacious rather than adherent (Lunenburg & Ornstein, in press).

Goals

Goals are another key element in how transformational leadership works. Followers of transformational leaders are more likely to pursue ambitious goals, understand and agree with the formal goals of the organization, and believe that the goals they are pursuing will lead to their own self-fulfillment (Berson & Avolio, 2004).

Vision

Transformational leaders create a strategic vision that energizes and unifies followers (Bennis & Nanus, 2007; Quinn, 2004). They communicate the vision with emotional appeal that captivates followers and other stakeholders (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Not only do transformational leaders communicate a vision, they also model the vision. In other words, they "walk the talk" by doing things that enact the vision (Simons, 2002). For example, leaders in higher education (deans, associate deans, department heads) walk the talk by doing research, acquiring grants, and publishing extensively in the research and professional literature alongside faculty members they lead.

Commitment

Making a vision a reality requires followers' commitment. Transformational leaders build commitment to the vision through enthusiasm for every project they tackle - by being persistent in their follow-through on all projects; and by involving followers in the creation of the vision (Dvir, Taly, Kass, & Shamir, 2004).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

Transformational leadership is currently the most popular leadership approach (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002). The evidence supporting transformational leadership is impressive. Transformational leadership has been supported in various occupations (for example, school superintendents, school principals, college presidents, naval commanders, military cadets, ministers, shop stewards, sales personnel, and school teachers) and at various job levels.

A meta-analysis of 49 studies indicated that transformational leadership was positively associated with measures of leadership effectiveness and followers' job satisfaction (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002). A second meta-analysis of 87 studies indicated that transformational leadership was positively related to leader effectiveness ratings, group or organizational performance, and followers' job satisfaction and motivation (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). A third meta-analysis of 39 studies revealed that the transformational leadership dimensions of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation were related to leadership effectiveness in most studies, as well as idealized influence when an organization was in crisis. Moreover, except for the contingent reward dimension, the transactional leadership styles did not result in leadership effectiveness ratings (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

These results were reinforced by findings from two large-scale studies of transformational leadership in public school settings. The first study involved 207 school superintendents and their followers (464 principals). The second study included 170 principals and their followers (277 teachers). In both studies, three of the four transformational leadership dimensions (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) were related to leader effectiveness ratings (Thompson & Lunenburg, 2003; Pagani & Lunenburg, 2003). The authors concluded that idealized influence, or charisma, may not be a significant factor in stable public school environments. Furthermore, none of the transactional leadership behaviors, except contingent reward, were related to leader effectiveness ratings.

Most of the research on transformational leadership to date has relied on Bass and Avolio's (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) or qualitative research that describes leaders through interviews. A confirmatory factor analysis of the MLQ using data from the two aforementioned public school studies supported a three-factor model of transformational leadership (Lunenburg, Thompson, & Pagani 2004). The three factors supported by the confirmatory factor analysis appear to be consistent with three of the "Four I's" proposed by Bass.

In conclusion, there are several important leadership implications of this study. Previous research has found transformational leadership to be positively related to leader effectiveness ratings, group or organizational performance, and follower job satisfaction and motivation. (Bennis &Nanus 2007; Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Judge & Piccolo, 2004, Yukl, 2010). Idealized influence, or charisma, may not be relevant for leaders in stable public school environments. Some researchers have begun to explore the idea that idealized influence, or charisma, may be more appropriate in some situations than in others (Egri & Herman, 2000; Pawar & Eastman, 1997). For instance, idealized influence is probably more appropriate when organizations are in crisis and need to adapt than when environmental conditions are stable—that is, when dissatisfaction is high and value congruence and unquestioned obedience are needed to ensure organizational survival (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2008; Hinken & Tracey, 1999). This line of thinking is consistent with several contingency theories of leadership proposing that individuals must modify their behavior to fit the situation or find a situation that fits their leadership style (e.g. Evans, 1970; Fielder, 1967; House, 1971; Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002). Clearly, studying transformational leadership in turbulent environments might lead to a better understanding of idealized influence, or charisma.

However, the other three dimensions of transformational leadership (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) may be very important in achieving leader effectiveness. This approach would be in agreement with Bennis and Nanus (2007), who studied 90 innovative leaders in industry and the public sector and found that articulating a vision of the future, emphasis on organizational and individual learning, and the development of commitment and trust were the factors that characterized transformational leaders. These results are very consistent with the three public school studies reported here. Similarly, Yukl (2010) described transformational leadership as influencing major changes in organization members and building commitment for the organization's goals. Thus, educational leaders should communicate a sense of where the organization is going, develop the skills and abilities of followers, and encourage innovative problem solving.

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Critical Issues for Leadership:
Early Transition of Implementation to a Professional Learning Community, A Conceptual Design

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…efforts to influence basic patterns of instructional practice in American schools on a large scale have never been sustained or deep enough to have an impact beyond the relatively small proportion of schools that are willing adopters of innovations.
(Elmore, 2007, p.7)

At the most basic level, businesses and schools are similar in that in the knowledge society, they both must become learning organizations or they will fail to survive. Thus, leaders in business and education face similar challenges- how to cultivate and sustain learning under conditions of complex, rapid change.
(Fullan, 2001, p xi).

Consider the messages in these two quotes. At the one extreme is the dismal portrayal of what Elmore (2007) found as he researched the landscape of education in the United States when he reviewed results of large-scale efforts to reform schools with The New American Schools project. He found that efforts at large scale change focused more on the structural components than on fundamental changes in the instructional core.

Elmore (2007) pointed to the intractability of schools to change the educational core while Fullan called for educators to innovate, change and learn if they were to survive. How to reconcile those two statements is the backdrop for this paper, in which I analyzed the results of educators working to adopt changes in the education core of their schools, changes that were labeled as Professional Learning Community (PLC) principles. The early efforts of six suburban high school educators who engaged in PLC activities to change the culture of their schools were illuminated in this descriptive, cross-sectional research study.

For this study, I began by identifying and reviewing the essential elements of PLCs and analyzing them in relation to the culture that exists in schools. Since PLC implementations rely heavily on collaboration (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hord, 1997, 2004; Kruse & Louis, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001), I explored the transition to and results of collaboration. I applied the literature about resistance to change to the challenges of learning community work. Currently, little is known about the early days of transition to a PLC. Thus, in this study, I proposed a conceptual design in the form of four quadrants to help in understanding the roles of faculty members as they approach PLC work. Finally, I reviewed supportive structures from the research base on leading change, with an emphasis on what would be important for leaders who are interested in encouraging a staff to embrace PLC concepts.

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Research on educational change has indicated the difficulty of waging efforts at large-scale efforts, including those that change school culture. Education analysts have indicated that despite calls for education reform, little change has occurred (Cohen, 1988; Cuban, 1993; Elmore, 1992; Joyce, 2004). What is the fate of efforts to transform the school to a PLC, one in which teachers are involved in activities designed to increase student achievement through the intentional, collegial learning of faculty. School district leaders are responding to current legislation such as No Child Left Behind (PL 107-110) and public expectations that they improve in order to raise achievement levels of all students. PLCs are a means to that end. The literature about school improvement is replete with references that call for schools to become PLCs (Fullan, 2001; Hord, 1997, 2004; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, 2006; Senge, et al. 2000).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Durrin an interview with Sparks (1999), Leiberman characterized learning communities as "places in which teachers pursue clear, shared purposes for student learning, engage in collaborative activities to achieve their purposes and take collective responsibility for student learning" as cited in (p. 1). For purposes of this paper, the philosophical foundation of a learning community was taken from the literature on organizational learning from Senge, (1990), and learning community research (Fullan, 2001; Hord, 1997, 2004; Kruse & Louis, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Hord's work on learning communities with a focus on student learning provided the conceptual model that was used as a base for the survey used in this study.

Researchers have applauded the work that happens in schools involved with PLC efforts. For example, McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) stated, "Principles for professional development policy, practice and initiative that come from nearly two decades of U.S. reform underscore our conclusion that teacher learning communities constitute the best context for professional growth and change" (p. 135). Contrast that finding with Fullan's (2006) report, "But a lot of evidence indicates that PLCs (or any other strategy) are not making their way with any substance and continuity inside the classroom" (p. 56).

In PLCs, staff efforts are data-driven and results-oriented, keeping the focus on improving student achievement. Educator learning is the cornerstone of PLCs; isolation is broken down, and people begin to work together to learn about best practice and assessment, develop strategies to help students learn, and study student learning results and attempt to improve them. Leadership capacity is developed as teachers assume shared power in decision making about instructional improvements made on behalf of students. Teacher-generated assessments are used to study which students are not learning and to create strategies and interventions that will help each student succeed.

PLCs demand a shift in the culture of a school because of the changes in the collaborative nature of teachers, the emphasis on the analysis of student learning, and the shared practice that is fostered by teacher interaction. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) referred to the significant changes that schools experience when they become PLCs as second-order changes. Second-order changes result in a change in culture and an upheaval in traditions of interacting. As such, they often evoke significant resistance.

THE STUDY

Prior to coming to the university, I worked for two years as a consultant for a regional service agency assisting teacher leaders and administrators from high schools in their development of PLC concepts. The intention was that the people attending the once-a-month training for nine months would return to their schools to lead the implementation of PLC concepts. This study was conducted to determine what level of implementation was occurring in these schools one year after the training and report what the early days of transition were like for the teachers and administrators leading the changes.

For this study, a research partner and I developed a survey, delineating the PLC concepts as defined in the empirical research of Hord of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (1997, 2004). The dimensions were: supportive and shared leadership; collective learning and its application; shared values and vision; supportive conditions; and shared personal practice. Initially, the interview questions on the survey were read by content experts who were familiar with PLC concepts before the survey was used. The minor word changes that were suggested by the content experts were used as adjustments to the draft survey. The researchers were satisfied that the survey instrument had construct validity.

The survey was then field tested with educators from one of the six high schools of this study (n=7), and the results of the teacher and administrators' responses were reviewed before other teachers from the remaining schools were surveyed. This field test generated satisfactory results with respondents expressing that the questions in the survey were clearly written and understandable as to the concepts queried. The respondents expressed that the Likert scale allowed them to rate each question according to their opinion, and they answered the questions without needing clarification from the interviewer. The researchers deemed that the survey had content and face validity. No changes were made to that survey, which was used with the remaining five high schools.

When measuring the PLC concepts across the six high schools that went through the PLC training, the participants' answers were consistent, with the lowest mean scores for the prompts, "The extent to which you examine and compare student learning results," (M = 2.08) to the highest mean score, "The extent to which you agree with administrators about the need to collaborate" (M = 3.50). The consistency with which the respondents answered the questions in all six schools in terms of assessing the PLC principles, suggested that the instrument had inter-respondent reliability.

I administered the surveys as private, structured interviews, scripting the answers of each educator. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes to one hour with the principals and 30 to 45 minutes for the teachers. The survey generated qualitative and quantitative information, asking participants to rate the level of implementation of a variety of learning community principles. The survey utilized Likert-type response options with the range of 1.0 signifying "almost never" to 4.0, which signified "almost always." This information then could be summarized by the percent of responses to each choice on the scale and the overall mean. The survey utilized the standard open-ended interview (Patton, 1990) where each respondent was asked a standard set of questions. The respondents were asked to qualify each answer. For example, in the case of a question about collaboration with other teachers, they were asked to explain how that worked or what that included. The system of qualifying or explaining answers allowed the researchers to look for consistency of responses and have the benefit of understanding the reasoning behind the numeric response. Finally, there were eight open-ended questions and a final question requesting general comments.

I visited six high schools to ask the participants who had experienced the training (n = 32) to reveal the level of implementation of various PLC concepts in their schools, approximately one year after their one year of training. All respondents reported that they were actively pursuing PLC implementation. I listened to the educators' stories of what happened in the implementation of the PLC concepts and used probes and follow-up questions to clarify answers. Immediately after the participant left, I reviewed the verbatim responses and filled in any of the comments that were abbreviated in scripting (Patton, 1990).

RESULTS

In this report of the qualitative information gathered from those six high school faculty, verbal responses provided information useful for researchers to understand the acceptance of or resistance to PLC concepts. Survey results from high school members represented progress made in one year of work in implementing the PLC concepts. These results were consistent with what is known about education change; i.e., it is a slow and deliberate journey (Fullan, 2001). The information from this study indicated that teachers wanted to collaborate as they defined it which meant that they typically wanted to share information, plan, and work together. Teachers reported that they followed curriculum guides to a certain extent, but indicated that they did not work together to determine the most essential elements for each course. The importance of determining essential elements of learning and collaborating to analyze student achievement to help students achieve at higher levels is underscored in the literature about PLCs (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001), and it proved to be the most difficult challenge for the teachers in the six high schools.

For the six schools in this study, the first year of transition to a learning community was fraught with teacher frustration and confusion, moderated by a sense of hope that things could be different. In general, teachers indicated frustration that their leaders did not set a course for a compelling "call to action." The teachers were cautious about how to proceed, not wanting to further the divide among colleagues. In some cases, teachers began to splinter off to work most closely with the teachers who were most receptive to PLC concepts.

Conceptual Design for Classifying Changes Efforts

I found four distinct categories of teacher responses to PLC work in the qualitative analyses. The responses were placed in a quadrant as a means for organizing these responses and making sense of the reactions that were either resistant to or resonated with PLCs. The quadrant describes what teachers emphasized in school, how they collaborated and the essence of their work, with the continuum ranging from individualistic to collaborative. The conceptual basis for this model comes from the works of Glickman (2006), Kruse and Louis (1993) and Hord (2007).

Glickman (2006) defined the various levels of supervision of schools, relating them to the types of cultures of schools, i.e., conventional, congenial or collegial (p. 6). Glickman described conventional schools as characterized by "dependency, hierarchy, and professional isolation"; congenial schools as being places of "friendly social interactions and professional isolation"; and collegial schools as those that are "driven by: (a) a covenant of learning-mission, vision and goals; (b) a charter for school wide, democratic, decision making; and (c) a critical study process for informing decisions and conducting action research" (p. 6). Collegiality was rare in the six schools in this study. Barth (1990) indicated, "Collegiality is nice- but it is extremely difficult to introduce into the persistent cultures of schools" (p. 31).

Other analysts provided information that related to the cultures of schools, using different descriptors to define the work among teachers in the schools. Kruse and Louis (1993) described teacher actions that focus on student learning as being "cooperative, collegial or collaborative" (p. 13). Kruse and Louis regarded a cooperative approach as being superficial, where teacher focus is seldom on teacher practice, spending time more on discussing students and less on student learning. They viewed collegial relationships as being more rudimentary in their dialogue about teaching methods and student achievement. The collegial teachers shared lesson plans and had involvement with teaching, describing how they analyzed their methods for teaching. Finally, they discussed a high level of professional work that is nurtured in professional communities, referred to as collaboration, where teachers regularly discuss teaching and learning in focused and deliberate meetings.

Hord (2007) called for moving beyond congeniality. Hord stated, "A PLC requires not just congenial relationships among the adults in a school but collegial relationships and trust" (p. 4). Although these authors used different descriptors for the preferred culture needed for PLC work, they all weaved a mosaic where teachers are working together with depth, focus, purpose and professionalism.

For purposes of this paper, I merged the definitions of Glickman (2006), Kruse and Louis (1993), and Hord (2007) to define the behaviors and attitudes witnessed in the teachers and administrators in the six high schools. It seemed that *congenial* and *collaborative* would benefit from additional words or descriptors to define better what was observed in the schools; hence, the terms "congenial managers" and "collaborative innovators" were chosen.

Two very different styles of collaboration existed in the six high schools of this study, with some departments within schools demonstrating a focus on their own learning and a study of student learning results, while the majority of the educators reported working together to resolve practical issues of management, materials procurement, or sharing of teacher resources. Collaboration did not equate with improvement of teacher practice, teacher learning or focus on student learning. The resulting quadrant reflected these four characteristics, inputs to outcomes and isolation to collaborative culture (see Figure 1).

Teachers

Quadrant I   Quadrant II

Emphasis on Outcomes		

Isolated Analyzers	**Collaborative Innovators**
Individual Teachers	**Groups of Teachers, PLCs**
Review student learning	Focus on student learning
Work in isolation	Examine results of their work
Respond to students needing help	Use data for decisions
	Learn continuously
	Take risks, attempt new strategies
FOCUS: Student Learning	**FOCUS:** Teacher Learning; Teaching; Student Learning
Isolated Planners	**Congenial Managers**
Individual Teachers	**Groups of Teachers**
Plan lessons – majority of time	Meet to share ideas, resources, & materials
Work in isolation	Coordinate calendars
Work to secure materials	Solve problems
FOCUS: Teaching	**FOCUS:** Teaching Materials, Discipline, Pragmatic Issues – Tardies, Management Issues

EMPHASIS

Emphasis on Inputs

Quadrant III

Quadrant IV

Individualistic
Collaborative

CULTURE

Figure 1. Four quadrants.

The quadrants describe the emphasis of teachers and the cultures that exist in the schools in this study. The vertical axis refers to the difference in the emphasis of the teachers, whether it is on the *inputs* or materials, lessons and resources, or the *outcomes*, known as the learning results of the students. The horizontal axis refers to the type of culture that dominates the school, be it *isolating* or *collaborative*. The collaborative culture is divided between congenial managers as depicted in Quadrant IV or collaborative innovators as depicted in Quadrant II. Each quadrant has unique characteristics and emphases.

Isolated Analyzer

Quadrant I portrays the *Isolated Analyzers*, depicting the professional isolation of teachers who spend the majority of their time working alone and individually reviewing student learning results. In Quadrant I, teachers' work is basically private. Teachers work with their students to increase student achievement, but there is little to no connection with other colleagues.

Collaborative Innovators

Quadrant II, *Collaborative Innovators*, is the culture where teachers work together to study student learning results. This is the quadrant of continuous staff learning and innovation. Quadrant II teachers have intentionality about working together to improve their craft and the learning results of their students. The workers collaborate, and they do so by being cooperative and professional with each other.

Isolated Planners

Quadrant III, or *Isolated Planners*, describes the professionally isolating culture where teachers work alone, gathering materials and resources for instruction. The majority of the time is spent gathering resources as opposed to analyzing learning results or intervening to help students learn the concepts in which they are struggling. Quadrant III emphasizes teaching over learning, whether it is teacher learning or student learning.

Congenial Managers

Quadrant IV, *Congenial Managers*, describes the teachers who collaborate. Their interactions are congenial, although often superficial with regard to student learning. The teachers go "through the motions" of being congenial with each other to avoid confrontation. The teachers in Quadrant IV spend much of their time sharing resources and materials, dealing with pragmatic, day-to-day issues of management such as student tardies, discipline, hall passes, rules and regulations. Some discussions of teaching take place, but they do not dominate as the primary reason for interaction.

These findings would relate to what Barth (1990) has observed, "Usually, when we refer to 'my colleagues' we are, in fact, talking not about collegiality but about congeniality" (p. 30). He referred to congeniality as a condition where teachers get along with each other or are friendly with each other, without emphasizing teacher or student learning. The majority of comments from the teachers in this study could most generally be placed in the fourth quadrant, indicating that they were willing to share materials and resources when they were asked to meet, but the deeper levels of analyzing student learning were generally resisted. In most cases, the teachers were congenial with each other, although at other times they sought to avoid each other, citing how unpleasant it was to work with negative teachers.

Some of the comments from the teachers in this study can be classified in each quadrant as follows:

Quadrant I- Isolated Analyzers

- Teachers want to work alone and respond to those who are not learning without working with other teachers. The teachers do offer assistance to failing students. They just don't do this as a group.
- Teachers see their primary role with their 170 students each day.
- There is very little conversation with teachers. The size of our building is an issue. We're isolated from each other.
- I give the departments in this school a 'C'. We're not really doing that much with PLCs.
- Some of the elective teachers feel that this is a waste of time. I don't look forward to going to team time.

Quadrant II- Collegial Innovators

- The science department is doing great. They are concentrating on what students are learning, and they are learning from each other.
- Teachers in our department learn from each other, and we focus on student learning. Now, one department with a 56% failure rate has improved.
- Some departments have worked collaboratively before the PLC efforts, and they continue now.
- Some of our teachers are working on common assessments. Some want to know how to make themselves better teachers.
- Some teachers are looking at data analysis for their tests.
- This year, we achieved the goals of a common curriculum and shared assessments.

Quadrant III- Isolated Planners

- Our teachers plan their lessons alone. They are not working together as a group.
- It's hard to lead the meetings when you hear in the halls, 'Gee, can't wait to go to the meeting.' If the administration would come to a meeting, people would be on task.
- We keep hearing, 'Why should I do this? I'm going to retire in two years.'
- We haven't met as a leadership team in four months.
- We never discussed how difficult it would be to have to collaborate.
- Teachers want to collaborate, but how do we do this?
- Can you imagine us doing the work of a PLC? That's just not going to happen.
- The teachers are working hard, and they are working in their rooms to gather materials and plan effective lessons.

Quadrant IV- Congenial Managers

- Our teachers spend a lot of time deciding on the calendar of when things should be taught.
- We work together to share resources and materials.
- We've spent hours in PLC activities. We mostly plan on what to teach and cover.
- We are talking about the problems students have- maybe not finding solutions.

- Some teachers banded together to talk about dress code and tardies to class.
- We need to move forward to intervening when students are not learning.
- We haven't shared data, so we haven't really seen what students are learning.
- This has been a great step in the right direction. We are sharing materials.
- What do we do with the students who are not learning?

IMPLICATIONS

The quadrants presented in this paper allow for a visual representation of the complexities of change and the strength of culture in a school. The transformation to a PLC results in an upheaval of the norms of interactions for teachers. Joyce (2004) warned of the lessons that history has taught about school reform and the likelihood that lasting change will not occur. Administrators need to be aware that the PLC transformation is a) fraught with complexity, and b) one that demands the skills of a second-order change leader (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). In this situation, administrators simultaneously share decision making and empowerment while leading with strength and vision (Fullan, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

The results of this study have many limitations of generalizability. This paper reflects the perceptions of the people who experienced training for PLC implementation in six high schools. Although asked to describe what was happening within their departments and the school, the study does not reflect all faculty members' perceptions. The study represents the efforts of personnel in five suburban and one suburban-rural school. Five of the schools had socio-economic levels that were upper-middle class, and the one that was further out geographically was middle to lower socio-economic level as reported by the consultants of the regional service agency who are responsible for the training, support, and consultation with the educators from the regional school districts. Finally, this study represents the early days of transition to a PLC, and as such, does not report on the final result of the PLC efforts. Results represent a "work in progress."

The literature on school improvement does not report extensively about the early days of transition to a learning community. However, the results of the present study align with what is reported in the change literature. Although the sample is small, study results represent the difficulties of change and the natural resistance that follows as change efforts are introduced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Results indicate the challenges inherent in the early days of transition to a PLC. While the theoretical models of change provide insights concerning the *acceptance of* and *resistance to* change, they also point the way for action of practitioners who live with the change efforts on a daily basis in schools. When the literature on change models and PLC implementation are integrated, new insights were noted, ultimately termed as recommendations in this paper. The recommendations are intended for the professors who teach aspiring and practicing administrators and other educators who are leading the changes of PLC transitions. These recommendations are collapsed below, articulating findings from researchers, education analysts, and practitioners who have written about PLC implementation. Quadrant II, the place of *Collaborative Innovators* in which teachers collaborate to learn, improve practice, and analyze student learning results with an attempt to improve student achievement, is the

description of what occurs in a PLC. Quadrant II behaviors are nurtured by a mix of administrative behaviors and institutional supports. Some of the conclusions from this study resulted in insights and suggestions according to the following themes*:*

Leadership

Leaders are the role models for the PLC efforts, and they need to be conversant with the literature about what a PLC includes. In some cases, there was incredible confusion about what the teachers were asked to do in the schools as they attempted to implement the PLCs, and many teachers indicated that the leader's voice to articulate a vision was absent. Tending to collaboration is a job of the leader (Garmston & Wellman, 1999). PLCs are examples of second-order changes: therefore, they require different leadership skills. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) called for seven responsibilities effective in leading these types of changes: knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment; optimizer; intellectual stimulation; change agent; monitoring/evaluating; flexibility; and ideal/beliefs (p.70).

Teacher Learning

Collaboration without deliberate learning takes teachers only so far. People reinforce what they already know without moving to a higher level of knowledge. The principles of PLCs include continuous learning, which must be reinforced and celebrated (Fullan, 2001; Hord, 1997, 2004; Kruse & Louis, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Student Learning

Teachers must be involved in a continual focus on student learning, a non-negotiable item in a PLC. Teachers will need time and training to be able to focus on student learning (Hord, 1997; Kruse & Louis, 1993: McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Collaboration

Teachers need help in developing a culture where ideas about best education practice and student achievement are shared with depth and honesty. Professional development activities that are authentic to the tasks of studying student achievement and analyzing learning results promote teacher growth (Fullan, 2001; Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1998). History has shown that collaboration around student learning has not been the norm in schools (Joyce, 2004). Teachers could benefit from learning to engage in conversations that lead to critical inquiry in their field.

Resistance

Resistance is a natural response to an effort to transform a school to a PLC. Leaders need skills to be able to respond effectively to the reluctance to change (Fullan, 2001).The people who resist change efforts need to be respected and listened to for the important insights they have (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Mauer, 1996). Resisters should not be allowed to derail forward movement. Their voices include observations that might have been overlooked. Principals can simultaneously listen to resisters while moving the change efforts forward.

Teacher Leadership

Teachers' leadership is important in establishing a PLC. Teachers will be the change agents for improving student learning. Teachers need respect, time, and resources commensurate with the important work of improving their craft and ensuring continual student progress. The success of a PLC is demonstrated by the sustainability of teacher efforts (Fullan, 2001; Hord, 1997; Kruse & Louis, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Conflict

Conflict is not always the negative force it is depicted to be. People often go through periods of conflict as they work toward change and growth (Fullan, 2001). Some conflict is inevitable as teachers push past superficial topics and get to the deeper conversations about teaching practice and student learning. Teachers can be encouraged to understand that diversity of thought leads to chances for breakthrough, innovation, and new thought (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998).

Culture

The culture of the school is deep and entrenched in its history. It is easy to overlook the strength of the culture when attempting something as ambitious as the transformation to a PLC. Leaders need to pay attention to the culture of the school (Deal & Peterson, 1999). McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) indicated, "The leadership for change builds upon the strengths of the professional culture and challenges its weaknesses" (p.118). Schools attempting PLC implementation are involved with reculturing their schools (Fullan, 2001).

FINAL THOUGHTS

The literature base concerning PLCs continues to grow, despite the challenge in understanding how to move past resistance to change efforts. It has been 17 years since Kruse and Louis (1993) wrote, *An Emerging Framework for Analyzing School-Based Professional Community* and 13 years since Hord (1997) wrote, *Professional Learning Communities*: *Communities of Continuous Inquiry*. The literature for PLCs now includes national and international references. Fullan (2006) stated, "The shift from research (what makes professional learning communities tick) to development (how do we cause more of them to become established) also has been part of recent developments" (p.26). Fullan (2006) called for administrators to emphasize changing the culture of the school; therefore, it is not about claiming that PLC work is about adopting a "program."

What is the challenge for administrators? Understanding the intersection of the literature and theory on change, resistance, and PLCs allows for insights, such as those discussed above, to mitigate the effects of resistance. While the themes for moving past resistance suggested in this paper are not meant to be all inclusive, they can hopefully inspire, encourage, and invite principals, who are busy managing a high school and leading the efforts to become a PLC, know that the work they are doing is important to positive things happening on behalf of students. MacGregor and Smith (2005) concluded, after surveying 56 colleagues from the four-year National Learning Communities Project, "Learning communities have arrived as a national movement" (p. 2). Principals are working to implement PLC principles.

Learning how to skillfully navigate the early days of transition can be the difference in successful implementation.

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Reconciling Supervisory Beliefs and Behaviors:
A Case Study about a Collaborative Performance Appraisal Initiative

Michael Chirichello
Kevin J. Walsh

INTRODUCTION

A Blip on the Radar Screen: Teacher Supervision

In a study that began in 2001 and concluded in 2006, 140 principals in K-12 schools and 261 teachers who work in those schools completed surveys that identified the roles in which principals spend the most and least amount of time (Chirichello 2010). The principals and teachers also identified the roles in which principals would like to spend the most and least amount of time. One of the lingering questions that emerged in the analysis of the surveys focused around the role of the principal as supervisor. Principals perceived the supervision of teachers as more important than interacting with staff other than as part of the supervisory process. In contrast, teachers reported that the principal should spend more time interacting with the staff other than when they supervise (Chirichello, 2010).

Why does this dichotomy exist? School cultures historically support a belief system that is hierarchical rather than collegial and is often focused on teacher compliance rather than professional growth. Teacher evaluation is viewed as an event rather than an ongoing performance appraisal process aimed at improving student learning. Supervisor directed monologues characterize pre and post observation conferences rather than reflective dialogues or conversations that advance professional growth. Although it is important for principals to observe teachers, the evaluation process as it is today is little more than a "blip on the radar screen" that disappears as soon as the event is over. If teachers' observations are going to be meaningful, school districts must rethink the process (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

A Case for Differentiation

It has become common practice in the 21st century for educators to acquire knowledge and develop skills needed to differentiate instruction for students (Tomlinson, 1999; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Many teachers work relentlessly exploring varied approaches and strategies to accommodate individual learners reflecting their wide-ranging levels of readiness, interest and preferred learning modalities (Tomlinson, 1999; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). This is done with the belief that all students can learn and experience academic success. Tomlinson (1999) argued that it is important to recognize the myriad needs shared by human beings and satisfy those needs through different paths and timeframes. She stated, "In a differentiated classroom, the teacher unconditionally accepts students as they are, and she expects them to become all they can be" (p. 10).

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Given the current educational climate characterized by the recognition of the important role human differences play in realizing an individual's potential, it is somewhat surprising and concerning that the common practice of instructional supervision does not reflect this same philosophical belief about differentiation with respect to adults. School leaders are often reticent to embrace these same principles reflecting the importance that varied adult growth and development have on teacher success and the improvement of instruction. Despite what has become commonly accepted practice in the classroom, school leaders often fail to use a differentiated approach in the school house when it comes to the supervision of adults with whom they work (Walsh, 2010).

Differentiated supervision is a process that can take into account the varying and idiosyncratic needs of each individual teacher when the supervisor attempts to provide meaningful and substantive professional development (Rettig, Lampe &Garcia 2000). It is an approach to supervision that provides teachers with options about the kinds of supervisory support they receive. As Glatthorn (1997) stressed, "In a differentiated system, teachers can choose, within limits, whether they wish to receive clinical supervision, work with a colleague in a program of cooperative development, direct their own professional growth, or have their teaching monitored by an administrator" (p 8). Pajak (2003) supported differentiating the clinical cycle to honor diverse teaching styles to better meet the needs of inventing, knowing, caring, and inspiring teachers. The process and outcomes can be differentiated in teacher supervision.

Although differentiated and collaborative approaches dominate the current landscape of supervisory practice in pre-service teacher education, the reality is that many districts "embrace collegiality in rhetoric, but continue to practice inspectorial evaluation as the predominant mode of interaction between teachers and supervisors" (Nolan & Hoover, 2008, p. 5). The current culture of teacher evaluation does not appear to support a differentiated approach (Varlas, 2009).

There are a number of factors that may be contributing to this apparent disconnect between beliefs and behaviors. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2007) suggested there are several elements that influence teacher improvement. Among them are: (a) individual teacher learning and development, (b) adult learning and development, (c) the work environment of the school, and (d) the characteristics of the teaching profession. These factors and others could be reorganized and viewed from three general perspectives: (a) the history of supervision and the related culture of education, (b) principles of adult learning, and (c) the issue of balance with respect to control or power. These three factors are among the many issues that potentially make differentiated supervision a hard sell.

The ultimate worth of any theory is its application to real-life and relevant situations. This paper provides a theoretical framework within which the benefits of developmental supervision can be evaluated through a case study analysis of a long-term process associated with transitioning a district's staff to a new perspective about supervision. The direct application of the developmental supervisory process captures the complex process of change during a five-year period.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The History of Supervision: A Cultural Legacy

The culture of our schools reflects many of the long standing practices emanating from our early *one room school house*. This cultural legacy is often reflected in current beliefs and

the behaviors of teachers and supervisors including: (a) isolation, (b) psychological dilemma and frustration, (c) routine, (d) inadequate teacher induction, (e) inequity in physical and human resources, (f) inverted beginner responsibilities, (g) lack of career stages, (h) lack of curriculum and instructional decisions, and (i) conservatism (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon 2009). The evidence of this legacy can be found in the everyday practices in a typical school. It is the cultural baggage that is often present but seldom recognized as teachers and educational leaders try to cope with schools characterized as having *resistant cultures* (Marshall, 2009). The story tellers, those who transmit school culture, can be heard chronicling their tales in the teachers' lounge and in the hallways before and after classes. The impact contributes to a closed school climate that is a hindrance to change.

Adult Learning and Development

There is ample evidence that adults, like children, neither develop in all areas at the same rate nor to the same level. Glickman, Gordan, and Ross-Gordan (2007) summarized this point when they wrote:

> Teacher or adult development is not monolithic, linear, or eternal. The research on developmental stages provides lenses for viewing teachers individually and collectively as to their current levels of thinking and commitment. Through such lenses, we can explore possible interventions to assist teachers individually and collectively to move into higher levels of development. (p. 78)

Bradford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) presented considerations for learning that can be used as guideposts for ensuring that instructional supervision, professional development, and the evaluation and assessment of teaching is developmentally appropriate and differentiated for adults. These guideposts for effective supervision include: (a) responding to the principles of adult learning, (b) responding to and fostering various stages of teachers' development, (c) recognizing and supporting different phases with teachers' life cycles, (d) helping teachers to understand, navigate and learn from life transition events, (e) recognizing and accommodating teachers' various roles, and (f) taking into account the socio-cultural context of the teacher as an adult learner.

From Control to Empowerment

In reference to a long standing supervisory practice, Glickman, Gordan, and Ross-Gordan (2007) explained, "Throughout most of its history, supervision has operated from within a conventional paradigm (worldview), attempting to control teachers' instructional behaviors" (p. 6). This view increasingly has come under scrutiny, and in some instances, direct attack (Hoy & Hoy, 2009). For many school leaders, the closely guarded secret of ineffective and routine supervisory practices of the past has more recently been discussed in open forums and public circles. It can be argued that the merits of the legacy of our cultural heritage have come into question and a new view has been increasingly embraced by school leaders. This perspective is echoed in the words of Hoy and Hoy (2009) when they wrote, "Traditional supervision in which the principal rates the effectiveness of teachers is an outmoded concept, one that was always more ritual than reality" (p. xvi).

Effective teacher supervision must be directed by a belief system that empowers teachers to self-direct their professional growth. As Nolan (2008) stated, "These approaches

offer school systems specific strategies that can be used to provide authentic growth opportunities for those teachers who perform at high levels and who are often underserved by traditional supervision systems" (p. 80). It changes the role of the supervisor to that of a facilitator rather an individual who presupposes to have all the knowledge and all the answers. In this capacity, supervisors become much more than individuals who engage in meaningless rituals. They become something other than those school administrators described by Wiggins (personal communication, July, 2007) as individuals who rent "space in a mall to self employed entrepreneurs!"

Because those who supervise instruction work directly with teachers, an important human resource in our schools, it is important to identify the core beliefs that motivate their supervisory behaviors. These beliefs will challenge and reshape the conventional purposes and practices of teacher performance appraisal and will offer a new perspective on the supervision of instruction.

One goal of teacher supervision is instructional improvement that results in increased student learning. This perspective was reinforced by Nolan and Hoover (2008) who argued, "The purpose of supervision is to promote individual teacher growth beyond the teacher's current level of performance" (p. 8). Glickman in Glickman et al. (2007) provided further insight into this position when he made the case for a developmental and differentiated view of the supervisory process.

> Instructional improvement will take place when teachers improve their ability to make decisions about students, content, and pedagogy. The process of improving teacher decision making is directly related to the process of adult learning. Thus, research and theory of adult learning is an important component of the knowledge base for instructional supervision. (p. 52)

In reference to the importance of collaboration and reflection, Barth (1986) made the following observation:

> The most powerful form of learning; the most sophisticated form of staff development, comes not from listening to the good words of others, but from sharing what we know with others. Learning comes more from giving than from receiving. By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn. (p. 486)

In his research on reasons why teachers leave the profession, Ingersoll (2003) concluded that one of the most significant reasons both new and experienced educators leave the profession is the external control of teachers' work lives. The importance of addressing this issue through the supervisory process cannot be underestimated. The transfer of control from supervisors to the self-empowerment of teachers can be viewed along a continuum in which the customary behaviors of supervisors are modified and ownership of professional growth is moved from the supervisor to the teacher. These behaviors can be characterized as: (a) listening, (b) clarifying, (c) encouraging, (d) reflecting, (e)presenting, (f) problem solving, (g) negotiating (h) directing, (i) standardizing and (j) reinforcing (Glickman, Gordan, and Ross-Gordan (2010). This model of developmental supervision embraces the notion that the outcomes of supervisory conferences could be viewed along a continuum characterized as directive, directive informational, collaborative, and non-directive. These outcomes can be viewed from the perspective of a scale of control or power. This view of supervision allows

for increased flexibility on the part of the supervisor where a variety of approaches can be used to meet the unique needs of the teachers involved. The supervisory initial entry point along the continuum will vary from teacher to teacher and may even vary over time with the same teacher. Supervision thus becomes a dynamic and fluid process that is dependent on and responsive to individual teacher needs and varying stages of development.

Likened to an acoustical engineer who adjusts a sound equalizer to increase and decrease the intensity of different sound frequencies to create balance and harmony, so also the supervisor can be viewed as an individual who carefully adjusts the control of selected supervisory behaviors to create an environment that is supportive of teacher improvement. The supervisor uses a "behavioral equalizer" to exert more or less control over selected behaviors for the purpose of creating just the right balance for success. The extent to which the supervisor takes control or allows the teacher to have control is directly related to the developmental level of the teachers involved. The ultimate goal in almost all situations would be to create an environment that will empower teachers to take control of their own professional growth. The application of Glickman's, Gordan's, and Ross-Gordan's (2010) supervisory behaviors to the concept of a behavioral equalizer is illustrated in Figure 1.
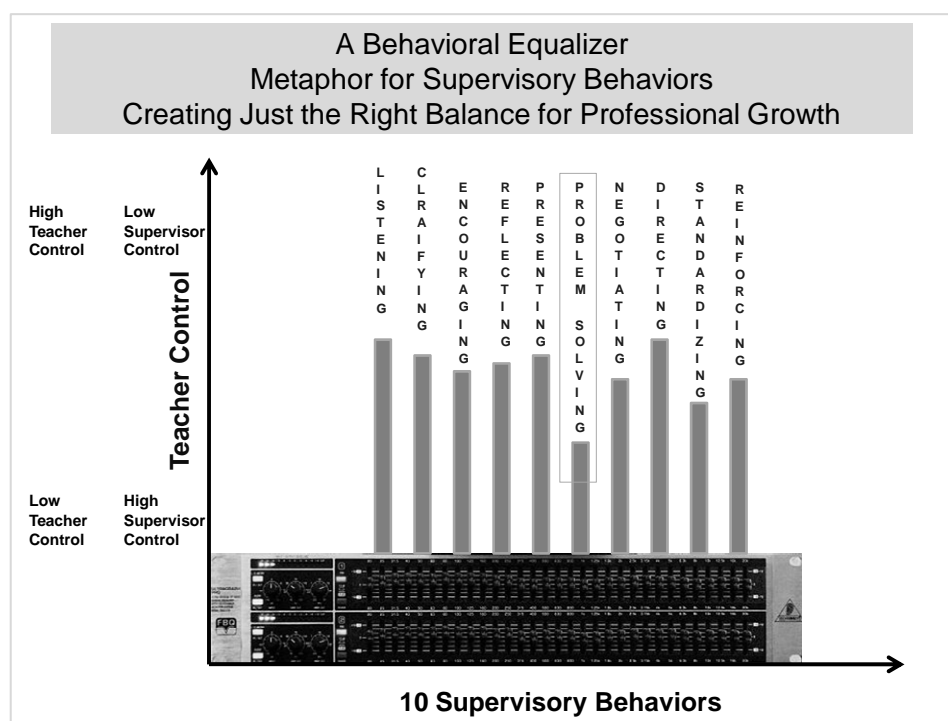
Figure 1. A behavioral equalizer.[1]

In this model, supervisors exhibit behaviors that reflect more or less direct control in a post observation teacher conversation. Controlling behaviors such as standardizing, directing, and reinforcing are contrasted with empowering behaviors such as listening, encouraging, clarifying, and reflecting. The range of behaviors reflects the continuum of control in which teachers are encouraged and expected to take increased responsibility for their own growth

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[1] Permission to use Figure 1 from NJASCD, Walsh, K. (2010).

and development. When the selected behaviors match the developmental level of the teacher, an environment is created in which self-actualization becomes a reality.

Differentiated supervision incorporates the observation process as one of several approaches to working with teachers to improve instruction, but it is not the only approach. If the ultimate goal of the supervisor is to develop reflective, autonomous teachers facilitated by nondirective supervision, then a differentiated approach is warranted. As Glickman et al. (2010) stressed, "The fact that many teachers are functioning at developmental levels or in situations in which self-direction is not feasible means that the supervisor often must initially use collaborative, directive information or, in rare cases directive control behavior" (p. 133). When teachers are encouraged to assume ownership for their professional growth, self-directed growth, action research, and collegial development groups become the norm.

Revisiting Supervisory Beliefs

Revisiting supervisory beliefs and developing the willingness to try something new moves everyone out of his/her comfort zone. If differentiated supervision ultimately empowers teachers and transforms the teacher observation process resulting in real self improvement and professional development, then the effort will be well worth it. If real differences are to be made in teacher development and instructional improvement, it is time to base supervisory decisions and behaviors on a new cultural legacy, the theory of adult learning and the benefits of shared power. Ultimately, it is the student who benefits from this collegial approach to teacher supervision. Differentiated supervision may be a hard sell at first, but the dividends will make it worthwhile and effective. The short term change and the long term transition associated with this view could have lasting and powerful effects for both teachers and students (Walsh, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

A Case Study about a Collaborative Performance Appraisal Initiative

Leaders who understand change focus on the journey more than the destination. They spend time developing a plan for change. They embark on the journey from *what is* to *what should be*, one step at a time. The process of letting go of the old, traveling through the neutral zone, and arriving at new beginnings becomes more important than the change itself. Bridges (2003) identified this process as *making transitions*. Leaders know, "It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions" (p. 3).

Located in Sussex County New Jersey, the Vernon Township School District took on the challenge to change its leadership team's supervisory beliefs and behaviors. The team included approximately 25 department supervisors, assistant principals, principals, central office personnel, and the superintendent. The New Jersey School Report Card (2008) lists three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school in the district with a population of approximately 4,570 students. One of the authors was contracted as a consultant to facilitate the district's journey to reframe the teacher supervisory process.

During the 2006–07 school year, teams of school leaders and the consultant observed at least one teacher from each building and several teachers in the high school who volunteered to participate in the Collaborative Performance Appraisal Initiative (CPAL). Following each session, schedules were arranged to meet with the teacher and have a post-observation conversation. Initially, the consultant assumed the role of supervisor to model

directive, collaboration, and self-initiated conversations (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005) using Danielson's (2007) domains and indicators as a basis for asking reflective, open-ended questions. Strategies from Marquardt (2005) were used to develop sophisticated essential questions that would raise the level of conversation and model critical thinking skills. As the year progressed, the district's leaders conducted the post observation conversations, and the consultant became the *critical friend.* For this case study, the researcher followed the work of the CPAI for five years.

The site visits and individual classroom observations continued. They mirrored the lesson-study protocol, a Japanese approach to classroom instructional improvement (Lewis, 2002). A team of school leaders collaboratively planned, observed, reflected, discussed, and reflected again on the lesson they observed. This process resulted in consistent, positive feedback from both the teacher who was observed and the school leaders. The lesson-study protocol resulted in continuous improvement, and at the same time, it reinforced a culture which valued collaboration and collegiality.

RESULTS

Letting Go of the Old—Year One

Reconciling supervisory beliefs and behaviors in the Vernon Township School District began in 2004. Three goals were collaboratively developed with the leadership team that focused on the improvement of supervisors' written observation reports. These goals included (a) the improvement of individuals' performance appraisal skills, (b) the application, review and practice of these skills, with a self-selected dyad partner from the leadership team, and (c) the analysis and critique of each other's performance appraisal reports using a *critical friends'* protocol.

Following the first workshop, the leadership team reached consensus on seven tenets that were adapted from Sullivan and Glanz (2000). Performance appraisal (a) is about engaging teachers in reflective thinking and discussion about the analysis of instruction, (b) will enhance teacher thought and commitment to instructional improvement, (c) describes the behavior first and then interprets it second, (d) gives teachers choices, (e) requires observers to be aware of their personal bias, (f) has limitations and requires observers to create a limited number of focus areas that will become the convergent topics of discussion subsequent to the observation and (g) requires the observers to visit with teachers in multiple settings**.** Initial efforts focused on the differences between note-taking and note-making, active listening skills, *I* messages, barriers to effective communication, differentiated post-observation conversations (rather than supervisor directed post-conferences), and indicators of highly effective teaching strategies based on the six domains included in the district's teacher observation instrument.

Transitions: Years Two and Three

After a year of relative inactivity, in the summer of 2006, a decision was made to refocus the leadership team on the district's performance appraisal process. What began as a focus on writing observation reports expanded to developing a performance appraisal process that would include teaching strategies, post-observation conversations, teachers' professional improvement plans, and differentiated   professional development. From the beginning, teachers were included in the decision-making process since the change process depends not

only on leaders who understand how to make transitions successfully, but also on creating an open climate that is supportive, collegial, and intimate (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). This initiative was referred to as the Collaborative Performance Appraisal Initiative (CPAI).

Five goals were identified for the CPAI. The leadership team would: (a) become familiar with Danielson's (1996) four domains to enhance professional practice, (b) use the four domains as a framework for writing observations, (c) improve the quality of their written narratives using the district's observation form, (d) apply the four domains to the district's annual evaluation report, and (e) analyze and critique each other's written observations using a *critical friends'* protocol. This protocol provided a context through which the school leaders could understand their work, their relationships with one another, and their thinking, assumptions, and beliefs about the performance appraisal process. In this context, the word "critical" means important, significant, and meaningful. Costa and Kallick (1993) identified a critical friend as "… a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend…. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work" (p. 49).

Each of the domains and indicators for planning and preparation, the classroom environment, and instruction (Danielson, 2007) became the focus of the school leaders' professional development sessions. Role playing and simulations using video tapes of authentic classroom lessons of teachers from this district focused on the three types of post observation conversations. School leaders learned how to differentiate their feedback during directive, collaborative, or self-initiated conversations (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). These alternatives provided the delicate balance necessary to supervise the full spectrum of teachers from the novice to the most experienced. As a result of this process, a new mission statement for the CPAI emerged:

> The Vernon Township School District would continue to enhance the
> performance appraisal skills of the leadership team and create an awareness
> among the teaching staff about the value of performance appraisal as a process
> that will enhance teaching strategies and sustain a culture in which everyone is
> accountable for improving student learning outcomes.

This mission statement became the mantra that kept the leadership team focused on five goals. Performance appraisal (a) is an integral part of the district's mission statement, (b) will be connected to the teachers' Professional Improvement Plans, (c) will be closely aligned to the professional development opportunities offered to teachers, (d) will enhance teaching strategies and improve student learning outcomes, and (e) will shape a culture in which everyone is accountable for the continuous improvement of student learning outcomes.

The district's leadership team focused on the need for change during the 2006-07 school year. As district teachers became aware of the need to change the observation process, they became more accepting of this new initiative. Unless teachers can reach consensus on why things must be improved or done differently, they will continue to resist changes (Chirichello & Richmond, 2007). Effective school leaders know that they must focus on the need for change rather than the change itself (Duke, 2004).

The early success of this initiative was the result of: (a) reframing by focusing on the need for change rather than the change, (b) building relationships by focusing on people in the organization and creating a supportive culture in which risk-taking was encouraged, and (c) repeating the message in many different contexts with both the leadership team and the teaching staff (Deutschman, 2007).

New Beginnings—Year Four

Before the 2007-08 school year began, a decision was made by the superintendent to meet with the executive board of the teachers' association to review the CPAI's mission statement and goals. The executive board agreed that the current performance appraisal process was not effective. Consensus was reached to support the CPAI and develop school and department level action plans for its implementation. At the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, principals and department supervisors worked collaboratively to develop and initiate the plans. The executive board also recommended that the district's professional development committee incorporate this initiative into the new teacher induction process. The district began to evolve into communities of professional practice.

The consultant met with each school's staff at the beginning of the school year to explain the CPAI. Representatives from the central office attended each meeting to reinforce the district's unconditional support for this initiative. At each of the meetings, the teachers' reactions were overwhelmingly positive. A few teachers expressed some skepticism that this initiative would come and go rather than become institutionalized. The majority of teachers welcomed this initiative because it would define teacher expectations during the performance appraisal process; it supported a culture which values accountability and life-long learning; and it would guide future district policy.

The lesson-study protocol continued as teachers volunteered to participate in the process, and their feedback continued to be positive. The consultant assumed the role of critical friend, and the participating principals, assistant principals, and department chairs led the post observation conversations. The volunteer teachers who participated in the process began to discuss their experiences with other staff members in their respective schools. Each school chose one domain and one or more indicators in that domain to discuss during staff meetings. These indicators became the focus of classroom observations. The idea of differentiating the performance appraisal process by offering alternatives to formal observations was introduced by the consultant. Additionally, a department chair who attended a conference on walkthroughs shared his experience with the leadership team. Everyone agreed that learning walks (Lemons & Helsing, 2009) would be placed on the leadership team's agenda in the subsequent school year. In March, the leadership team agreed that the current observation form needed to be revised. The revision process was completed during and subsequently approved by the teacher's association and the board of education. It was implemented during year five.

The Journey Continues—Year Five

At the beginning of the fifth year (2008-09), the CPAI was initiated throughout the district using the revised performance appraisal observation form. In January 2009, a formative assessment of the CPAI was completed by the school leaders. It contained open ended questions as well as forced choice responses using a Likert-type scale. As a result of the analysis, the following district needs were identified:

- Develop a deeper understanding about and a meaningful process for walkthroughs.
- Explore ways to link the Professional Improvement Plans to the CPAI.
- Continue to develop post-conversation skills especially for directive conversations.
- Continue to develop skills to identify and model effective teaching strategies.

- Continue to develop skills for writing evaluations that focus on the language of the domains and indicators.
- Bring the district's teacher evaluation forms up to date to reflect the changes in the 2nd edition of Danielson's (2007) book.
- Develop new forms for non-teaching professional staff.

The CPAI's goal was to improve the teaching-learning-assessment practices of teachers and learning outcomes for students. Although the leadership team indicated that the new process was valued by the staff and themselves during the formative assessment in January 2009, the researchers would have to develop additional quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments to assess the impact of the CPAI on teaching strategies and student learning outcomes as the CPAI continues.

As the 2009–10 school year began, there was a transition in superintendents. The superintendent who initiated the CPAI retired, and the district hired a new superintendent from outside the district. Future conversations about the CPAI with the new superintendent will include a proposal for designing qualitative and quantitative assessments to measure the impact of the CPAI.

DISCUSSION

Courageous Leadership

This case study illustrates that the transition from *what was* to *what could be* is challenging but possible. The current teacher evaluation systems found in most schools, although well intentioned, are "… not helpful for teachers who are looking to improve their practice. Nor do they assist administrators in making difficult decisions regarding teacher performance" (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 3).

Changing the belief system about performance appraisal demands courageous leadership. Schools must adapt a comprehensive performance appraisal process. Providing extensive and ongoing professional development for school leaders must be part of that process.

This process, however, must begin with the preparation programs for school leaders. Programs that prepare school leaders to assume their roles as principals must focus on developing their knowledge, interpersonal, and technical skills. Aspiring leaders must value a collaborative performance appraisal process. They must know how to generate instructionally specific formal and informal conversations that give teachers a clear sense of what they should work on and how to implement effective teaching strategies (Portin, et al, 2009). They must know how to ask questions that give teachers opportunities to become reflective practitioners. Aspiring school leaders must learn to lead for instructional improvement. They must know how to apply differentiated supervision through directive, collaborative, and self-initiated pre- and post-conversations during the formal evaluation process; they must understand how to plan differentiated professional learning opportunities as a result of formal and informal teacher observations; and they must be able to relate the outcomes from the performance appraisal process to teachers' professional improvement plans. Aspiring school leaders must understand the life-cycle of the career teacher and know how to differentiate supervision for the novice teacher, the experienced teacher, teachers in need of improvement, and teachers who are capable of self-improvement. They must vary supervisory approaches

throughout the life-cycle of the career teacher and draw on a repertoire of approaches that includes formal observations, learning walks, peer coaching, lesson study, collaborative teams, and action research. They must know how to recruit and develop a highly qualified teaching staff. Aspiring school leaders must know how to use data to inform instructional practices and improve student learning outcomes. Learning-focused supervisory leadership will lay the groundwork for learning improvement (Portin, et al, 2009).

Practitioners must collaborate with professors to achieve these learning outcomes within the context of university and alternative preparation programs for school principals. There exists a national imperative to strengthen the preparation of school leaders (The Wallace Foundation, 2008). Possessing the courage to bridge the gap between supervisory beliefs and behaviors is a place to begin. Courageous leadership must become the way of the future (Glanz, 2007).

Future Research

During the next two years, the authors will continue to: (a) identify current research related to philosophical beliefs and current best practices of teacher supervision, (b) collect data with respect to the philosophical beliefs of school principals about teacher supervision, (c) collect data concerning the actual practice of these principals, and (d) analyze the data collection to determine the degree of consistency that exists between beliefs and practice, and the factors that affect this possible discrepancy. The authors will also initiate a conversation about an assessment process for the CPAI with the school leaders in the district described in the case study. The authors hope that further research will result in practical recommendations that can narrow the gap between the perceptions of principals and teachers about the importance of the performance appraisal process. The authors believe that narrowing the gap is a critical issue for effective school leadership.

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High School Athletic Director Roles:
Views from Rural School Superintendents

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Athletic participation numbers are increasing (National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2007); consequently, athletic department leaders must perform numerous roles and responsibilities within the public school program (Malcolm, 2005). Texas leads the nation in athletic involvement with 763,967 participants (NFHS, 2007) out of 1.2 million high school students (Texas Education Agency, 2005). These numbers show that 63% of Texas secondary students participate in athletics. Because of the large number of students who are involved and the increasing abundance of duties under the athletic director's control, high school athletic directors are in a position that calls for numerous leadership roles (Read, 2000).

As early as 1930, athletics was described as "one of the time-consuming and challenging problems confronting school administrators today" (Haggard, 1930, p. 390). Consequently, Parkhouse and Lapin (1980) were the first researchers to analyze the role of the high school athletic director in five administrative functions: (a) organization, (b) decision making and problem solving, (c) planning, (d) communication, and (e) evaluation. Researchers have demonstrated that as athletic directors perform their jobs, they directly impact the climate of the athletic organizations (Scott, 1999; Snyder, 1990). Athletic directors also understand the impact this climate can have on educational performance of students (Smith, 1993).

In comparison to other district level administrators, the athletic director deals with the largest segment of students, the largest group of staff within a department, and the most visible activities of the school (Hoch, 2000). Monitoring athletics and evaluating the athletic director are important functions of the superintendent's job. A portion of this monitoring is performance assessment and the review of specific expectations (Boulmetis & Dutwin, 2000; Davis & Hensley, 1999). Accurate assessment and review perhaps may be enhanced if the expectations within these standard roles and responsibilities are established.

PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE

The broad topics of management and leadership have been studied comprehensively in the business setting and in various other contexts. Researchers have also recently examined intercollegiate athletic administration extensively (Cunningham, 2002; Mahoney, Hums, & Riemer, 2005; Quarterman, Dupree, & Willis, 2006; Robinson, Peterson, Tedrick, & Carpenter, 2003; Ryska, 2002; Suggs, 2005; Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002; Wolverton, 2007). In

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contrast, very few studies were completed in the area of high school athletic administration within the last decade (Pedersen & Whisenant, 2005; Schneider & Stier, 2001; Stier & Schneider, 2001; Whisenant, 2003; Whisenant, Miller, & Pedersen, 2005; Whisenant & Pedersen, 2004). Whisenant largely focused on gender inequity in athletic director positions. In non-gender related research, the focus has been on the athletic director's expectations (Barnhill, 1998; Branch, 1990; Miller, 1982; Schneider & Stier, 2001; Smith, 1993; Soucie, 1994; Stier & Schneider, 2001). No research studies were conducted in Texas to establish the perceptions of high school athletic directors as viewed by superintendents.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Researchers have established how athletic directors view their roles and responsibilities (Barnhill, 1998; Branch, 1990; Miller, 1982; Smith, 1993; Soucie, 1994). However, no research had been conducted in Texas to establish how school superintendents view these daily roles. This study was designed to examine Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the roles and responsibilities of the high school athletic director in five administrative functions: (a) organization, (b) decision making and problem solving, (c) planning, (d) communication, and (e) evaluation. As such, this investigation may be beneficial to current superintendents and athletic directors by providing insight into the perceptions of the high school athletic director position. Understanding these perceptions may provide a framework for current or aspiring high school athletic directors to use when making daily decisions regarding their expected responsibilities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, we addressed five research questions concerning Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in: (a) the organization of the athletic program; (b) decision making and problem solving; (c) planning the athletic program; (d) communication for the athletic program; and (e) program and staff evaluation.

METHOD

Participants

The purposive sample targeted included the 180 superintendents who worked in rural Texas 3A school districts as classified by the University Interscholastic League (UIL) in the 2008-2010 realignment (UIL, 2008). All superintendents in these 180 districts were sampled. Of the 88 superintendents who responded to the survey, 13 were female and 75 were male. Six superintendents were within the youngest age group of 34 and 39. The next four age groupings revealed a relatively even distribution. Of the respondents, 22 were between the ages of 40 and 45, 19 were between the ages of 46 and 51, 22 were between the ages of 52 and 57, and 18 were between the ages of 58 and 63. When these four groupings were added together, 92% of all superintendents participating were between the ages of 40 and 63. Only one superintendent was over the age of 64.

Superintendents were queried in the next demographic question about the years of experience they had in coaching. Of the respondents, 58% ($n = 51$) had some background as an athletic coach. Of the 51 superintendents with experience, 18 coached for 5 years or fewer,

21 coached between 6 and 10 years, 7 coached between 11 and 15 years, and 5 coached 16 years or more. There were 37 participants (42%) who had no coaching experience.

Of the superintendents, 38 (43.2%) had 5 or fewer years of superintendent experience. There were 24 superintendents with 6 to 10 years experience, 15 superintendents with 11 to 15 years experience, and 11 superintendents with 16 or more years experience in the position. When added together, a large majority (70.5%) had been a superintendent for 10 or fewer years.

Rural is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as any area not classified as urban. In the 2000 census, urban was defined as any area of census blocks with a population density of 1,000 people or more per square mile combined with any surrounding census blocks with densities of at least 500 people per square mile (State of Texas Comptroller, 2001). Schools classified as rural are examined because the role of these schools is often different from schools in urban or suburban areas of Texas. These schools not only serve as academic centers; they also serve as social and cultural centers, providing entertainment through sports, theater, music, and other activities (Lyson, 2002). As defined in this study, UIL 3A school districts are single high school districts with a ninth through twelfth student enrollment of 430 to 979 students (UIL, 2008).

School districts classified as 3A by the UIL were selected based on the administrative hierarchy common to this classification. Athletic directors in this classification are generally full-time athletic department employees with no teaching or administrative duties outside athletics or physical education. The superintendents of 3A districts commonly are the direct supervisors and evaluators of the districts' athletic directors (Bauch, 2001). Larger 4A and 5A classifications tend to have multiple layers of administration between the athletic director and the superintendent. In districts smaller than 3A, the athletic director usually has additional responsibilities assigned such as academic classroom teacher.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was completed by superintendents on a voluntary basis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Survey results were used to indicate the relative importance that superintendents placed on 32 tasks related to the job of athletic director. Cronbach (1950) and Nunnally (1967) advocated the use of an even number of scale points because the use of a "neutral" category allows the participant to make neither a positive nor negative choice. A four-point Likert scale was used that included: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The first phase of survey development included reviewing the existing literature to identify any previously created instruments. Kelley's (2002) instrument for measuring interscholastic athletic director perceptions of roles was chosen and then modified by removing the items measuring educational attainment and leaving the remaining items relating to tasks intact.

Kelley's (2002) instrument was developed from his research on responsibilities of interscholastic athletic directors (Bucher, 1987; Parkhouse, 1996; Parkhouse & Lapin, 1980). Directly from this research, a new 32-item survey instrument to determine the importance for each task was developed. Section I of the survey contained demographic data including age, gender, coaching experience, years as superintendent, and years in current position. Section II identified 32 tasks that athletic directors routinely perform. This list correlates to the Parkhouse and Lapin (1980) administrative functions which include: (a) organization, (b) decision making and problem solving, (c) planning, (d) communication, and (e) evaluation. All functions were distributed and the instrument contained seven tasks related to planning,

five tasks related to decision making and problem solving, seven tasks related to organization, eight tasks related to communication, and five tasks related to evaluation.

Score Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell, 2005). Cronbach's coefficient alphas were calculated to gauge reliability of the summated scales (see Table 1).

Table 1. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α) for the Five Functions of
Athletic Directors Ranked by Mean.

Function	*M*	Coefficient Alpha
Evaluation	3.59	.58
Organization	3.51	.75
Communication	3.44	.77
Decision Making and Problem Solving	3.31	.66
Planning	3.26	.78

Note. *M* = Mean.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the functions of evaluation and decision making and problem solving were less than the desired .70 (Nunnally, 1967). However, these two functions had only five items each on the survey. This low number of items could explain the low alphas. Hattie (1985) showed that Cronbach's coefficient alpha increases with an increased number of items.

Score Validity

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure. A pilot study was completed by Kelley (2002) with athletic directors (*n = 30*) who classified the instrument as appropriate in terms of content. Feedback received from the athletic directors indicated that the tasks on the survey covered the tasks they perform. Content and face validity for the instrument was established through: (a) a panel of experts, (b) review by a doctoral committee, and (c) a pilot study. Based on their recommendations, a revised survey was submitted to a panel of 15 Texas high school athletic directors. This inspection, to determine whether the instrument measures what the instrument purports to measure, added face validity (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006) to the survey used in the current study.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) recommended a pilot study be conducted to (a) ensure the items yield reasonably unbiased data, (b) identify any unclear items, and (c) allow for revision of the items. A pilot study was conducted by Kelley on a stratified sample of 30 high school athletic directors within the state of Ohio. All respondents reported that the instrument was "well constructed and essential for identifying the complexity of the tasks/duties and responsibilities athletic directors perform" (Kelley, 2002, p. 43). We conducted an additional pilot study on the modified instrument with 15 Texas superintendent candidates. Information gathered from the pilot studies and expert panels were incorporated into the final instrument.

PROCEDURES

A total of 180 surveys were distributed by email to all members of the sample to collect data. Each administrator received an emailed letter explaining the research study and requesting his or her participation in my study. Because no identifiable characteristics were collected to indicate which superintendents had responded, two follow-up emails were sent to all members of the sample. An opening paragraph asked them to disregard the email if they had already completed the survey. Efforts were made throughout the process to update incorrect email addresses that resulted in failed delivery. Each email included notification of endorsement from the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association and endorsement from the Texas High School Coaches Association. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire within a one-month period. All participants who completed the survey were offered a copy of the completed study for their reference.

Yun and Trumbo (2000) documented an average response rate for emailed surveys of 36.83% ($n = 31$). They also established an increase in response rate was obtained with individuals with advanced degrees when a follow-up message was sent (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). This follow-up technique was used for this study because all superintendents in Texas hold advanced degrees. A total of 88 of the 180 superintendents participated in the survey, producing a return rate of 49%. This return rate exceeded Yun and Trumbo's average and also exceeded the 40% return rate expected on survey research (Dillman, 2007).

RESULTS

Athletic Director Tasks

After demographic data were collected, superintendents were asked to assess the importance of 32 tasks related to the job of high school athletic director using a four-point Likert scale. When the individual tasks were ordered by mean, four groups became apparent. The first group included the 11 most important tasks indicated by a mean range between 3.92 and 3.64. The highest rated tasks were maintaining working relationships with other staff members and recruiting and supervising coaches. The second group of nine tasks had a mean range between 3.60 and 3.45. The mean distribution of the 20 highest rated tasks is provided in Table 2.

The third group of five tasks had a mean range between 3.38 and 3.02. They were: (a) coordinating team transportation, (b) arranging and paying for game officials, (c) administering disciplinary action to student-athletes, (d) managing facilities and athletic fields, and (e) coordinating intervention programs for alcohol/drug issues among athletes. The lowest ranked six tasks in the fourth group had a mean range of 2.98 to 2.52. They were: 26. Working with student leadership groups (student council, music groups, etc.), 27. Utilizing data to respond to spectator and community member pressure and politics, 28. Developing and implementing risk management and emergency plans and procedures, 29. Dealing with school-wide crises, 30. Developing pay policies that adhere to Equal Pay requirements, 31. Planning and implementing fundraising activities conducted by school personnel, and 32. Marketing the athletic program to corporations for sponsorship purposes.

Table 2. Highest Rated Tasks for Athletic Directors.

Task	M	SD
1. Maintaining working relationships with school staff (principals, teachers, etc.)	3.92	.27
2. Recruiting and supervising coaches	3.91	.29
3. Resolving conflicts between coaches, players, and parents	3.86	.38
4. Preparing budgets	3.83	.38
5. Developing and implementing policies and procedures for coaches and athletes	3.75	.44
6. Developing and maintaining policies on sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity	3.75	.46
7. Assessing coaching candidates for educational beliefs, values, and practices	3.72	.52
8. Assessing parent and student perceptions of the athletic program	3.69	.51
9. Working with external support groups (booster club, civic organizations, etc.)	3.69	.49
10. Scheduling athletic competitions	3.66	.52
11. Assessing student-athlete eligibility and UIL issues	3.64	.51
12. Marketing the values of the athletic program to the community	3.60	.54
13. Purchasing equipment, supplies, uniforms, etc.	3.60	.52
14. Dealing with difficult people and situations	3.59	.52
15. Managing equity stipulations and Title IX compliance	3.55	.55
16. Managing athletic events	3.55	.55
17. Coordinating athletic awards banquets and special events	3.53	.57
18. Properly maintaining medical forms and insurance documents	3.50	.53
19. Performing public relations and communicating with the media	3.47	.52
20. Communicating with other athletic directors	3.45	.59

Note. M = Mean and SD = Standard Deviation.

To consider which of the five administrative functions had the highest importance, all tasks for each function were summed, and an overall mean for each task was calculated (Table 3). The highest ranking function was evaluation ($M = 3.59$), followed by organization ($M = 3.51$), communication ($M = 3.44$), decision making and problem solving ($M = 3.31$), and planning ($M = 3.26$).

Table 3. Five Functions of Athletic Directors Ranked by Mean.

Function	M
Evaluation	3.59
Organization	3.51
Communication	3.44
Decision Making and Problem Solving	3.31
Planning	3.26

Note. M = Mean.

Question One: What are Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in organization of the athletic program?

The first research question was an examination of the importance of individual tasks superintendents believed high school athletic directors should be performing in the area of organization. Seven items were on the survey (Items 4, 11, 12, 19, 20, 23, and 26) related to organization. Descriptive statistics for these items are identified in Table 4.

Superintendents identified preparing budgets as the most important organizational tasks performed by high school athletic directors. All superintendents agreed budgeting was

important with no superintendents rating this task less than a 3 on the survey. Managing equity stipulations and managing athletic events were next with identical means. Those tasks were followed by coordinating athletic awards banquets, maintaining medical documentation, arranging and paying game officials, and managing athletic facilities and fields. All organizational tasks fell in the agree or strongly agree range indicated by means above 3.00.

Table 4. Tasks Superintendents Rated for Athletic Directors Concerning Organization.

Task	*M*	*SD*
4. Preparing budgets	3.83	.38
11. Managing equity stipulations and Title IX compliance	3.55	.55
12. Managing athletic events	3.55	.55
19. Coordinating athletic awards banquets and special events	3.53	.57
20. Properly maintaining medical forms and insurance documents	3.50	.53
23. Arranging and paying for game officials	3.35	.70
26. Managing facilities and athletic fields	3.25	.72

Note. *M* = Mean and *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Question Two: What are Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in decision-making and problem solving?

The second research question was an examination of the importance of individual tasks superintendents believed high school athletic directors should be performing in the areas of decision making and problem solving. Five items on the survey (Items 8, 13, 14, 29, and 31) were related to decision-making and problem solving. The means and standard deviations for each item are identified in Table 5. The top two decision-making and problem solving tasks indicated by superintendents had very similar means. Purchasing equipment, supplies, and uniforms and dealing with difficult people and situations were the top two items. These items were followed by administering disciplinary action to student-athletes, coordinating intervention programs for alcohol/drug issues among athletes, and dealing with school-wide crises. All decision-making and problem solving tasks fell in the agree or strongly agree range indicated by means above 3.00 with one exception. Dealing with school-wide crises had a mean of 2.86 indicating superintendents disagreed with this duty being a task of the high athletic director.

Table 5. Tasks Superintendents Rated for Athletic Directors
Concerning Decision Making and Problem Solving.

Task	*M*	*SD*
8. Purchasing equipment, supplies, uniforms, etc.	3.60	.52
13. Dealing with difficult people and situations	3.59	.52
14. Administering disciplinary action to student-athletes	3.31	.73
29. Coordinating intervention programs for alcohol/drug issues among athletes	3.18	.62
31. Dealing with school-wide crises	2.86	.71

Note. *M* = Mean and *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Question Three: What are Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in planning of the athletic program?

The third research question was an examination of the importance of individual tasks superintendents believed high school athletic directors should be performing in the area of planning of the athletic program. Seven items on the survey (Items 1, 9, 15, 16, 22, 24, and 28) were related to planning. Descriptive statistics for these items are depicted in Table 6. Developing and implementing policies and procedures for coaches and athletes and developing and maintaining policies on sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity were the highest ranked planning tasks. Superintendents also agreed that scheduling athletic competitions and coordinating team transportation were important tasks. As indicated by means below 3.00, a majority of superintendents disagreed with developing and implementing risk management plans and procedures, developing pay policies adhering to Equal Pay policies, and planning and implementing fundraising activities conducted by school personnel as being important tasks for the high school athletic director.

Table 6. Tasks Superintendents Rated for Athletic Directors
Concerning Athletic Program Planning.

Task	*M*	*SD*
1. Developing and implementing policies and procedures for coaches and athletes	3.75	.44
9. Developing and maintaining policies on sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity	3.75	.46
15. Scheduling athletic competitions	3.66	.52
16. Coordinating team transportation	3.38	.59
22. Developing and implementing risk management & emergency plans and procedures	2.93	.71
24. Developing pay policies that adhere to Equal Pay requirements	2.78	.82
28. Planning and implementing fundraising activities conducted by school personnel	2.55	.77

Note. *M* = Mean and *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Question Four: What are Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in communication for the athletic program?

The fourth research question was an examination of the importance of individual tasks superintendents believed high school athletic directors should be performing in the area of communication. Eight items were on the survey (Items 6, 7, 10, 17, 21, 25, 30, and 32) related to communication. Descriptive statistics are depicted in Table 7. The highest ranked communication function, maintaining working relationships with school staff, also had the highest mean of any task in the survey. The next communication task was resolving conflicts between coaches, players, and parents which ranked third overall in the survey. No superintendent indicated disagreement with either of those tasks being important as indicated by neither task receiving any rank less than 3.

Table 7. Tasks Superintendents Rated for Athletic Directors Concerning Communication.

Task	M	SD
6. Maintaining working relationships with school staff (principals, teachers, etc.)	3.92	.27
7. Resolving conflicts between coaches, players, and parents	3.86	.38
10. Working with external support groups (booster club, civic organizations, etc.)	3.69	.49
17. Marketing the values of the athletic program to the community	3.60	.54
21. Performing public relations and communicating with the media	3.47	.52
25. Communicating with other athletic directors	3.45	.59
30. Working with student leadership groups (student council, music groups, etc.)	3.02	.61
32. Marketing the athletic program to corporations for sponsorship purposes	2.52	.77

Note. *M* = Mean and *SD* = Standard Deviation.

The next highest communication task was working with external support groups (e.g., booster club, civic organizations) followed by marketing the values of the athletic program to the community, performing public relations and communicating with the media, communicating with other athletic directors, and working with student leadership groups (e.g., student council, music groups). Within the communication function, only marketing the athletic program to corporations for sponsorship purposes was below a mean of 3.00. This item was the lowest rated task within the communication function. This task was also rated by superintendents as the least important of the 32 tasks on the entire survey.

Question Five: What are Texas rural public school superintendents' perceptions related to the high school athletic director's role in program and staff evaluation?

The final research question was an examination of the importance of individual tasks superintendents believed high school athletic directors should be performing in the area of program and staff evaluation. Five items on the survey (Items 2, 3, 5, 18, and 27) were related to organization. Recruiting and supervising coaches was the highest rated evaluation task and second highest rated task overall. No superintendent disagreed with this task being a function of the high school athletic director's job as indicated by all scores being above 3. Within the evaluation function, assessing coaching candidates for educational beliefs, values, and practices was next, followed by assessing parent and student perceptions of the athletic program. The next task was assessing student-athlete eligibility and UIL issues, and the lowest rated evaluation task was utilizing data to respond to spectator and community member pressure. Utilizing data to respond to spectator and community member pressure was the only evaluation task with a mean below 3 indicating a majority of superintendents disagreed that utilizing data was an important task.

Table 8. Tasks Superintendents Rated for Athletic Directors
Concerning Program and Staff Evaluation.

Task	M	SD
2. Recruiting and supervising coaches	3.91	.29
18. Assessing coaching candidates for educational beliefs, values, and practices	3.72	.52
5. Assessing parent and student perceptions of the athletic program	3.69	.51
3. Assessing student-athlete eligibility and UIL issues	3.64	.51
27. Utilizing data to respond to spectator & community member pressure & politics	2.98	.76

Note. *M* = Mean and *SD* = Standard Deviation.

DISCUSSION

Superintendents identified preparing budgets as the most important organizational task performed by high school athletic directors. This finding supported Miller and Williams (1983) who identified budgeting as an important role of the athletic director. School budgets are always under public scrutiny, and running a planned fiscally responsible department is important (Grant, 2004). Superintendents must defend their budgets to the school board which in turn must answer to the community. All superintendents agreed budgeting was important, as none rated this task less than a 3 on the survey. Title IX regulations must always be considered when running an athletic department. Staffing, facilities, equipment, and other support services must all adhere to the federal regulations (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Superintendents understand this requirement along with their ethical obligation to treat all students and programs fairly. Managing equity stipulations and managing athletic events were next after budgeting with identical means.

It is not surprising that managing athletic events was considered highly important. Management of athletic contests is the most visible aspect of the athletic director's job (Smith, 1993). Interscholastic athletics has been reported to be an effective opportunity to serve as a unifying factor of individuals within the same geographic area (Eitzen & Sage, 2003; Rader, 1999). Fans and community members pay admittance to contests, and they have a high set of expectations about what they are spending their money to watch.

Schools are nearly a continuous stream of decision making opportunities (Tuten, 2006). The athletic director is hired, as are all administrators, to make daily decisions about running the organization. Giving administrators more control of these decisions makes them more effective leaders (Johnson, 2002). The two highest ranked decision making and problem solving tasks indicated by superintendents had very similar means. Purchasing equipment, supplies, and uniforms and dealing with difficult people and situations were the two highest ranked items. This finding was supported by Grant (2004) and Miller and Williams (1983), who noted that because of the impact the task has on the school budget, purchasing equipment, supplies and uniforms must be near the top of all athletic directors' priority lists.

High school athletics is an emotion-stirring phenomenon. Coaches, players, parents, and fans often disagree on the methods employed or results attained (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Conflicts may arise anytime there are multiple viewpoints on how individual situations should be handled (Isaacs, 1999). The ability of the athletic director to deal with these difficult people and situations is seen as an important consideration by superintendents. Athletic directors must utilize numerous techniques to deal with the wide range of issues and with people whom they come in contact (Shields, 2004).

The remaining items agreed on by a majority of the superintendents were administering disciplinary action to student-athletes and coordinating intervention programs for alcohol/drug issues among athletes. For an athletic department to be successful, a high level of discipline must be maintained in the program (Cousins, 2004). Just as the athletic director is charged with holding his or her coaches accountable for performance, athletes must also be held accountable.

Superintendents agreed that coordinating intervention programs for alcohol/drug issues among athletes was important. These programs help to encourage healthy lifestyles by students when they are away from the direct supervision of their coach. These programs may range from simple counseling and education sessions to intensive testing and rehabilitation services for those students with known problems.

The climate and culture of a school or department is in part determined by the outcomes associated with the decisions of its administration including athletic directors (Lindsay, Halfacre, & Welch, 2004; Nye, 2004; Thomas & Bainbridge, 2002). Though this impact is substantial, the responsibility for school-wide interventions falls with other administrators, according to the results of this study. Superintendents disagreed that dealing with school-wide crises was a task of the high athletic director. Leaders must actively engage in solving problems to continue effective organizational functioning (Samier, 2002). Within the problem solving function, superintendents agreed. With the exception of dealing with school-wide crises, all decision making and problem solving tasks fell in the agree or strongly agree range.

Efficient operation of a department requires standard operating procedures be in place (Beach & Lindahl, 2004). Developing and implementing policies and procedures for coaches and athletes, including developing and maintaining policies on sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity, were at the top of the planning tasks ranked by superintendents. This flexibility to mold each program to fit the community supports Hersey and Blanchard (2007) and Beach and Lindahl who clarified that programs "must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each school" (p. 20). Superintendents also agreed that scheduling athletic competitions and coordinating team transportation to these contests were important tasks.

Athletic directors must implement local, state, and national policies (Bucher & Krotee, 1988) and ensure school boards have set and developed pay policies that align with Title IX and other regulations. Superintendents indicated they did not believe it falls under the athletic director's responsibilities to develop pay policies adhering to Equal Pay Act policies. Financially, superintendents also indicated that planning and implementing fundraising activities conducted by school personnel were not important tasks of the high school athletic director.

The highest ranked communication function indicated was maintaining working relationships with school staff. The ability to maintain a work environment where everyone has a shared vision of the goals of the organization is important (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Athletic directors must be able to work with principals, other directors, coaches, teachers, custodians, security officers, ticket sellers, cafeteria workers, and all other people who have an impact on the athletes or the programs they direct. This ability to foster positive relationships with school staff had the highest mean of any task in the survey. This finding supported the work of Shields (2004) who wrote that administrators must be able to facilitate dialogue among diverse and marginalized groups. None of the superintendents indicated disagreement with this task being important.

The next highest ranked communication task was resolving conflicts between coaches, players, and parents. No superintendent disagreed that this task was important, and it ranked third overall in the survey. Coaches, players, parents, and fans often disagree on the methods employed or results attained during athletics. The ability of the athletic director to deal with these difficult people is seen as very important by superintendents.

Similar to the fundraising task analyzed in the planning function, superintendents were consistent with their denial that finding outside funding sources was a job of the athletic director. In the communication function, marketing the athletic program to corporations for sponsorship purposes was below a mean of 3.00. An explanation of why fundraising or corporate sponsorships was not important to the respondents may be the size of school represented. Rural Texas 3A superintendents may not have the community size that will allow for a sustained campaign of fundraising or sponsorship requests from the athletic

department. Larger classifications, in more densely populated areas, usually have different approaches to fund raising (Watkins & Rikard, 1991).

Because the athletic program is the largest nonacademic program available for students (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003), having a staff of coaches who interact positively on a daily basis with those students is critical for success (Shea, 2006). Superintendents agreed and ranked recruiting and supervising coaches as the highest ranked evaluation task and second highest rated task overall. No superintendent disagreed that recruiting and supervising coaches was a function of the high school athletic director's job. This finding is supported by the literature (Duquin & Tomayko, 1985; Knorr, 1989) which contains evaluation of coaching performance as a basic function of the athletic director.

With so many duties, the ability of the athletic director to manage all of the duties alone in an effective manner is highly unlikely (Hoch, 2002). The athletic director must be a leader with the ability to delegate (Barnhill, 1998). He or she must then be able to supervise and manage those delegated tasks.

IMPLICATIONS

For Superintendents

Forty-two percent (42%) of the responding superintendents had no coaching experience from which to draw. This limited exposure to athletics potentially limits the understanding a superintendent has of the role of the athletic director. Superintendents who have limited knowledge need to identify what other superintendents seek in their high school athletic director. Those superintendents can use the results of this study to familiarize themselves with the predominant tasks superintendents across Texas expect from their athletic directors.

Superintendents must hold their athletic directors accountable for maintaining working relationships with other staff members, for hiring and retaining successful coaches, and resolving conflicts between coaches, players, and parents. These tasks were clearly at the forefront of the data. Athletic directing is a profession that is built on working with people and students. Public relation skills must be in place for high levels of success (Hoch, 2002).

When a superintendent is hired, he or she often evaluates all existing personnel. The first step in a fair evaluation process is to have clear and explicit explanations of job expectations (Tucker, 2001). Understanding the tasks of the athletic director's job will help each superintendent finalize his or her personal set of standards. This set of standards also becomes important whenever a change is made in leadership of the athletic department. The superintendent must know the traits he or she is looking for in an athletic director. Maintaining working relationships, along with a director's ability to hire and retain successful coaches must be remembered when interviews take place. Hiring an athletic director incapable of performing the tasks assigned may be futile, even if that candidate appears to have other traits seen as desirable.

For Athletic Directors

High school athletic directors must have a passion for their position (Malcolm, 2005). When an individual is passionate about his or her job, it becomes a personal work. Athletic directors must always remember, however, that they do not operate alone in their guidance of the school's athletic programs. Superintendents are the chief administrator of the school

district, and high school athletic directors ultimately report to them for job performance. Because of this layered authority, athletic directors must always remember that the job they are doing should be aligned with the wishes and expectations of the superintendent and district.

Athletic directors must make it a priority to hire and retain quality coaches for the sports program. Coaches are the direct link between the athletic department's philosophies and goals and students. The successful athletic director must have the ability to identify the best candidate from a pool of applicants. Once hired, athletic directors are responsible for empowering these coaches to establish goals and motivating them to achieve them (Soucie, 1994). Superintendents agreed that athletic directors must evaluate these coaches and determine how best to improve the programs they lead. Effective athletic directors coach their own coaches to make them a part of their team.

Not only do athletic directors need to have good working relationships with their superintendent and their coaches on staff, athletic directors must foster relationships with other members of the school system (Scott, 1999). It is important for the athletic director to be able to problem solve and work cooperatively with principals, counselors, teachers, maintenance personnel, bus drivers, and food service employees. All these individuals will be among those persons who work with the athletic department on a daily basis. The athletic director's ability to communicate effectively and facilitate projects with these individuals will significantly influence his or her success.

Individuals who aspire to be high school athletic directors may examine the results of this study and identify areas for professional growth with which they are not familiar. Those individuals can seek specific opportunities that will strengthen their abilities in deficient areas such as public relations or budgeting. Athletic director positions are often hard to obtain so success upon hiring is important. With the priorities outlined by these superintendents, aspiring athletic directors will be well served to understand communication skills and human resource management. Professional development opportunities in these areas should be sought out and utilized.

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A Social Justice Framework for Navigating the Sea Change in Public School Life

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DEMOCRACY AS A VERB

Social justice leadership is a sea change. A *sea change* is a profound transformation to a prevailing paradigm that occurs in society and within educational institutions. The work of social justice is inclusive and responsible, alive and dynamic, powerful and life changing. The change that leaders enact at cultural and organizational levels is evident in the felt-transformation of a community's way of thinking or behaving. While democratic processes generate change to educate more broadly and deeply, these can also preserve the status quo. Radical social justice theorist Cornel West (2005), explaining this idea, makes a crucial distinction between types of democracy. In *Democracy Matters,* he writes that *democracy* as a verb connotes "a more dynamic striving and collective movement" and that *democracy* as a noun implies "a static order or stationary status quo" (p. 68). Thus, democracy can reflect a sea change, stasis, or a mere tweaking of what already is.

Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks' (2009) provocative essay can be interpreted within this framework. A serious concern expressed within the administrative leadership scholarship is that the education profession is not moving in a democratic direction. Based on their extensive review of the current literature and conclusions drawn about school leaders' readiness to address pressing democratic and accountability agendas, they conclude that aspiring school leaders are generally not adequately prepared to face "fierce accountability and fiscal pressures" (p. 2); public school leaders are themselves at a loss as to how to create conditions that advance "the rights and education for all children" (p. 2), and the curricula of leadership preparation programs are still not predicated upon "a broader and deeper understanding of social justice, democracy, and equity" (p. 2).

Based on a reader's reaction, some faculty members in education and school practitioners alike may deem the previous statements to be broad generalizations. Reactions of this kind surface questions about whether sufficient supporting evidence exists for these claims. Many of us know faculty members who believe they are doing a good job preparing democratic school leaders for the harsh world of high-stakes accountability systems. Those who work on the ground level of schools might similarly believe that public schools are, in fact, successfully educating children and advancing their rights as citizens.

PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION

This discussion is exploratory in nature. It is a brief treatment of concepts that are fundamental to the development of aspiring leaders as social justice advocates of democratic accountable leadership (DAL) that brings into view the concepts of accountability and democracy.

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I draw upon insights from empirical case studies I have conducted alone and with colleagues. I build on findings from my review of the extant literature, including perspectives on the contested site between democracy and accountability. With this tension in mind, I advance the meta-concept of democratic to unpack meanings of DAL and to relate these to the priorities and interests of aspiring executive leaders of schools and districts (Mullen, 2008; Mullen, Harris, Pryor, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2008). For the purposes of this essay, I am theorizing this social justice model of leadership with reference to sociopolitical issues that affect the current schooling enterprise and dynamics of leadership preparation.

In 2009, I searched databases in education, identifying articles and books published since 1970 that enabled my social justice theory to develop. Descriptors used for my search were *democracy*, *accountability*, *democratic accountable leadership*, and *social justice*. I narrowed my search to examine DAL as a type of social justice framework that forges a theory of practice relevant to educational leaders. I posit that DAL has potency and value for aspiring leaders and education professors. Faculty members who prepare practitioners as democratic stewards of executive leadership may find this social justice orientation useful in their teaching. Practitioners from schools and districts may also discover ideas that inform the direction of their work.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCEPTIONS: A POSITIONAL REVIEW

In this section, I draw on concepts of democracy, accountability, and leadership to describe the synthesized principle of DAL and its potential relevance for school leaders.

Democratic Accountable Leadership

Arguably, educational leadership faculty members are responsible for ensuring that the high-order competency of social justice thinking is attainable for aspiring leaders. Herein, I refer to this capacity as *democratic accountable leadership* and define it as a theory of practice (Hoffman-Kipp, 2003) for which the tenets of democracy and accountability (e.g., individuality, community, justice, fairness, equity) are weighed in critical decision making. Higher education students preparing for executive leadership roles will strive to understand the governing principles of accountability and democracy in order to accomplish democratic ends in ways that are both just and responsible. First, they must grapple with the inherent tension between accountability and democracy in their work and, contradictorily, how, in some instances, these are conflicting and, in other cases, mutually reinforcing. Second, they need to interpret ways in which accountability and democracy function as forces that influence competing agendas. Finally, aspiring leaders will deliberate about this theory through ongoing negotiation, unlearning of outdated assumptions, and new learning.

Social justice leaders committed to the democratic and accountability values inherent in their role thoughtfully integrate these tenets within their orientations and actions. Principals, teachers, and others who are social justice leaders have "a social justice orientation to issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically marginalizing factors central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 221).

These leaders should be concerned whether a lopsided view of leadership that overemphasizes accountability and undervalues social justice prevails in the schools and districts that they will lead. They should be concerned that the life world of school leaders has been compartmentalized, relegating democracy to a noun—and an accountability treadmill

that is constantly moving but directionless. Dantley (2004), English (2008), Kincheloe (2003), Shields (2006), along with many other social justice scholars, have persistently brought these issues to our attention; individually and collectively, they have advanced robust democratic visions for guiding schools and the nation.

A core argument these scholars make is that skills- and test-driven educational standards and learning outcomes are embedded within capitalist practices that perpetuate efficiency and production, competition, and inequity. Measurable progress is being demanded on student test scores, school grades, and district progress; results are publicized, comparing disadvantaged schools of low socioeconomic standing with their privileged counterparts. The assumption is that students learn when teachers are held to rigorous (i.e., measurable) standards of accountability and that high-stakes testing is the key to success. However, citing national testing data from 17 American states, Berliner (see Amrein and Berliner, 2002) has demonstrated that it is "indeterminate" whether increased scores can even be equated with actual student learning. In other words, one can perform muscle work without the necessary mind work. Proponents of high-stakes accountability conversely argue that these are productive systems of change. Some empirical studies, though, report mixed results, implying a more complicated picture. In Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Owens, & Clements' (2003) study, for example, teachers in both low and high performing schools responded positively and negatively to high-stakes accountability systems. On the one hand, teachers revealed a positive influence on their learning and ability to focus on academic standards and expectations for their teaching; on the other hand, they described a negative influence on their learning as perpetuated by ineffectual professional development trainings and confusion governing what they needed to do to raise student achievement.

Social justice leaders consciously or unconsciously address the dissonance (and cognitive distance) between democracy and accountability in their schools and districts. For example, in an effort to create power-sharing arenas for transformative communal work within their own locales, leaders have developed sustainable professional learning communities that are simultaneously teacher led and learner centered (Bullough & Baugh, 2009; Mullen, 2009). The DAL model (see Mullen, 2008; Mullen et al., 2008) proposes that democracy is a discourse and practice, as well as a mental and physical muscle that integrates democratic "principles of freedom, equity, and social practice" (Giroux, 1992, p. 5) and accountability of a reflective, higher order (English, 2003).

While the concepts of democracy and accountability may be thought of separately, leaders must be vigilant about (1) envisioning these principles as a whole and (2) vigorously integrating them in practice. Shields and Mohan (2008) have appealed to principals and other democratic leaders to refuse to assimilate truncated forms of accountability and democracy predicated upon academic comparisons that reinforce ethnic and other stereotypes of ability. Some scholars argue that because standardized curricula and testing subvert alternative instruction and assessments for at-risk students, such practices jeopardize a "socially just" worldview (Shields, 2006; Kincheloe, 2003). High-stakes accountability likely frustrates educators attempting to enact democratically grounded models in their domains, but they must persevere at building a new world (English, 2008; Harris & Alford, 2005).

The DAL model is the conflation of twin issues composed of accountability and democracy. This model is intended to have real-world appeal to leaders working in high-stakes environments. Diverse meanings of DAL include participatory leadership involving collaborative decision making and inclusiveness in policy and practice, and responsibility for the learning and success of all student subgroups. Democracy and accountability—two seemingly disparate constructs, conceptually and practically—share resonances and overlaps,

dissonances and ruptures. DAL, a social justice framework, lays bare these dual principles. Through collective agency and social action, the activist leader is a broker of change who performs across the democratic–accountability platforms of freedom, equality, responsibility, and improvement (see Figure 1 for conceptual clarity).
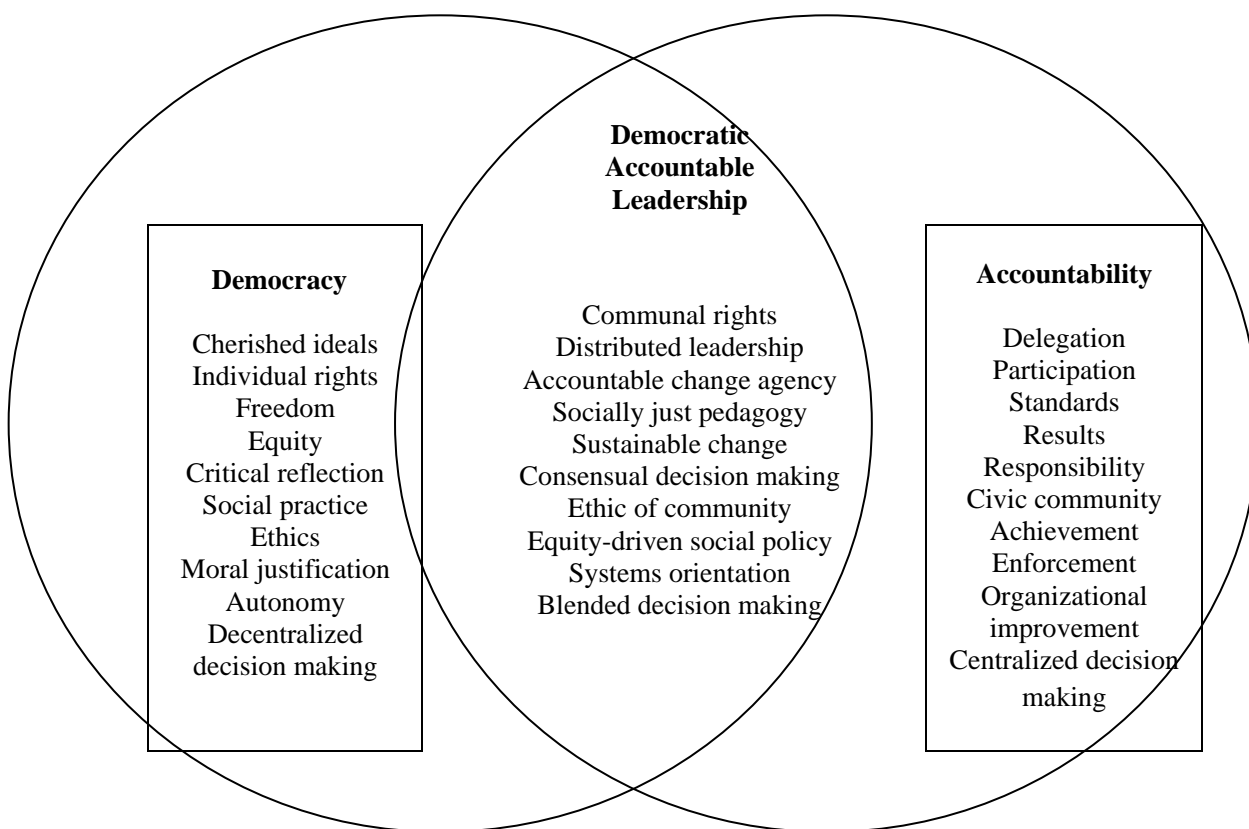
Democratic Accountable Leadership

Democracy

Cherished ideals
Individual rights
Freedom
Equity
Critical reflection
Social practice
Ethics
Moral justification
Autonomy
Decentralized decision making

Communal rights
Distributed leadership
Accountable change agency
Socially just pedagogy
Sustainable change
Consensual decision making
Ethic of community
Equity-driven social policy
Systems orientation
Blended decision making

Accountability

Delegation
Participation
Standards
Results
Responsibility
Civic community
Achievement
Enforcement
Organizational improvement
Centralized decision making

Figure 1. A visual of the tripartite concept of democratic accountable leadership.

Benefits of preparing future school leaders for the diverse educational needs of their constituencies (e.g., Davies, 2000) include (1) responding to multicultural needs of a school and community (Campbell, 1996), (2) understanding the value of deliberation in school contexts (Singleton & Linton, 2005), and (3) being prepared to interpret and establish school norms and sanctions (Callender & Wright, 2000). These actions clarify the democratic components (e.g., multicultural) and accountability components (e.g., sanctions) of school leadership that are inevitable and for whom contextually-driven principles and priorities will be necessary.

PORTRAIT OF A DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABLE LEADER

To what extent are educational leaders actually willing to change and inspire or lead significant cultural and organizational changes within and beyond their domains? Change theorist Fullan (2003) asked this question at the outset of *Change Forces*. It is hoped that leaders who exercise a dual capacity in their work as democratic accountable leaders confront the "bifurcation" between top-down governmental control and local communal control that he

claims unfortunately characterizes school life. However, even though democratic leaders may discover ways to narrow this deep-seated tension in their own schools, the necessity for effecting change beyond the local context must be addressed.

Next, a snapshot follows of leader attitudes and behaviors gleaned from my studies of the DAL framework (Mullen, 2008; Mullen, et al., 2008). Participants were aspiring leaders from the states of Florida and Texas.

Table 1. Attitudes and Behaviors of Democratic Accountable Leaders.

Models the behaviors and ideals expected from stakeholders within the organization
Demonstrates ethical standards in resolving conflicts and executing policies
Allows each stakeholder the space to voice concerns and ideas in a non-threatening environment
Routinely sets goals and meets them by maximizing the strengths and talents within the organization
Negotiates and renegotiates with others toward equitable consensus
Empowers those being led to engage actively in shaping and satisfying organizational goals
Assumes responsibility for providing an environment of equity and equality by collaboratively building a culture of equity and requiring democratic principles of representation among groups within the system
Uses professionally-acceptable accountability measures to continually adjust policies and actions for meeting an organization's needs

Given this portrait, in a democratic accountable community that entrusts the DAL leadership with change momentum, the leader is supported by the entire community. That person or team functions as the voice of the community. Such a leader is responsible for considering ideas and incorporating suggestions from all members, or at least representative stakeholders. In addition, this principal, superintendent, or other leader acknowledges personal responsibility for understanding democratic principles and for effectively implementing them.

Regarding the expectation to transform practice when faced with standardized accountability measures, some leaders may feel that their hands are tied, thus limiting their potential to foster change. Others may express difficulty in meeting the differing needs of students when state systems expect educators to focus on all groups achieving mastery. Aspiring leaders have importantly emphasized that each leader and educator must accept responsibility for demonstrating democratic purposes aligned with the greater good (Mullen, et al., 2008).

Democratic accountable leaders are identifiable by virtue of particular principles and agendas, purposes, and values. These attributes function as action-oriented beliefs, allowing leadership for social justice to be evidenced in practice (Jean-Marie, 2008). Leadership that is steeped strictly in accountability goals places great strain on democratic agendas (Shields, 2006; Shields & Mohan, 2008). Leaders who mindlessly follow dictates and mandates are puppets. They must rise to the occasion of transforming their puppetry drama into active democracies that can only be changed by synthesizing accountability principles with democratic principles through daily action. Similarly, leaders who focus exclusively on democratic agendas as though their actions exist in a vacuum apart from policy-driven

accountability pressures, including high-stakes accountability, may win the battle, but lose the war (Mullen et al., 2008); that is, they may exemplify democratic leadership only to be relieved of their leadership positions, particularly if their schools do not achieve the requisite scores on various accountability measures. However, this perspective, while legitimate, is somewhat oversimplified—for example, in addition to the likely concern of job insecurity is the loss of responsibility to individual student learning that accountability emphasizes.

The personal model of accountability assumes that it is the responsibility of the leader or leadership team to enhance the participation of such constituents as community members, parents, administrators, teachers, employees, and students (Grant & Keohane, 2005; Jones, 2006). Leaders' performance is, in effect, judged by stakeholder groups and the entire community (or representatives thereof). The personal model of accountability is communicated through sanctions and mandates. Aspiring leaders may view these in black-and-white terms, either as positive outcomes for learning organizations or punitive for nonconforming school systems. Leaders know that domestic power structures reproduce skills- and test- driven educational standards and learning outcomes. But do they seek understanding of the dynamics of accountability and democracy within the larger sociopolitical context? The bearing of this interface is likely several imaginable steps away from their present concerns and roles.

Thus, the necessity for effecting change beyond the local school community with respect to sociopolitical action and policymaking has saliency for leadership preparation programs. Fodder for contemplative analysis includes messages of puppetry (e.g., academic standards are mandated; academic freedom is curtailed; punitive consequences are threatened or endured for perceived inadequacy of school performance) that some prospective school-and-district leaders have conveyed in higher education settings (Mullen, et al., 2008), as well as some classroom teachers at their school sites (Kincheloe, 2003). The image of school leader as puppet is alarming, if not disturbing—this imagery needs to be interrogated and changed through real-world experiences of liberation. Images of leadership empowerment underscore the social influence and policy activism integral to the role of democratic accountable leaders.

Some public schools are entrenched in inequitable practices that do not promote the capacity of poor and minority students to engage in authentic and alternative approaches to learning (Kincheloe, 2003; Shields, 2006; Shields & Mohan, 2008). Social justice leaders in these places may experience facilitating democratic thought and action an unprecedented source of stress because such efforts go "against the grain." Kincheloe (2003) has quoted classroom teachers who describe some of their public schools as places dominated by a technical standards-driven mentality that is top-down, curricula that is prescribed, and leadership that is authoritarian. In this culture where social justice is not a priority and equity-oriented approaches to academic excellence consequently suffer, dreams of making a difference are dashed.

Social justice convictions necessitate a loss of power for privileged groups, with the goal of, for example, reallocating resources to support equity-related political work and marginalized groups. Leadership that promotes compacts of collective agreement, action, and governance across constituent groups is a moral act that powerful groups from inside and outside the school environment may resist. Years ago, Sergiovanni (1992) described this kind of transformative work as necessary for creating democratic work conditions for leaders, teachers, children, and parents through such means as the making of promises to others that must be kept.

Internal compasses of authority, such as documented schoolwide promises, can guide critical decision making to the benefit of the entire polity. Thus, it is incumbent upon all leaders to study the complex dynamics of democracy and accountability that inform their work, leadership, and social identity, and to investigate promising practices that have reportedly made a difference for the better. Despite the tension inherent in their democratic–accountability roles, leaders must determine how to democratically and creatively address accountability pressures that increase tension, reduce morale, and perpetuate burnout (Kincheloe, 2003), turning these into renewing strengths. Their thinking, then, must be as fully integrative as possible of nuanced understandings of accountability and democracy that advance their mission. The extent to which leaders use conflicting and complex situations as material for change-oriented "mind-work" and "muscle-work" (Lugg, Bulkley, Firestone, & Garner, 2002) is simply unknown.

Leaders of schools and districts keep the accountability part of the accountability–democratic equation squarely within view. Principals learn to negotiate competing agendas, especially when their "feet are to the fire" and their reputation is on the line (Peck & Mullen, 2010). Principals are under constant pressure, for example, to satisfy the demands of accountability systems that measure school and district progress via "a status model of accountability," notably adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2009). AYP is used to monitor the progress of American public schools toward high achievement for all students. A nonprofit organization of public officials, the CCSSO mission is to provide capacity-building support to state leaders responsible for "creative problem solving" regarding AYP. I imagine that the Council must exert itself against the status quo of accountability to guide creativity in problem solving and instructional delivery. If this is accurate, then the Council's work might serve as an example of enacting and deepening democracy. The challenge that West (2005) has identified for educators is to live out a concept of democracy that is active and action-oriented (i.e., a verb) within our varying contexts.

Stewards of democratic change are being morally called upon to problem solve dynamics associated with accountability-loaded reforms. Some teachers have felt angry and hopeless, believing they have been shut out from their own moral calling to teach with integrity (Kincheloe, 2003). Some leadership teams are so worry-bound about the veiled threat of punitive consequences—notably, drastic cuts in funding that may lead to school closings (Amrein & Berliner, 2002)—that their educational efforts are democratically staid and even morally questionable, as in the reports of cheating on test scores. Fear and trepidation short-circuit the democratic principles inherent in a higher-order concept of accountability.

In contrast, leaders who apply their energies toward developing their constituents as stewards of democratic accountability that maximize the greatest potential of freedom but as deeply connected to responsibility in their daily work show what is both moral and possible. Their curricular programming treats as value-added, not deficient, students who are poor, diverse, and at-risk, and those with different capabilities and backgrounds. They focus on societal problems ensnared within the microcosm of their own school communities. The Children's Aid Society (2006) has reported that the "unequal treatment" of African American and Hispanic males is pervasive. Widespread "discrimination and prejudice" (p. 3) leads to school dropout and incarceration rates, which are consistently much higher for these groups than for White students. All leaders must respond to the call of not only recognizing and but also changing the status quo. Schools that support social justice and academic excellence by

treating their diverse student populations fairly and humanely enact the DAL model (Mullen, 2009).

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE APPLICATIONS

To guide the integration of democracy and accountability in the preparation of leaders, K–12 practitioners can be solicited for their understanding of DAL: What ideas do educators have about democracy, accountability, and democratic accountability? What are some implications of democratic accountability for leadership? These higher-order questions can be used to provoke open-ended, critical self-reflection in future leaders (Dickman, 2009).

The goals of democracy and accountability share pivotal challenges for implementation. Accountability expectations can complement the democratic integrity associated with teaching, learning, and leading or negate, oppose, or simply marginalize it (Mullen, 2008). A leader's practical applications of democratic goals provide a model of advocacy for schools, increasing the likelihood of a democracy strengthened in structure and in its viability to users.

As educational leaders move from the university classroom to the school campus, theoretical discourse about DAL becomes more viable in practice. Freire's (1970) work in transformative emancipatory learning suggests that learning transfer happens when adult students engage in reflective criticism of their and others' work (for discussion, see Harris, *Lowery-Moore, & Farrow, 2008).* Transformation occurs through praxis, reflection, and dialogue, processes that support social action (Jean-Marie, 2008; Singleton & Linton, 2005). For example, when professors effectively facilitate reflective learning along these lines, they model democracy in action (Beghetto & Alsonzo, 2006; Brown, 2003; Muth, 2002). Because democratic learning "aims for freedom of expression" and "application, demonstration, and contribution of learning to immediate and larger communities" (Glickman, 1998, p. 29), students learn firsthand meanings of "participation, equity, justice, responsibility" (p. 36)— essences of democracy and accountability. Democratic school principal behavior has resulted in "social justice for marginalized students … through ongoing professional development" of inservice educators that incorporates a focus on student diversity in background and learning styles (Jean-Marie, 2008, p. 345).

Educational leadership coursework that requires examination of assumptions, values, beliefs, experiences, and worldviews (Cranton, 2002; Kegan, 1980; Mezirow, 1997) could produce benefits where attention is on the challenges of democracy and accountability, especially as concerns student learning and equity within diverse communities of learners (Brown, 2003). Writing cultural autobiographies, documenting case studies, undertaking equity audits, conducting life history interviews, and participating in prejudice reduction workshops can enable graduate students to develop as critically reflective, policy oriented leaders (Mullen, et al., 2008). Aspiring leaders also need opportunities for identifying and implementing goals related to "behaviors, boundaries, alternatives, and consequences" (Brown, 2003, p. 4). Through social justice work (e.g., practical exercises) sustained throughout their preparation programs, students will be positioned to understand democracy as a dynamic, collective movement (West, 2005) and themselves as activist leaders committed to democratically accountable schooling processes.

Aspiring leaders can learn practical knowledge and know-how from principals, superintendents, and other advocates of equity-driven social models and policies (see Figure 1). Executive leaders of social justice believe that programmatic equity and implementation measures are a necessary constructive strategy for enabling deeper cultural reach. They attest

to the fact that programs and services for minority and poor students must be carefully planned and financed (Mullen et al., 2008). Such leaders work with their teaching staff to increase awareness, confront biases, and diversify programs to promote equal opportunity for under-privileged ethnic and other subgroups, notably immigrants, refugees, second-language learners, and low ability learners (Henry, 2009). The Children's Aid Society (2006) has identified factors that have proven beneficial to African American males and their academic success; these include "positive cultural identity, redundant routines and structures, and access to positive male role models" (p. 4). Where advisable, such factors can be incorporated into dropout prevention programs.

As another example of democracy in action, some leaders have created open spaces for courageous conversations to take place about the fair treatment of students from different backgrounds (Singleton & Linton, 2005). Committed to democracy as a verb for which muscle and mental work are required, leaders can "subvert the dominant paradigm" while building "a new social order" (Jean-Marie et al., 2009, p. 4). Ensuring equal access and returns to education may lead to a restructuring of social and power relationships inside schools. If leaders work toward ensuring equity as a measure for academic excellence, opportunities for success should transpire for oppressed groups. Further, leaders should include members of dominant groups as they work to bring about equality for under-privileged groups (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007).

In support of this pedagogical learning experiment involving the social justice concept of democratic accountability, democratic–accountability schemas can be produced. Within such a schema, one might determine that the act of leading (self as leader) is not simply a top-down or bottom-up enterprise. Rather, it should be construed as a more nuanced process of negotiation that utilizes the best of decentralized and centralized forces (see Fullan, 2003). As another example, higher-level habits refer to the civic behavior or responsibility desired of all leaders and K–12 students. After deciding on capacity or proficiency habits to be encouraged, one can work backward to identify the skill standards that best foster these habits. Seeing the principles of democracy and accountability holistically instead of singly provides a larger view of the knowledge, dispositions, and skills to be nurtured along this leadership journey.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The emergent picture I have described of democratic accountability in action can serve as a conceptual resource for faculty members responsible for the preparation of educational leaders. In the program contexts within Florida and Texas that provided the data for this study, while democracy and accountability were incorporated into the design of the educational leadership curriculum, the integrated concept of democratic accountability and implications for leadership clearly were not. Hence, professors can make a significant contribution to the quality of education within schools by encouraging aspiring leaders to grapple with tensions, contradictions, and overlaps inherent in democratic accountable leadership. Programmatic efforts to align the theory of democratic accountable leadership with promising practices might provide future leaders with tools for problem solving the formidable pressures that practitioners encounter in ways that enable democracy to flourish.

Newly on the horizon is President Obama's Race to the Top initiative. Once this economically significant but selective grant program has been put through the paces of implementation, more powerful examples of democratic accountable leadership should materialize, especially in low-performing schools. Executive leaders from the funded states may find that they have newfound freedom for flexing their creative problem-solving

muscles. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009)**,** the Race to the Top program will require funded schools to use international standards and assessments that prepare students for success; strategies for recruiting, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; data systems that measure student success and enable school improvement decisions, and innovative ideas for building the capacity of low performing schools.

In this shifting American context, aspiring leaders will benefit from understanding the foundational tensions that inform the work of democratic accountable leadership. They will need support as they orient themselves to the new legislative creed that postulates that school performance and student achievement are primarily equity-related resource issues (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Education faculty members have a vital role to play in preparing future leaders for these sea changes to the prevailing paradigms of schooling.

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Meeting Critical Academic and Socioemotional Needs of Middle School Students: A Case Study Illuminating a Middle School Principal's Successful Practices

Betty Alford

A challenge in middle school reform includes meeting the academic needs as well as the socioemotional needs of students (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004, 2006). In the first wave of reform following the publication of *Turning Points* (Carnegie Council of Adolescent Development, 1989), a landmark report on restructuring middle schools, many middle schools concentrated more fully on becoming a unique school designed to meet socio-emotional needs of students rather than to achieve academic rigor (Jackson & Davies, 2000). Although many structural changes were made in middle schools to meet socioemotional needs, such as establishing advisory periods and teaming, a concern was identified that academic needs were not receiving the same focus as the structural changes (The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 2000; Cooney & Bottoms, 2002; NASSP, 2004, 2006). The introduction of specific middle school standards was described as one way to strengthen middle schools (Powell, 2005). Currently, middle schools throughout the United States are held accountable to both state and national accountability standards.

Assessment and accountability have influenced school reform (Kowalski, Lasley II, & Mahoney, 2008). Mathison and Ross (2004) stressed, "Educational standards and assessment practices are the engine driving the historic changes public schools are experiencing today" (p. xxiv). Throughout the U.S., districts and school campuses are working on standards based education linked to accountability measures (Mathison & Ross, 2004). Yet, accountability measures alone do not promote the improvement of student learning (Firestone, 2004). Professional development is needed for teachers to learn ways to foster engagement, increase academic press, and enhance student learning (Loughridge & Tarantino, 2005). Weinstein's (1996) prediction over 14 years ago has held true as he stated, "Without appropriate pedagogy as well as systemic support, tough standards and punitive accountability will hold children and teachers accountable without providing the means to successfully meet those standards" (p.18). Accountability measures fall short of influencing an improvement in student learning unless leadership and capacity building are present (Kawalski, Lasley II, & Mahoney, 2008). If assessment and accountability are the engines of school reform as Mathison and Ross (2004) stressed, leadership practices are needed to steer the engines.

Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy, and Muth (2007) purported that school leaders influence the conditions that influence student achievement. However, identification of specific leadership practices of a middle school principal who has sustained success in a large, high-needs school for over ten years is needed to illuminate an example of the conditions that influence student achievement. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the essential leadership practices that sustained success in meeting students' academic and socio-emotional needs within a high performing, diverse middle school campus.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Davis and Pokorny (2004) identified a framework of leadership skills inclusive of four quadrants for a coherent middle school success model. These quadrants included: visionary that encompassed leadership values, accountability, high expectations, and decision making; building relationships that included leadership and voice, collaboration, flow of information, and adult academic relationships; building the team that included leadership knowledge, content subject knowledge, and staff expertise; and developing the team that included leadership savvy and persistence, professional development, and use of data for decision-making. The authors insisted that these qualities must function as a system rather than in isolation. At the core were high expectations for student achievement, good adult student relationships, and qualities of teachers of no excuses, persistence, constructivism, and respect. These successful schools were characterized by careful disaggregation of test data, a constant flow of information, strict accountability, a positive school climate, teacher willingness to help each other, staff expertise, and teacher content subject knowledge (Davis & Pokorny, 2004).

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) analyzed extensive studies of leadership and identified characteristics of leadership for school reform which included setting direction, developing people, leading change and establishing managerial order. These characteristics again reinforced the importance of developing a shared vision, building team capacity, implementing the change process effectively, and fulfilling managerial responsibilities as integral to successful school leadership. The principal is second only to the teacher in influencing student learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood, 2009).

What separates successful leadership of middle schools from successful leadership of elementary and high schools is that successful middle school leaders understand the unique needs of the middle level child and work to develop practices and processes to meet these needs (Weller, 2004). As Weller (2004) expressed, "Without question, no school can be called a middle school where its principals, assistant principals, and all instructional personnel lack a clear knowledge and understanding of the goals and objectives of the middle school concept" (p. xii). These needs include a search for identity and the need for exploring future careers. Powell (2005) stressed, "Middle school philosophy is grounded in two areas—our understanding of the unique nature of young adolescents and how we choose to respond to their needs" (p. 18).

The Southern Regional Educational Board, in a report entitled, "Middle Grades to High School: Mending a Weak Link" emphasized the need for academic rigor in middle schools (Cooney & Bottoms, 2002). *Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies of Leading Middle Level Reform* by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006) issued a call for strategies that would increase student learning in middle schools in addition to meeting socio-emotional needs. The report called for a focus on collaboration, personalization, and curriculum and instruction. This report was supportive of *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform* which emphasized the need for rigor, relationships, and relevance (NASSP, 2004). However, just as the importance of the rigor of classes to a student's later success was recognized, recognition of the importance of positive relationships to a student's later success was maintained. Fostering a school culture that meets middle school students' academic and socioemotional needs is important in this process (NASSP, 2006).

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The context of a person's work influences opportunities and actions (Donaldson, 2006; Goldenberg, 2004). The principal at Lasiter Middle School had served as associate principal at Lasiter Middle School prior to becoming principal of the school. This study reviewed the principal's leadership practices over a ten-year period from 2000 to 2010. The principal currently remains as principal of the school. During her tenure as principal statewide award provided for school improvement across multiple indicators, Lasiter Middle School has been recognized twice by the Just for Kids Award, a statewide recognition process. The campus has achieved Recognized status on the state accountability measures for multiple years.

Lasiter Middle School

Lasiter Middle School is one of the largest middle schools in the state with a student population of 1800 and 270 faculty and staff members. With a student population of 1800, the challenge for this school when it was formed as two middle schools became one in 1998 was to create a personalized, safe, and productive environment within a very large setting. The middle school is located in a town of 34,000 and serves as the only middle school for the district. The student body is 43 % white, 24 % Hispanic, 32 % African American, and 1 % Asian or Pacific Islander. Over 70% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The faculty and students of two middle schools moved into the former high school building as a new high school was built, and elementary school students and faculty moved into the former two middle schools. The transition of two schools to become one was a large-scale change in this district. As is characteristic of this district and school, a year long process characterized this change. A major challenge was to develop a cohesive faculty united behind common goals who would work as a team to meet the needs of middle school students. The faculty was divided into teams for the core subject areas to create schools within schools consistent with proposed middle school recommendations (Weller, 2004), and students were assigned to academic teams. Lockheed Martin, a local industry, provided year-long team building training for faculty and staff. A goal was to provide a nurturing environment to meet the unique socioemotional and physiological needs of middle school students in grades six, seven, and eight and to provide both the rigor and relevance essential in promoting students' academic achievement.

Primarily, the campus and district leadership sought to develop improvement processes, practices, and policies as part of a systemic change process rather than as isolated activities. Whole faculty training in strategies for teaching English as a Second Language, year-long processes of mathematics alignment and improvement with follow-up and coaching, and pre-advanced placement training for all core teachers were examples of professional development for the campus faculty. The campus and district were characterized by stable leadership. The current principal was assistant principal when the campus was formed. She was a curriculum specialist and former gifted and talented teacher in the district and demonstrated strong energy, keen intellect, and a strong commitment to developing a campus wide vision. In a survey of faculty of this campus, Faris (2006) found the mean of faculty ratings of empowerment on a five point scale with five as high was 4.1 during her tenure as principal. By measures of size and demographics, the school is one that faces challenges in meeting the academic indicators for the state by sub-group scores. However, in 2003 and in 2009, the campus won the Just for Kids Award for outstanding achievement over a three year time period for sustained academic improvement. The campus has continued to

excel on multiple indicators through the sustained leadership of the principal for ten years from 2000 to 2010.

METHODOLOGY

Merriam (2009) described a case study as particularly useful when one seeks to attain understanding. This case study investigated the leadership practices of a middle school principal who has sustained both academic press and attention to students' socioemotional needs. The purpose of the study was to identify essential practices and processes needed for effective middle school leadership from the views of students, teachers, community members, and administrators. Specifically, the research question was: What were the essential leadership practices that sustained success in meeting students' academic and socioemotional needs within a high performing, diverse middle school campus?

Data sources included interviews, site observations, and archival data of the schools' performance on state accountability tests over the ten year period. Focus groups were conducted on-site in three focus groups with 8 different teachers per focus group representative of different learning teams, a focus group of 5 community members and 3 administrators, in addition to 4 classroom observations with open-ended questions posed to students concerning what they liked about this school, how the teachers have helped them learn, and areas they would improve. Three interviews with the principal served as additional data sources in addition to a presentation that the principal made to a graduate class of individuals preparing to become school leaders. Four focus groups were also conducted across four years. Members of the focus groups were the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) council consisting of the assistant principal, counselor, three core teachers, and the GEAR UP coordinator.

All interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed to discern themes. Archival data sources included the school's performance on state tests and the additional measures of the state's accountability system over the ten year period. Monthly reports of participation in a U.S. Department of Education Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs grant to create a college-going culture in the school were also reviewed for Lasiter Middle School. The principal and researcher also participated in P-16 council monthly planning meetings once a month over a 4 year period and in GEAR UP Leadership Institutes that were characterized by dialogue over the 10 year period. Lincoln (2007) maintained that trustworthiness of the data is maintained through member-checks, an audit trail, and peer debriefing. All three methods were employed. The data were analyzed, and themes emerged in response to the research question. Triangulation of the data was attained through analysis of the other data sources of observations and archival data. An audit trail was maintained to ensure trustworthiness, and member checks of the interviews were provided. Pseudonyms were used for the names of the principal, district, and campus. Findings will be presented as follows.

FINDINGS

From interviews with the faculty, school leaders, students, and administrators, a portrait of leadership practices emerged that influenced academic press and attention to students' socio-emotional needs. At Lasiter Middle School, the principal modeled facultative leadership for sustained student achievement. The themes that emerged from analysis of the data were reflective practice, distributed leadership, development of a shared vision,

involvement of the community, dedication to improvement, a focus on the school culture, and celebration of success. Each will be discussed as follows.

Reflective Practice

Three words characterized Sarah Hale's work as principal at Lasiter Middle School. They were "I've been thinking." Sarah laughingly shared with me while she was assistant principal that she always knew as the former principal began a conversation with "I've been thinking" that she was about to begin implementing a new idea. Yet, as she moved into the role of principal, the phrase, "I've been thinking" also characterized her work. From resurrecting the idea of a student advisory period that had once been unsuccessful and developing a cohesive plan for implementation with faculty buy-in in order to build relationships with students to implementing pre-advanced placement strategies in all language arts classrooms, the principals' actions were preceded by reflection, study, and collaboration. Implementing change was truly a process not an event just as Fullan (1991, 2001), a leading writer on the change process advocates. For example, when the campus moved to uniforms as the mode of dress for students, the process was year-long with multiple community, parent, faculty, and student meetings including a style show for students to illustrate the required uniforms.

Distributed Leadership

From triangulation of the data, it was evident that Sarah fostered distributed leadership toward attaining a shared vision for the campus. She was highly knowledgeable of the change process, instructional strategies, curricular alignment processes, and team building toward a joint vision in addition to being constantly engaged in ongoing learning. Having emerged as a classroom teacher and curriculum specialist, she maintained a clear focus on curriculum alignment and data analysis, yet she demonstrated also an awareness of the importance of distributed leadership. Sarah described her philosophy of leadership in the following way:

> I think first of all, a school cannot be successful if it's not a school full of leaders—not just the principal, but from the principal to the teachers, to the students, to the parents, and that takes cultivating. There are many leaders in the school. I believe that you have to create an atmosphere that you are always growing leaders. It's not about who is the boss. It's not about who gets the credit. A true school leader is someone who grows other people to the point that they are successful, and gives them the credit, but the leader has to be the one to take the responsibility in the end if something does not work. The leader has to give the faculty the freedom and leeway to be able to make decisions, and if something does not work, be willing to *take the fall* for it. Growing leadership qualities in other people is important.

When asked how the school continued to strengthen its academic programs, Sarah was quick to cite the important role of the instructional specialists for math and language arts who served as coaches on the campus and assisted in improving instruction and alignment of curriculum. As principal of a very large, middle school, Sarah recognized that she could not spend extensive time in each classroom, but she could influence the structure of the day so that academic teams of teachers could have common planning time for in-school professional

development and planning in addition to conference periods. She could select highly skilled instructional specialists to work with the core content area teachers. She could provide whole campus professional development, and she could provide resources for student success. In distributed leadership, the principal relied on the expertise of each individual in the identification of needed resources for the school. As a faculty member commented, "When I began to work with the district, I was asked, "What would it take for me to be successful? Everything I asked for was provided."

Development of a Shared Vision

Working in teams to plan and implement changes was a vital part of all campus improvement projects at this school. The teams were not designed to achieve merely a congenial faculty but to truly achieve collegiality in working toward common goals. As Sarah stressed, "It is not my vision for the school, but our vision that is important." Sarah described what she viewed as essential:

> Here is the key. The most important thing is that you have to have a set of beliefs
> that you stand by. I think one of these beliefs is that children are volunteers. They
> don't come to us as captives. They volunteer their time and their attention, and
> that's not something you can demand of them but rather something you cultivate
> in them when every decision that you make on that campus is guided by what
> your beliefs are. You have to establish your beliefs for yourself and your own
> campus individually or as a campus together. We established it together. We sat
> down and actually talked about what we believe at this school. At Lasiter Middle
> School, it is our purpose to create meaningful work for students to do so that
> students can be successful in learning.

Part of this vision is a relentless focus on high expectations for academic performance and behavior. As teachers commented, "We are held accountable to show improvement. We rise to meet the expectations."The commitment to shared beliefs is vital. In explaining the importance of creating buy-in for systemic change, Sarah emphasized:

> Anytime that you mandate systemic changes, they are probably not going to be as
> effective. It is important to get people to believe in the change and buy into it.
> That way, when the principal is gone or the superintendent is gone or whoever
> else is gone, the change is going to stay around long after the person leaves. That
> is what you have to do.

In 2009, the administrators and faculty at Lasiter Middle School were working with the Schlechty Center with a focus on *working on the work* to ensure engaging, relevant, and rigorous learning experiences for students (Schlechty, 2001). Sarah explained:

> It was very easy for me to get involved with the *working on the work* part. That
> was always my philosophy. I had always felt like the work that we required of
> students was the most important thing. I think so often we concentrate on all the
> things we cannot change, that we cannot make a difference in, and we just spin
> our wheels. I think if we can focus on the work that we give students, this matters.
> This improvement process has been slow because we can't do this work with

> *working on the work* unless the faculty really believes in its importance. At our campus, we introduced everyone to this concept. We talked about our beliefs. We talked about what engaging work looks like and what we would want our school to look like if we could have the perfect school, and how do we work to get that? Then, we invited anybody who wanted to become a part of this professional development to participate. We implemented book studies. We created steering committees that have formed after inservice meetings. Participation was voluntary at this point, but the way we do business at our school is really based on the *working on the work* framework.

Sarah's words illustrated the power of the shared vision to influence the improvement processes of the school. Professional development served as a means of strengthening the shared vision in addition to developing faculty members' knowledge and skills.

Involvement of the Community

Sarah involved the community in this vision, and multiple indicators supported her success. For example, the campus held annual Hispanic parent nights with translators for those who spoke Spanish only at the meetings, and annually, over 300 parents attended. The focus of the meetings was academic preparation for success in middle school, high school, and postsecondary education. As a community leader emphasized, "We decided as a community and school that students here could do anything." Another parent added:

> The parents and the school staff make this school work. It is a community-wide effort with great teachers, administrators, and school board members. We have a *can do* attitude that filters down through the school board and the superintendent on down to the campus administrators and to the teachers.

Sarah acknowledged that she has an advantage in working with the community in that she has been a community member for 30 years, but she also shared her belief that even newcomers to a community should take the time to learn the needs of their community. As she stated:

> You have got to know your community. If you are a newcomer in your community, you are responsible to learn about that community. It might be a little more difficult, but you will have to find ways to put yourself in the culture where you are working. I am lucky to have lived in the same community for 30 years.

As a member of the community, the principal stressed that it is very important to model your ethical beliefs in all that you do. In explaining the importance of modeling ethical beliefs, Sarah stressed:

> You model your ethical beliefs all the way down from how you dress to how you talk in the community. When you are a leader, you have that obligation to uphold higher standards all the time, not just when you are at school. It goes a little bit further when you are a superintendent or a principal or, I would even say, a classroom teacher.

Dedication to Improvement

A teacher emphasized, "There is a complete dedication to the improvement of students by teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and most parents." Praise for the skills of the campus leader and faculty were strong. Teachers stressed, "The campus administration is very positive. There's a work ethic and positive attitude with students." The principal stated, "When you work here, we say, 'Roll up your sleeves and prepare to work harder than you have ever worked before.'" Students stressed:

- The teachers help us if we don't understand something. They make sure we understand. They don't just put information on the board and not explain it. They'll sit down and talk to you.
- You feel comfortable learning here. You don't have to worry about other students getting out of order, and that's good.

Teachers added:

- There is a willingness to try whatever may work by the faculty and a willingness to give extra time to students.
- There is a *we can do it* attitude by all faculty.

A teacher succinctly summarized what he believed to be a essential in the school's success by stating, "In short, there's a talented faculty with administrators that recognize talent and put it to good use." The principal encourages risk-taking and innovation as evidenced by her statement, "Some of the best ideas that have come from our campus have been from wild ideas, some creative ideas that if I had not allowed people to be in control of what they thought was good might not have ever emerged." Continuous improvement through a commitment to do "whatever it takes" was evidenced.

Praise for central administrators was also strong in "putting the right leaders in the right places." The dedication to improvement was noted by a teacher who stressed, "This district does a very good job of moving the right leaders to the right places to maximize improvement." He further added, "The school leaders have the right perspective and creativity. They have the skills you must have to lead and make a great organization. They are flexible enough to make students do what they need to do." A student succinctly stated, "This school is a good place to learn."

A Focus on the School Culture

Sarah emphasized the importance of the culture that is created in a school as vital to the school's success:

> I think for a long time we chased programs, and what we are finding out is it's not the programs at your school that are important. It's the culture and climate that you create on that campus. Those are the things that make the biggest impact, especially on the children that you want to reach that are at-risk. That's where I think I am the most proud of what we have done because any program that we bring in *fits* because the students have bought into it. We intervene with every

single student that we can. Now, whether or not they take advantage of it, that's another story, but we have at least tried to intervene with them. This is what I have found on our campus that has worked for our middle school. I honestly think this focus on the school culture would work for any campus.

Skills of consensus building, leading change efforts, designing and implementing effective professional development, providing follow-through on initiatives and maintaining a focus as evidenced from the research data were fostered as part of the school's culture. Sarah further suggested:

- Have a high enough intensity to reach your goals.
- Know the data and what to do to improve curriculum.
- Somewhere along the way, let the students have fun.
- Decorate the building.

From awareness of issues of climate, such as openness and warmth of a welcoming environment, to specific knowledge of curriculum improvement, the campus was characterized by knowledge plus effort. Donaldson (2006) maintained that leadership without positive action is meaningless. This school took positive actions to implement goals; yet, while focused and systemic in change efforts, the faculty and administrators were consistently engaged in a continuous improvement cycle as part of the school's culture.

Celebration of Success

When the Governor of the State addressed the campus on achieving Recognized status on the state's accountability system, all of the students filed into the gym for an assembly. Although the gym was filled, you could have heard a pin drop as the speakers praised the students on their success. This is a school that celebrates success and takes pride in accomplishments while always seeking further improvement. These accomplishments do not happen by accident but rather through the leadership of the principal and distributed leadership among faculty, community members, parents, and students.

DISCUSSION

Triangulation of the interview and observation data affirmed the importance of focused leadership practices and processes in reaching school goals. As Sarah stressed, "Maintain a focus, keep on track, pull everybody together, and make sure everything is tied to student achievement." Fostering learning was the focus of this school. Coherence of alignment of the vision, goals, and expectations was viewed as vital. Findings revealed that Sarah's key leadership practices and processes included reflective practice, distributed leadership, development of a shared vision, involvement of the community, dedication to improvement, a focus on the school culture, and celebration of success in meeting both academic and socio-emotional needs. Through the principal's and key stakeholders' voices, the vital practices of principal leadership in promoting student achievement in a large, diverse middle school were illuminated.

The study has significance to professors of educational administration in supporting the importance of developing the future leader's understanding of key practices and processes

that matter in launching and sustaining meaningful reform to strengthen both rigor and relationships in middle schools. The preparation of future school leaders who will serve as effective leaders to transform schools into successful places of learning is needed. Studying a successful middle school principal can strengthen understanding of the realm of possible practices and processes that can be beneficial in sustaining the focus of middle school reform with a balanced emphasis on meeting students' academic and socioemotional needs.

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Reasons Small Schools are Successful with Student Achievement: Themes from High Student Achievement School Districts

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Schools districts in the United States are working in era of high-stakes testing with an ever increasing reliance on accountability to create improvement. This has caused many educational leaders to look for ways to improve public education. Researchers have found that small schools in Texas, especially with large numbers of low socioeconomic status (SES) students, have shown better academic results for their students than their larger counterparts (Marshall, Sampson, & Stewart, 2008; Stewart, 2009). Reviewing the different policies, practices, procedures, and relationships that exist in successful small school districts is a possible way to begin understanding why they are successful. Owen (2006) stated that policy provides the guidelines that ensure a framework for making decisions that will sustain changes. Bolman and Deal (2003) expanded on this idea, as the purpose of policies is to include the procedures that ensure predictability and uniformity. The importance of the district leadership and central office for reform initiatives is often seen in policy and directions (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006; Elmore, 2004).

Introduction

Researchers at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas have been trying to determine what are the practices with regards to raising student achievement, especially for students from low income and minority populations. The research has indicated that small schools in Texas have been more successful in educating children, especially those from low income and minority backgrounds (Sampson & Marshall, 2008; Sampson and Marshall, 2007). With this information in mind, the researchers studied five successful small school districts in East Texas in an effort to identify the policies, practices, procedures, and relationships of district leadership that appear to contribute to the success of these school districts.

One school district was chosen each year to study as determined by the results of the previous year's Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports. For five continuous years, this study was completed in an effort to identify new factors and confirm previous superintendent and principal leadership practices that influenced these small school districts' successes. Each of these five studies examined the district leadership policies, practices, and procedures that led to their success with student achievement (Marshall and Sampson, 2007).

The last two studies also considered an additional element that was identified in some of the comments from the first three years. Relationships among internal stakeholders of the

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districts were identified from the first three studies as something that should be questioned (Marshall, Sampson, and Stewart, 2008).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been an increased effort by researchers to study school improvement issues since the early 1980's when the well known document "*A Nation at Risk"* reported that public education in the United States was failing the students and society (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). During the past 25 years, the following issues have come to be staples in the field of school improvement: finance issues, school size issues, leadership and managerial questions, curriculum concerns, and the question of private verses public education (Cotton, 1996; Finn & Archilles, 1990; Finn, Gerber, Boyd-Zaharias, 2005; Horst & Martin, 2007; Mosteller, 1995; Nwanko, 2009; Ornstein & Levine, 2000; Waymack & Drury, 1999; Stewart, 2009). For the purpose of this study, the researchers were interested in considering school size studies and leadership and managerial research for a place in the body of knowledge to couch our study of these smaller successful schools.

Smaller school size is one of the plausible explanations for the success of some schools. Current research indicates that smaller school size does make a positive impact on student achievement for schools with greater numbers of low socioeconomic status (SES) students (Bensman, 1995; Galletti, 1999; Hylden, 2004; Marshall, Sampson, & Stewart, 2008; Oxley & McCabe, 1990; Smith, 2009; Stewart, 2009). Even though numerous studies indicated student achievement is higher in small schools, there were some studies that have shown no significant relationship between school size and student achievement (Wyse, Kessler, & Schneider, 2008). In some cases, there has even been a negative correlation between school size and language arts student achievement (Dearman, 2008).

As many researchers have come to the conclusion that small rural school districts better serve the needs of their students (Hueng & Howley, 1993; Mitchell, 2000), especially those with large percentages of students from low socioeconomic status (SES) families (Stewart, 2009), it seemed logical to investigate the practices and policies in successful small districts (Marshall & Sampson, 2007). What characteristics are found within small rural school districts that have promoted academic success of the students in East Texas?

Researchers found that small schools are inclined to provide a safe school climate and build on relationships (Cotton, 1996; Lawrence, 2006; Mohr, 2000) which have shown to increase graduation and lower dropout rates (Galletti, 1999). The researchers also found an increase in the percentage of students who participate in extracurricular activities in small schools which may answer why students feel a sense of belonging at the school (Galletti, 1999; Hylden, 2004).

In addition to school size issues, the research also indicated that superintendents have proven to impact student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2007a). Several traits have been identified as important for the success of a superintendent. The characteristics include (a) the superintendent's ability to see the needs of students as a preeminent factor in their daily business, (b) their ability to build relationships within and outside the school district, (c) the ability of the superintendent to allow their principals some latitude, (d) a superintendent's tenure, and (e) their ability to collect and analyze the appropriate district data. We considered each of these characteristics.

Putting Student Needs First

An examination of the research on the role of the superintendent showed that high performing superintendents have felt the need to place an emphasis on student needs (Chan, Pool, & Strickland, 2001). As far back as thirty years ago, Edmonds (1979) provided characteristics of effective schools that included the instructional leadership that emphasized high student expectations while monitoring their progress and student engagement on learning. More recently, researchers continued to find that the practices of superintendents in higher performing school districts kept the focus on student achievement with the use of data to hold the staff accountable while providing learning opportunities for the administrators (Borba, 2002; Cudeiro, 2005; Blanco, 2009).

Building Relationships

Successful superintendents need to build strong networking relationships with other successful superintendents (Chan, Pool, & Strickland, 2001). Collaboration with other superintendents has shown to be especially important when superintendents were rebuilding their school cultures for increased academic success (Smith, 2009). The collaboration cannot stop with fellow superintendents; it must be expanded to include local stakeholders and the community in decision making (Andero, 2000).

Allowing Latitude for Principals

Waters and Marzano (2007b) analyzed studies to determine the impact of the superintendent on student achievement and found that district leadership does make a difference when the leaders are goal-oriented and provide "defined autonomy" to their campus principals. The allowance of principals' autonomy has often been in the areas of hiring teachers and providing professional development at their campuses. But the principals' autonomy has also been researched with data decisions. There is an understanding that principals have a clearer understanding of the students' and teachers' needs on their campuses as well as implementation strategies to meet these needs (Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008). The "defined autonomy" (Waters and Marzano, 2007b, p.13) is similar to the recommendations of other researchers for a "mutual accountability between central office and the principal at the campus level" (Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008, p. 240).

Superintendent Tenure

Researchers found a positive correlation between superintendent tenure and high district student achievement (Harris, Lowery, Hopson, & Marshall, 2004). Researchers (Harris et al., 2004) examined the reason for longer superintendent tenure and found that superintendents who were interested in a long tenure were motivated by the desire to have a positive impact on the district.

Analyzing Data

The ability of a superintendent to analyze data is also an important element in their success. Horst and Martin (2007) completed a case study of one superintendent in a poor

rural school and found that the ability to collect and analyze data for evaluation purposes was essential in this superintendent's success within the district.

School size and the superintendent's role within the district are two important aspects of the success of a school according to the research (Andero, 2000; Chan, Pool, & Strickland, 2001; Cotton, 1996; Harris, Lowery, Hopson, & Marshall, 2004; Horst &Martin, 2007; Stewart, 2009; Waters & Marzano, 2007b). Both of these areas were examined within the five small and rural East Texas school districts studied during this five year research project.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

School districts face greater challenges every day to improve achievement levels of all students. The requirement that school districts assure all students meet certain standards has led school district leaders to develop policies, practices, and procedures that encourage every student to meet these new standards. Stewart (2009) found that smaller schools in Texas, with greater numbers of low SES students had greater success in raising student achievement. Other researchers also identified school size as a factor in higher student achievement (Cotton, 1996; Finn & Archilles, 1990; Finn, Gerber, Boyd-Zaharias, J., 2005; Mosteller, 1995; Nwanko, 2009; Ornstein & Levine, 2000; Waymack & Drury, 1999). School size studies began to appear in the 1970's when politicians began to call for the consolidation of smaller school districts into larger, more comprehensive districts (Raywid, 1996).

This research project came out of a desire to better understand why these small rural East Texas school districts have been successful with student achievement. The purpose of the study was to identify the policies, practices, procedures, and relationships of district leadership that were common among these schools. With this in mind, the researchers studied one successful small and rural school district in East Texas each year, for five years, to determine their policies, practices, procedures and relationships. A cross-case analysis was used to examine common themes between these districts, as identified by the stakeholders within each district.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a cross-case analysis to consider common themes of five different case studies, over a five year period. Creswell (2007) suggested that a cross-case analysis is useful when one is trying to find themes across multiple case studies. The hope was to find common themes that could be used to determine why the students had been successful in passing the state mandated testing within these five school districts. While these themes cannot be generalized to other districts, with differing needs and populations, the data in this study helped to determine why these five schools were successful and can help inform practices in other small and rural districts.

In order to create this cross-case study, a new Texas school district was selected each year by the researchers, and a qualitative case study was conducted for each one. The perceptions of teachers and campus administrators were combined with superintendents' and board members' perceptions of practices to determine the policies, practices, and relationships of district leaders that were influencing high student achievement. Case studies are used to write a rich in-depth narrative of a "bounded system" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). Creswell (2007) explained that a bounded system is a study of a system that is bound by time and place. A case study approach was utilized for each of the five districts because the researchers were interested in obtaining a rich description of the phenomenon that occurred within each system

during the school year of the study (Yin, 1984; Creswell, 2007). The researchers were interested in determining why each school district had demonstrated success in student achievement, in spite of having a diverse student population and a majority of students from low SES families. Yin (1989) suggested that case studies are appropriate when there is an attempt to explain possible connections among actions in schools such as policies, practices, procedures and relationships that might explain the reasons for the continued success to increase student achievement. Yin (1984) also emphasized that a case study approach works well when the variables being studied cannot be separated from the context.

The purpose of these five studies was to explore the district leadership's policies, practices, procedures, and relationships that impacted on student achievement in these rural districts with high poverty and diverse populations. Therefore, one primary research question guided each of these five studies. What are school district leaders in high performing school districts in East Texas doing to dramatically increase student achievement despite diverse populations with high percentages of students who are from low SES families?

First, the researchers gathered Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data from each of the 121 East Texas school districts on the Texas Education Agency's website. Next, school districts were delimited based on demographic characteristics. Districts with more than 50 percent of their student population from low SES backgrounds were selected, as determined by students receiving free or reduced school lunches. Districts also needed to closely match the state demographics. Texas has averaged the following demographics for the past five years: 45.3 percent Hispanic, 14.4 percent African American, and 36.5 percent Caucasian (Texas Education Agency Pocket Edition, 2008). Finally, a district needed to demonstrate high student achievement for several grade levels (at least 7 grade levels, across four subjects). These criteria were used to select the school district that was studied each year.

A case study approach is useful when a researcher is interested in obtaining a rich description of the phenomenon that has occurred within the system (Creswell, 2007). The researchers were interested in examining an in-depth view of several factors for district leaders within each successful school district. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with teachers, administrators, the superintendent, parents, and board members in each school district. All structured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Interview questions were designed to explore the staff's views of why the school district was successful. Next, all transcriptions were read individually by the research team, to inductively look for emergent themes in an open coding process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). A description of the discovered factors that played a role in the increased student achievement was created by the researchers. These findings were returned to the participants for a check on accuracy and clarification of possible explanations.

Four interview questions were used by the researchers during the first three years of studies. A fifth question was added during the next two years of studies. The additional question was added for the last two years due to findings in the first three years which showed a possible relationship between student achievement and the quality of internal relationships among the stakeholders within the district. The interview questions were:

1. How do you define a successful school district?
2. Do you believe your district is successful and if so, why?
3. What practice, policy or procedure has your school district implemented that you feel has led to the academic achievement successes of your students?

4. Have you developed any local programs or implemented any commercial programs that you feel has led to the academic successes of you students?
5. How are relationships an important component of school success in your district?

In each of the five studies, researchers met with the superintendent of the school district to explain the study and gain permission for the study to be completed in their district. Researchers spent time within each district observing daily school activities and operations. Additionally, a variety of district artifacts were collected to be used in the triangulation of findings. In order to maintain a consistency in the interview process, a single member of the research team was utilized to conduct structured interviews of the district staff. The district staff included teachers, principals, the superintendent, and school board members.

Thirty-two participants were chosen based on their position within the school district, because of the desire to get a cross section of the district to participate in the interviews. Participants were informed of the primary purpose for the research and their participation was voluntary.

Current school reform processes, based on the current literature, were utilized by the researchers as the theoretical framework when developing the questions. The themes from the interviews were distilled and presented in the findings section.

FINDINGS

Several common themes were identified throughout the schools studied. The themes were:

- Creating a culture of "family" among all stakeholders
- A definite attitude of "children first" throughout the entire district
- Open and trusting communications among all stakeholders
- Setting of high expectations for all students
- Providing support to both staff and administration to develop programs and skills to meet these high expectations
- Celebrating successes.

Each theme is discussed in this section. Words from the participants were provided as thick descriptions in order to illuminate the feelings of the parents, teachers, administrators, and board members.

A Family Culture

The feeling of being part of a family was important to the teachers and administrators in these districts. Feeling like a family was something that at least one person from each district spoke of, when asked about the culture of their district. One teacher said, "You must have a relationship between the teachers and between the teachers and students. Everyone needs to work together as a family and a team." Another teacher suggested, "I think that our school is successful because the principals, teachers, and parents all work together for the good of the students and encourage all students." Parents agreed with the school staff about their school's family culture. One of the parents stated, "… everybody knows each other. The students enjoy going to school. If they don't enjoy going to school, then they are not going to

want to go. The parent and teacher relationships are important. There is a closeness here." The board members also understood the importance of a family feeling among the district members. A board member stated:

> We want to make a difference in every person's life. Each day we try to make a difference. The board is making a difference in these student's lives. We are affecting them. It is the whole team. The teachers are making a difference. We are trying to prepare students for their lives.

These participants believed in the power of a family atmosphere. They believed this atmosphere was one of the reasons for the success of their students. The research seemed to bear this out as well. When students believe they are part of an organization that treats them like a family, then they tend to respond in a positive manner (Dodd, 2000; Ratner, Chiodo, Covington, Sokol, Ager, & Delaney-Black, 2006).

Putting Students First

Teachers and administrators all shared the belief that they were to serve their students' needs. This was evidenced in many ways. One principal said:

> A successful school district with me would be basically [that] the students are number one. That's the main focus of the school district, students being successful. For students who are not being successful, they have early intervention and support so he/she can be the child that is successful.

All of these schools shared a common belief that the students had to be the purpose for their existence. Making students the "main focus," as this one principal said, is how these schools were able to assist each child academically and help each child understand the importance of learning.

Trusting Communications

Barnard (2004) suggested that communication is one of the key elements in an organization's success. He further suggested that without two way communication, organizations will severely disrupt their chances of succeeding in their goals. Schools systems are no different. One board member stated:

> Our administration is constantly researching and seeking new programs, testing the programs, and not just bringing in *stuff*. They are also doing the research and trying to find out if this program works. We're constantly communicating back and forth. The school board is allowed to make suggestions, and the schools bring us presentations of things, so they're continually trying to figure out what is the right combination of everything. I think it's just being open to try different things because there's not a set formula that is going to work for the rest of our life. We have to willing to change because everything around us has changed.

Another board member added:

> We rely on the superintendent to run the district. We put our trust in our superintendent. She is an individual who has a focus and is able to communicate that focus with the rest of the administration while keeping everybody on the same page. That is where the district needs to be and we are pulling together, and I think if it wasn't for her and the administration, we wouldn't have the success that we have been having. We work out our differences and we have always been able to come to a positive determination.

A teacher commented, "We've opened the doors and tried to pull the community in. We have more collaboration. That has never happened before." The superintendent explained:

> Early on, we had the conversations about adding value to every student. We have a changing population of students. We are getting a more diverse group of students and they are not responding to old ways of teaching. We took the teachers through a process so they could see how the students needed a new way of teaching.

This was similar to another superintendent who stated:

> You start having the conversations on our expectations for students and teachers. They need to understand that the way children are taught in one grade does affect the students' performance in later grades. We spent a lot of staff development to support a process, to get teachers to understand the data, and then hold them accountable through the data.

Setting High Expectations

Expectations are important when considering student success in school settings. When the district believes and expects its administrators, teachers, and students to perform at a high level, these groups often meet the challenge. One board member stated that their "success was definitely set with a high vision for the district." Superintendents also played a crucial role, in terms of expectations, within the school district. One superintendent passionately said:

> I think we have to get students to dream, and we have to sell those dreams and get them to reach for their maximum potential. My deal is to break through the rut of some students and push them to be the best they can possibly be.

The importance of using data was also emphasized by many interviewees. An example was one teacher who stated, "We have never seen so much data. I love it. It gives you a great insight on the students. It lets you know where they are coming from." One parent expressed the high expectations within his district by stating, "We've got really good students that are graduating and pursuing really good careers. The curriculum needs to continue to be brought up to standards." One board president mentioned the work that elementary faculty did with parents to encourage them to ask the questions about their children's progress. The teachers in that district expressed support from the parents and the community, "There are groups in the community that want the school to be improved and they are willing to have the changes." The superintendent expressed that "their district's major strength was the great community

support." It does take work and commitment to achieve high standards. One principal stated it best:

> I want us to reach all of our students. I think you have to set the bar really high and say what do we have to do to get there and are we willing to put the effort to get there. It is hard work being in school business today. It requires dedication, commitment, and a heart.

Providing Support

The faculty often expressed their need for support, as well as, the district leaders and campus principals discussed ways they tried to provide the support. One superintendent stated that support had been provided to the faculty through staff development, technology, and programs. He stated that decisions were made to impact students through the purchase of state of the art software to provided visual concepts for students so they could bridge the gaps in their experiences. He further elaborated that staff development was focused on relationship building and ways to work with low income students from diverse backgrounds. Other support was provided to the students through incentive programs with adjustments to students' schedules in order to motivate secondary students. One central office director commented, "Our faculty has the support from the central office to recreate their campuses in a manner that brings the kids into the process. We are trying to impress on the staff that students should be empowered with the same democratic principles we are trying to use with the faculty."

Celebrating Successes

Schools that embrace student achievement realize the hard work to obtain improvements. Additionally, the successful school leaders attribute their success in a forthright manner. Leaders realize the importance of recognizing teachers' and administrators' successful work and this further continues sustaining higher levels of motivation.

One teacher expressed that their school was exemplary because dedicated and knowledgeable teachers work together and share their successes with each other with high expectations for themselves as well as their students. A superintendent identified the "celebration of learning" as a reason for their success.

CONCLUSIONS

Single factors do not explain the reasons for small schools' success with student achievement. Many factors taken together promote their success. Those who work with school to improve student achievement should consider creating a culture of "family" among all stakeholders, establishing an attitude of "children first" throughout the entire district, developing open and trusting communication, setting high expectations for all students, providing support to meet high expectations, and celebrating success. Each of these factors is further expanded in this section.

Creation of a Culture of "Family" Among All Stakeholders

Peterson and Deal (1998) emphasized the importance of culture as expectations and values that influence the special nature of a school. It is the traditions and rituals that have developed over time that define the school district. The positive cultures have a shared purpose with networks like families which support and provide the historical stories of the school. Like families, the positive school culture shares a commitment for all students in a caring and concerned manner.

A Definite Attitude of "Children First" Throughout the Entire District

The stakeholders in the districts had a clear focus on what it meant for children having success in their school (Ray-Taylor, Baskerville, Bruder, Bennett, & Schulte, 2006). Peterson and Deal (1998) found that in order for a school district to maintain a commitment to improvement, there needed to be an emphasis on a positive and strong student-focused culture.

Open and Trusting Communications Among All Stakeholders

Trust needed to start with the faculty discussing the relationship between race and student achievement (Bennett & Schulte, 2003; Singleton, 2003). Other researchers stated that students should be included in communication with stakeholders. Students are encouraged to describe the practices that help them learn best (Alson, 2003). Lewis and McFadden (1998) reminded us that many of our stakeholders still understand schools only from their own experience in schools. They informed the school community that there is often a disconnect between the school's actions and the community's understanding of the school's actions. They further stressed the importance of being forthright in the school's communication with the community. The community needs facts of the successes, strengths, and challenges for the school. The communication needs to be a two way process as the school and the stakeholders work together for solutions. The open and trusting communication needs to be seen as an ongoing development of relationships between stakeholders and the school.

Setting of High Expectations for All Students

The importance of setting high expectations has been cited by Lezotte and Bancroft (1985) and earlier with Ron Edmunds (1979). Ray-Taylor, Baskerville, Bruder, Bennett, and Schulte (2006) also listed this as a major challenge. They advocated that faculty need to examine the student data carefully to focus on pedagogy, curriculum, and the teachers' relationships with students. Successful schools often have a difficult time with high expectations because they already have achieved some success so they feel a lack of urgency or commitment to needed changes or initiatives that would have high expectations for all students (Ray-Taylor, Baskerville, Bruder, Bennett, & Schulte, 2006). Akers (2004) found that teachers needed to get excited about high expectations, and one way to improve instruction for high expectations was through the use of technology. The technology helped teachers understand data in order to individualize instruction that is relevant and realistic. Students also need to see that their needs are being met when high expectations are implemented (Dodd, 2000). The students and the community could be better served with high expectations when the progress is measured in the rate of improvement. Dodd (2000)

concluded that schools must show improvement in school climate as well as student achievement or high expectations will not be a reality. The students need the school climate to emphasize caring, communication, and intellectual curiosity (Dodd, 2000).

Providing Support to Both Staff and Administration to Develop Programs and Skills to Meet These High Expectations

Ray-Taylor, Baskerville, Bruder, Bennett, and Schulte (2006) identified the need for staff to sense the support if they are to take risks through professional dialogue instead of the traditional staff meetings. They also advocated that teachers and administrators have alternative evaluations where they are encouraged to identify goals and develop action projects to meet those goals for student achievement. This support needs to be sustained over time with a continued focus on the identified goals and initiatives (Ray-Taylor et al., 2006). Akers (2004) also reported that in order to bring about change, the teachers need to see the possibilities and then be supported as they work to make the changes.

Celebrating successes. The celebration of successes was also important for an understanding of how the change initiative connected with past initiatives. It is helpful to realize and recognize the value of previous changes and successes. However, successful schools need to continue to examine their practices to ensure that success is achieved for all of their students.

The theme of strong positive relationships among the school board, administration, and teachers was paramount within all five years of studies. These types of relationships were found to be common in smaller, rural school districts in Texas and have been a topic of training for members of school boards by their state associations throughout the United States. Such relationships are not exclusive to small, rural school districts in Texas, but do seem to be easier to develop in smaller, rural communities (Hopkins, 2005; Kennedy, 2003). This was found to be the case in all the districts studied and along with their strong belief in meeting the needs of all students in the district, has led them to higher student achievement for all students.

Researchers noted that even though there were several common themes that ran throughout all the districts, how the districts accomplished these themes varied from district to district. Not only did how the themes were implemented vary, the style of the superintendents' leadership was quite different. One of the superintendent's leadership style was very directive and top-down, while another superintendent was highly collaborative and inclusive of all stakeholders. A third superintendent's style was inclusive only with the central office administrators. The different styles makes it difficult to make overarching and definitive themes that need to be used for all small schools desiring to improve student achievement. This would be a warning to anyone attempting to replicate these themes within their school district. The themes must be viewed as how they relate to individual districts and then work with both internal and external stakeholders to determine how these themes could best be accomplished within their district. This is similar to Galetti's (1999) warning that there is no one reform that can make a failing school successful.

However, there are some themes that can be used as a starting point when examining a school district in an effort to increase student achievement. As Blanco (2009) pointed out in her dissertation, a superintendent can implement a reform strategy that includes strategic planning, building capacity, development of common vision, action plan based on data driven decisions to improve student achievement. Her findings from an urban superintendent showed

that job preparation and leadership skills of the superintendent along with the district's strengths and challenges impacted the choice of reform strategies. Blanco's (2009) findings of strategic planning and focus on priorities were similar to the report by Waters and Marzano (2007a).

The purpose of our research was to understand the successful school district's leaderships' practices, policy, procedures, and relationships which led to the success of five East Texas schools. The examination of multiple stakeholders showed several common themes, yet the unique nature of each school district and superintendent were important components in the reform strategies used in the district as well as how they were implemented.

There is a continued need for further research on the varied roles of superintendents in the choice of reform strategies based on the strengths as well as challenges of rural and small school districts. Differences in the political and managerial needs of rural and small school districts should be further researched to help superintendents implement a system leadership of reform for high student achievement. How the superintendents choose strategies and actions for school improvement may provide more insight into the changes needed to increase student achievement for an entire school district.

Further, the role of the university preparation programs for educational leaders need to have a clearer understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for the superintendents in the current reality of accountability and student achievement. Research may help superintendents know how to choose from the many change models and system frameworks in order to guide their actions to making the connection between theory and practice to the classroom level that will lead to higher student achievement. This may mean a greater understanding of strategic planning, resource allocation, data analysis, instructional alignment, connections with stakeholders, increasing students' achievement and closing the achievement gap while preparing the students for postsecondary education.

The role of the superintendent as the change agents becomes increasingly important and yet the superintendent may struggle with matching the community expectations and values with the internal classroom practices, while holding on to a job. The role of the superintendent requires an ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a district in order to choose the strategies necessary for improvement (Takata, Marsh, & Castruita, 2007). McDermott (2000) and Togneri (2003) stated that a better understanding of leadership practices will help current superintendent who need to choose and design a reform strategy.

IMPLICATIONS

Even though generalizations cannot be made due to the small number of case studies, the findings affirmed that district leadership can create practices and policies that have a high likelihood of impacting student achievement. Much of this type of research has focused at the school building level; however, this research appears to show that actions of district level administrators can have a positive or negative effect on how successful the individual schools can be in a district. Students need to be our focus whether at the school or district level, and when we treat all in the organization like a family, then we get commitment. It is important to remember the importance of celebrating all successes no matter how small or big. It must be noted, "No single practice has the power to transform a failing student or school into a successful one" (Raywid, 1998, p. 38).

The implications for educational leadership preparation programs are to reinforce the importance of the district leaders and to continue the building of relationships when in the

process of creating cultures that will increase student achievement and keep the focus on the children. It is the responsibility of the leaders to set the vision for high expectations of all students and then provide the support for the faculty to understand data and teaching strategies to ensure the student success. Further, preparation programs can help develop the skills of collaboration between all school stakeholders with forms of open and trust building communication, and ways to celebrate success.

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REMEMBERING AN OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

Dr. Lee Stewart co-authored this article immediately prior to his untimely death. He was a strong advocate for rural and small schools as well as schools that strived to improve in all areas including social equity issues. His unwavering work ethic will be missed as well as his care to help all those around him.

What Critical Issues Do Principal Preparation Programs Need to Address in Business and Community School Partnerships?

Peggy B. Gill
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Principal preparation programs are charged with preparing aspiring administrators to successfully lead schools of the 21st century. Principals face pressures to maintain high academic achievement, meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, and manage a high-stakes testing culture. This demands internal and external systems that provide resources and support (Sanders, 2007). Principal preparation programs must train administrators to function effectively in this environment. One response to meeting diverse needs with limited resources is the formation of business or community partnerships (Lewis, 2008). Although business or community partnerships are present at almost every secondary school, and to some extent in most public schools, many programs of leadership preparation do not specifically address this issue. The purpose of this study was to explore the significant issues identified by leaders of public schools and businesses or community organizations as they seek to develop and manage effective partnerships. This data may provide information to principal preparation programs that can be used to better prepare future administrators to successfully maintain these critical partnerships in climbing toward the summit of increased student achievement.

History of Partnerships

The development of school-business partnerships is not new. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), over 42,000 education partnerships existed in 1984. By 1991, there were over 200,000 business-education partnerships in the United States (Solomon, 1991) with approximately 9,000,000 students involved (Grobe, Curnan & Melchior, 1993). The history of these partnerships suggests a natural involvement of business and community organizations within the school, but obstacles have often limited effectiveness.

The modern history of partnerships started after World War II, when communities encouraged schools to work with businesses to identify the training needs for students to succeed in the workforce. The turbulent 1960's saw these relationships deteriorate as students rebelled against any sense of conformity (Gelberg, 1997). By the 1980's, a renewed interest in business and community partnerships appeared with these groups setting the standard for education as a highly trained workforce (Brinson, 1996). The American education system was charged with creating graduates who could compete globally. The 1990's brought an increased interest from businesses in forming partnerships. Schools were viewed as a captive market of students who controlled substantial discretionary income; therefore, businesses sought entry into schools to influence future decision-makers to purchase their product. By

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1991, 50% of all schools had some form of business partnership (American Association for the Advancement of Science, (2002). There was continued growth in the 21st century. While partnerships were growing and seen as essential to the success of most schools, the issue of "branding" (working to build consumer loyalty to particular brands) in partnerships continued to be of concern .

Branding should not be the purpose of these partnerships, nor should they be simply involved with the development of workers for a particular field. Student experiences and understanding of career opportunities may have a role, but many businesses recognize the importance of public relations that are a factor in developing partnerships. Businesses that are competing in the global economy cannot ignore the importance of a collaborative relationship with the local community in order to maintain a moral presence (Loza, 2004). As Goodlad (1992) stated, "A healthy nation requires an array of agencies and institutions joined in an educative ecology" (p. 34).

Positive Effects of Partnerships

Support for the value of business and community partnerships was found in the Annenberg Foundation's (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2008) study on community partnerships. Major findings included improved school-community relationships, parent involvement and engagement, sense of school-community trust, teacher collegiality, and increased teacher morale. The key to successful school partnerships was that all parties participated in the partnership and receive benefit (Wohlstetter & Smith, 2006).

The mutual benefits do not always have to involve businesses. Shaw (2003) wrote about a program that uses community mentors and college professors to provide support for students. This partnership, with a college professor providing much of the training, develops community mentors to meet with students for general conversation, games, and homework. The assistance with homework is made more effective because a strong relationship is built along the way. The program has positive effects in both literacy and providing appropriate role models for students.

The importance of literacy has led to positive effects in partnerships between public libraries and schools. These groups may form a natural collaboration due to similar missions (Maxwell, 1999). A library can use its media, technology, and literature to entice students to continue academic development when school is not in session. This partnership is mutually beneficial.

Even partnerships that appear to be mutually beneficial must have certain characteristics in place to be successful. The Annenberg Foundation (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2008) found three significant factors necessary for effective partnerships:

1. Effective partnerships combine community knowledge and expertise with research to define reform initiatives aimed at improving the core capacities of local schools.
2. Partnership groups are viewed as legitimate, credible, and tactically effective by local education officials.
3. Organizational capacity influences the likelihood of organizing success.

Review of these factors shows the importance of formalization of the relationship and continuing avenues of communication to maintain the relationship.

The positive effects from partnerships are varied and numerous. Research has often suggested that schools can benefit in many ways from partnerships (Ashcraft, 2002; Adger,

2001; Devier, 1999; Blake & Wacaster, 1998). The benefits of partnerships have improved the educational opportunities of many students, but this has not happened without difficulties and challenges that had to be overcome.

Challenges of Partnerships

Provisions in the *No Child Left Behind* act, as well as many grants, call for more community partnerships, so principals are responsible for building relationships with businesses and community organizations that serve the mission and vision of the school. A common vision and mutual respect shared by the school and its partners are critical to assure that students are not exploited (Larsen, 2001). *Public Education Positions* of the National Association of State Boards of Education (2008) directly addresses the issue of ethical partnerships:

> School business relationships based on sound principles can contribute to high quality education. However, compulsory attendance confers on educators an obligation to protect the welfare of their students and the integrity of the learning environment. Therefore, when working with businesses, schools must ensure that educational values are not distorted in the process. (p. 4)

The National Education Association (2003) called for more research into how these partnerships are developed and sustained in order to justify the expenditure of tax dollars and labor from professional educators and volunteers.

The research on effectiveness is likely to be associated with the relationships that are developed. Bauch (2001) wrote, "Partnerships are built on social interactions, mutual trust, and relationships that promote agency within a community for the development of the common good" (p. 208). Effective relationships require consistent work from all parties involved. These involved parties must include the top administrative officials (principals, superintendents, CEOs) within the organizations involved. Failure to have this support creates the potential for difficulty during the partnership. Subordinates must be involved in the process from the start. This shared development increases the likelihood that all parties understand and agree with the mission of the partnership (Engeln & Council for Corporate and School Partnerships, 2003).

As business and community partnerships with schools increase, new principals are likely to step into a position where partnerships already exist. In most districts, there is an assumption that principals will continue to build strong relationships with businesses in the community. Recognizing and understanding issues identified by current principals, and business and community leaders, as important in these relationships may be beneficial to a new principal.

Concerns about School Partnerships

While most articles on school community partnerships emphasize the positive aspects of these partnerships, some concerns are being raised. Mickelson (1998) examined two school business partnerships in Charlotte, North Carolina. Both projects sought to increase the technology capacity of the schools. Both projects failed to achieve the desired results, one because of controversy about finance and student enrollment in the project funded schools, the other because of lack of appropriate training of the volunteer technology specialists

needed. These two projects were imposed upon the schools without involvement of teachers, parents or community members. Longoria (1999) raised similar concerns about the lack of school involvement in business partnerships in the Houston schools. Abowitz (2000) warned against the strong influence business can exert over school goals. She suggested that the school administrator is responsible for monitoring and managing these programs to be sure the mission of the school is the main focus for all partnerships.

Research Questions

The following three questions guided the research:

1. What are the significant issues from the principal's perspective in forming effective, ethical business/organization-school partnerships?
2. What are the significant issues from the perspective of business or organizational leaders in forming and maintaining an ethical school partnership?
3. What school factors are correlated with the presence or absence of partnerships with business or community organizations?

The purpose of these questions was to provide insight into the dynamics of school partnerships. The data should provide suggestions for educational administration programs in preparing students for effectively building future partnerships.

METHODOLOGY

This research was a mixed method study. A quantitative measure of partnership issues was completed using a convenience sample of 49 principals. These respondents completed a survey composed of 15 Likert scale items that examined principal attitudes and perceptions and 9 Likert scale items about school participation in partnerships. A final question asked principals to list their community and business partnerships.

In addition to the survey, qualitative interviews were conducted. Sample size in qualitative interviews is not clearly defined. Romney, Batchelder, and Weller (1987) suggested that samples as small as four can provide very accurate data as long as those interviewed have a high level of expertise in the area under inquiry. This study used a purposive sampling technique as all who are interviewed work with partnerships. Five principals with significant on-going partnerships were chosen for in-depth interviews. A business or community organization partner from each of these five principals' schools was also asked to participate in an interview. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed through a coding procedure that identified themes or patterns. These themes formed the basis for interpreting the interview data.

The interviews were analyzed using the process described by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data were reduced using categories suggested by the interview questions as well as new ideas found in the data. Step two in the analysis produced a matrix that cross referenced the ideas expressed by the principals and their community partners. Finally, an analysis was made to identify emerging conclusions. The themes from the principal and business partner interviews were compared and overarching themes common to all data sources were established. Themes that were common to two data sources were also reported as relevant. The final phase of analysis was triangulation of the data using the survey information, in-depth interviews of principals, and in-depth interviews of community partners. Triangulation

of the data allowed examination of the research questions from different perspectives thus improving the validity of the findings (Berg, 2001). A data display was used to allow findings from the surveys, principal interviews and partner interviews to be compared. Using constant comparison, this data was compared and contrasted across instances

RESULTS

Demographic Statistics

A survey on school/business partnerships was sent to 49 principals. The principals were campus leaders on campuses that were found in urban (44.9%), suburban (22.4%), and rural (32.7%) locations in the southwest. All campuses were within the attendance area of a regional state university. The grades served were diverse, with 40.8% of respondents coming from elementary school (pre-Kindergarten–5th grade), 34.7% representing middle school (6th–8th grade), and 24.5% high school (9th–12th grade).

The campuses represented were of differing sizes: 28.5% had less than 400 students, 28.6% had 400 to 600 students, 36.7% had 600 to 800 students, and 6.1% had more than 800 students. Low socioeconomic status of students was an issue on most of these campuses with three-fourths of campuses having over half of their students in this category. Only one-fourth of respondents were from campuses with less than half of their students considered as low socioeconomic. The principals were relatively evenly divided on years of experience. Almost 37% of respondents had less than 5 years experience, 32.7% had 5 to 10 years, and 30.6% had more than 10 years as a principal.

Research Question 1: What are the significant issues from the principal's perspective in forming effective, ethical business/organization-school partnerships?

The qualitative portion of the study revealed three common themes from the principal interviews: (a) lack of clarity in defining and understanding partnerships, (b)) concern from principals that non-educators may not understand today's schools, and (c) difficulty finding time to maintain effective communication. A common theme was the difficulty with communication.

The campus leader interviews suggested that school-business partnerships are understood in vague terms. This became apparent when campus leaders stated that the partnerships existed but failed to express much understanding. Several of these leaders had a difficult time providing examples of partnerships, and when they did remember one, could not communicate much information about the relationship.

One campus leader recalled that they worked with GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment). This school's GLOBE partner was Texas Eastman, which took students on field trips to the local plant. The campus leader said the partnership was beneficial because it introduced students to the workplace of a big company. The campus administration did not know much about the project other than the importance of the experiences of the field trip. The school's role in the project was to provide the students and little else.

Another principal expressed concern about interference from those outside of education who do not have the educational background to understand school operations, curricular requirements, or student cultures. The principal stated, "Too many people think they can fix schools just because once upon a time they went to school."

All principals were challenged to find time to work with community and business partners and maintain communication. As the leader of the school, the principal is charged with overseeing both the vision of the school and the day-to-day operations. Adding responsibility for partnership development and oversight was one more activity in an already busy schedule. While recognizing the importance of building strong business and community support for the school, principals had difficulty finding time for meetings to discuss these possibilities.

Research Question 2: What are the significant issues from the perspective of business or organizational leaders in forming and maintaining an ethical school partnership?

Although campus leaders seemed to know little about partnerships and even viewed partnerships with some reservation, organizational leaders wanted to form effective partnerships with schools. Partners clearly recognized the importance of principal buy-in to the partnership, getting students into work place settings before graduation from high school and the difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective communication. In reference to the importance of the principal, one organizational leader stated, "The principal must support the partnership or it will fail, because no one else will support it."

Some partners, especially the ones in business, value the attention to their workplace that partnerships provide, while some organizational leaders expressed a more student-centered purpose to their mission. As one partner stated, "Partnerships bring in more voices and ideas than what is just within the school. Our perspective is a little different; we have expertise that may not be available in the school."

The biggest obstacle appeared to be communication. This became evident in comparing the organizational and campus leader comments. Campus leaders were often uncertain of these partnerships, and when they were aware, knew little about them. As one organizational leader said, "Communication is the biggest barrier. It is difficult to find times and ways to communicate that support a partnership." Communication is an important factor in leadership, and in a collaborative leadership project among different entities, becomes an integral part of success.

The communication issue may be fundamental, but some organizational leaders questioned the desire for principals to engage in these partnerships at all. "There is more of wanting a group to come in to do an activity instead of a partnership," an organizational leader said. Another comment was, "They ask for one-time help in areas, but not an ongoing partnership." Principals, on the other hand, expressed desire for community/business support for schools, but as one stated, "I am too busy with the business of the school to even look for the help that is out there. Sometimes help is an extra burden and another complication."

The qualitative interviews in this study suggested that campus leaders express interest in partnerships, but are often unaware of ones that are currently in place. They stated that these collaborations are important, but they do not seem too eager to get involved. This attitude may be part of the frustration on the part of organizational partners. The partners seemed willing to develop a program that is executed with cooperation and collaboration, but the campus leadership seemed unwilling or unable to expend the necessary effort. Communication is important to this process, but the interviews suggested campus and organizational leaders knew very little about establishing or maintaining a productive and beneficial partnership.

Research Question 3: What school factors correlate with the presence or absence of partnerships with business or community organizations?

Campus location and grade level. Several factors emerged as significant findings. Location and grade levels of the school were important. Urban schools were more likely than rural to have business partnerships (p = .01). Furthermore, high schools were significantly more likely to believe that business and community organizations should be involved in the public school to provide expertise and support in the area of dropout prevention (r = .289; p = .05). High school principals were significantly more likely to have attended conference sessions on partnerships than middle and elementary principals (r = .217; p = .01).

Campus socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic status of the students in a school was significantly correlated with several factors. The higher level of low socioeconomic students in the school, the less likely the principal was to believe mentor experiences provided valuable learning opportunity through working arrangements between individual students and professionals (r = -.287; p = .05). Respondents from these schools, however, believed businesses should be allowed to advertise within the partnerships (r = .454; p = .01). Perhaps reflective of the problems faced on these campuses, principals with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students believed business and community organizations should be involved in the area of dropout prevention (r = .521; p = .01), teen pregnancy (r = .432; p = .01), and drug abuse (r = .342; p = .01). Notably and perhaps reflective of economically depressed communities, the higher the low socioeconomic level percentage in the school, the lower the number of partnerships (r = -.424; p = .01), and the less likely the principal has had a discussion with community organization leadership (r = -.598; p = .01).

Principal experience. Principal experience was significant factor in the survey research. The more experienced principal was more likely to believe that business and community organizations should be involved in public schools to provide expertise and support in dropout prevention (r = .419; p = .05) and attendance (r = .205; p = .05). Principal experience was correlated with awareness of school/business partnerships (r = .381; p = .05), and similarly, principal experience was correlated with a higher frequency of discussions with community organizations about partnerships (r = .319; p = .05).

Partnership development knowledge. While principals were in agreement that partnerships were important in theory, they were unable to identify their partners and estimated their contribution as worth relatively little. When asked to list specific partnerships currently in place, most principals did not list any and those who did listed only one or two, usually local businesses. Most principals did not see the partnerships as providing more than a few hundred dollars with only one school indicating partnerships provided more than $10,000 of value to the school. However, principals who had attended training in developing partnerships had a significantly higher dollar amount from partnership contribution.

CONCLUSIONS

Business and community partnerships are growing in importance since they support quality education as an important community resource. Consequently, both principals and business/community leaders see the importance of forming relationships, but they have

different perceptions of the partnership arrangement that are centered on varying levels of engagement. This information provides insight into this critical issue for principal preparation program in developing the next generation of administrators.

Principal preparation may benefit from a review of two issues found in the study. First, a lack of training for principals in how to manage and develop partnerships resulted in business and community leaders assuming the leadership role in the partnerships. Both principals, and business and community leaders, recognized this as an area of concern. This suggests that current training sessions for principals are not effective. This may be because of the tendency to focus on an issue when it is important and ignoring the education that would improve effectiveness. Principal preparation programs do not seem to be effectively addressing this issue.

Second, the benefits for all parties need to be clearly identified and stated, including the issue of advertising. Principals saw advertising as an issue of public trust. How much advertising and what kind of advertising was permissible without violating that trust. What are the expectations inherent in the partnership? The advertising that is related to minimal organizational engagement may be more of a liability than asset. The simple act of receiving funds may not be enough. Funds assist the school in some minor ways, especially in economically difficult times, but the achievement of students is the top priority. Schools must consider whether this mission is being met through a simple monetary exchange for the organizational branding of students.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to identify issues that leaders of public schools and businesses or community organizations encounter as they seek to develop and manage partnerships. These issues may assist in identifying ways principal preparation programs can improve training to support development of successful partnerships. The data suggested training issues for principals, which if corrected, could improve the relationships that occur between schools and outside organizations.

The information collected in this research can serve to enhance principal preparation programs in their work to prepare future administrators for the challenges of school-business partnerships. The purpose of instructional leadership programs is to adequately train future administrators in issues that most clearly impacts a school leader's ability to increase student achievement through administrative behaviors. Aspiring administrators will most certainly assume positions in schools where partnerships exist. Their success in maintaining these relationships and developing new ones that are essential to student achievement can be enhanced through pre-service training as part of the formal principal preparation programs. Current principal preparation standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and endorsed by both the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary Principals recognize the importance of community partnerships in the schools. These standards are not meant to be all-inclusive but to focus on the primary indicators that are important to school leadership. Standard 4: Relationships with the Broader Community to Foster Learning, suggest that high performing principals create multifaceted strategies to collaborate with the community. These principals initiate collaboration and take an active role in maintaining and fostering community partnerships that contribute to effective teaching and learning activities.

The ISLLC standards are based on the theory of Open Social Systems (Green, 2009) which requires school leaders to respond to needs both inside and outside the school. Principal

preparation programs which meet these standards would effectively prepare school principals to be not only campus leaders but also community leaders in the area of education, taking a proactive role to establish partnerships that benefit both the school and the community at large. A review of the textbooks used in principal preparation programs indicated that none of the books gave more than a paragraph to the concept of partnerships. Communication, collaboration, decision-making and change are all addressed, but not tied specifically to the topic of partnerships. The primary focus is on the day-to-day happenings within the school walls. Professors must identify ways to demonstrate the portability of these skills across environments so the future principal is prepared to use these skills in many different environments.

One possible approach that would address the issues of collaboration, communication, and trust is using case studies and critical event simulations. Principal candidates can explore ways to successfully work collaboratively with the community through these activities (Green, 2009). Additionally, programs may offer specific training in team building, where the members of the team represent the community rather than only the school. Role play activities where students assume community roles allow students to explore perspectives and look for meaningful ways to work together. Successful principals will look for ways the community and the school can serve each other to the mutual benefit of both. The data in this study, as well as previous literature on partnerships, consistently finds that professional relationship building is important. This reiterates the importance of instructional leaders to be effective in consensus building and general communication. Relationships are not built through one-time encounters. They are the product of honesty, trust, reliability, and consistent discussion of the important topics for both organizations. Future principals will need to learn how to involve stakeholders in the decision making process, how to use effective marketing strategies and processes to achieve partnerships as well as looking for opportunities to offer school resources to address the needs of the community and social services agencies (Hessel & Holloway, 2006). This is a shift from the traditional principal preparation program that focuses on school building leadership and will require university professors to address issues that may not have been relevant during their career as a school leader.

Principal preparation programs must help aspiring administrators to recognize that not all partnerships are of equal value. The key point is that partnerships must benefit both the organization and the school. Although there are potentially many benefits, principals might use the "hedgehog concept" (Collins & Porras, 1994) in developing the relationship. The hedgehog concept is a term used to signify organizations that protect their mission from all of the outside influences, just as a hedgehog curls up to protect its vital organs. The mission of the school is clear: To climb the summit toward increased student achievement. Thus, any partnerships that are not aligned with this mission are to be avoided. This may be particularly true of advertising partnerships. The school receives funds that help in developing short term projects, but the branding that occurs is not likely to fit with the mission of the school.

In summary, principals in the study, while acknowledging the value of partnerships, were not actively seeking such partnerships and did not see partnership building as a priority on the campus. Principals recognized potential benefits, but they did not understand how to make it a functioning component to the regular operations of the school. Community members interviewed found it difficult to work with the schools and did not feel a true sense of partnership. The recent Annenberg Foundation (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2008) study on partnerships found strong benefits coming from school community partnerships when there is clear organization and strong support from the school. Only when

principals are trained to work with the community and see the community and the school in a symbiotic relationship can strong and effective partnerships develop.

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Collective Efficacy and the Teacher Leadership Academy: A Case Study

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"The relationship between individual and organizational effectiveness assumes special significance when individuals have to work interdependently to produce results."
(Bandura, 1997, p. 472)

The Consolidated Unit School District 200 of Sherrard, Illinois, is a mostly rural district about twenty miles outside of the Quad Cities Metro Area. The district serves 1,770 students and employs 125 certified teachers. A district leadership team, consisting of administrators and teacher leaders, is utilized to review district data and make recommendations to improve the performance all students. Faced with information in the Spring of 2005 that the teaching corps was below the state average in possessing master's degrees (District—28%, State—50.6%), the team determined that building leadership capacity would enhance the district's goal of raising student achievement. Discussions with the Educational Leadership Department at Western Illinois University led to the development of a Teacher Leadership Academy (TLA). Through this academy, participants received instruction delivered by university faculty on site in Sherrard, allowing them to complete a 38 credit hour master's degree in Teacher Leadership. The completion of this program would not lead to Illinois Administrative Certification Type 75, but was intended to develop the leadership skills and knowledge base of the teaching staff who volunteered to complete the program.

The administrative team created a package of tuition reimbursement for the cohort of teachers who volunteered for the Teacher Leadership Academy (TLA). The expectations for the cohort was that the members would be better prepared to serve as leaders in building and school improvement efforts and that they would be called to assist building principals and district level teams in these activities. The course work was designed to use existing Education Leadership courses, adapted for teachers, and a series of elective courses within the College of Education and an action research project.

The Educational Leadership Department had some prior experience in designing and delivering a TLA in another small district. However, there was no system included in the initial program design to assess the effectiveness of the Sherrard TLA or its impact on the host district's student achievement results. Concerns about the capacity of the Academy to produce positive results emerged as the program unfolded. Prior TLA's had been organized by district superintendents, and then they were facilitated by an Educational Leadership faculty member. There had never been a desire to measure effectiveness, only to offer the classes in a convenient venue on-site and at convenient times. Despite the lack of a research design at the beginning of the Academy, the researcher proposed to measure the collective efficacy of the faculty at the mid-point of the program and at the end and to examine the trajectory of student achievement within the district during the period of the Academy.

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According to Goddard (2001), there have been relatively few investigations of the promising construct of the measurements and effects of collective efficacy. He presented this construct as follows:

> According to social cognitive theory, the control individuals and collectives exert over their lives is influenced by their perceptions of efficacy. Analogous to self efficacy, collective efficacy is associated with task, level of effort, persistence, thoughts, stress levels, and achievement of groups (Bandura, 1993, 1997). Collective efficacy is concerned with the performance capability of a social system as a whole. (p. 469)

Gibson and Dembo (1984) suggested that teacher efficacy may influence certain patterns of behavior known to influence achievement gains. Certain teacher behaviors may intervene in the relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement. Student achievement is probably affected indirectly by teacher efficacy through many of its correlates (Ross, 1995). The higher the teacher efficacy, that more likely a teacher is to:

1. learn and implement new teaching techniques
2. use classroom management approaches that develop autonomous learners.
3. attend to the needs of students with lower achievement
4. enhance students' own self perceptions as capable learners
5. set high goals, and
6. exhibit persistence in the face of failure.

Bandura suggested that when aggregated, teachers' efficacy perceptions represent collective efficacy. The presence of positive collective efficacy is correlated with higher student achievement. The following graphic from The DePaul Center for Urban Education Research Base (2007) illustrates the theoretical construct for increasing the collective efficacy of teachers (see figure 1).

Core Element	Connections Structure	Basis in Research
To increase the effective use of time and energy by administrators, teachers, student and parents.	Teachers work with increased clarity. Students work with increased focus and responsibility. Administrators provide ongoing support for teacher development. Everyone learns.	The ability for schools to attain goals is based on the intentional, coordinated and synergistic interactions of its members

Figure 1. School collective efficacy.

RESEARCH REVIEW

Self efficacy has its roots in the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura. The research work of Bandura found, "People construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of competence. These beliefs affect how much effort people expend, how long they will persist in the face of difficulties, their resilience in dealing with failures, and the stress they experience in coping with demanding situations"(Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p. 481). Efficacy beliefs help to determine how a person feels, thinks, and acts.

Applying the idea of self-efficacy to education has resulted in the definition of teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy has been defined as the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement. The construct of teacher efficacy consists of two dimensions. The first dimension is the extent to which teachers believe that it is possible to impact the educational achievement of students. To fully appreciate this realization, teachers must admit that they can overcome any hurdles presented by outside influences such as family, past educational experiences, and working environment. The second dimension involves assessing the task at hand to determine whether teachers believe that they possess the actual skills and knowledge necessary to impact the achievement of the students in their school. As Goddard et al. (2000) stated, "Teacher efficacy is context-specific. Teachers feel efficacious for teaching particular subjects to certain students in specific settings, and they can be expected to feel more or less efficacious under different circumstances" (p. 482).

While the research in individual teacher efficacy has been fully established, there is little research on the idea of collective teacher efficacy. Collective teacher efficacy was first identified by Bandura in 1977. Defined as, "The perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students," collective teacher efficacy is a promising construct for understanding ways to advance student achievement (Goddard et al. 2000, p. 480). The idea that collective teacher efficacy is an organizational construct that belongs to a school has been supported through the work of several researchers including Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy. Their work at the Ohio State University has laid a foundation for further study in this area. Collective efficacy refers to the collective perceptions that the entire group has regarding their ability to construct actions and events necessary to produce a given level of attainment. In the case of a school environment, collective teacher efficacy is the product of the interactive beliefs of faculty members on the group's ability to impact student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

As with individual teacher efficacy, Goddard et al (2000). defined two key elements in the development of collective teaching efficacy: analysis of the teaching task and the assessment of teaching competence. They concluded:

> … factors that characterize the task include the abilities and motivations of the students, the availability of instructional materials, the presence of community resources and constraints, and the appropriateness of the school's physical facilities. The analysis of teaching competencies makes inferences about the faculty's teaching skills, methods, training, and expertise and might also include positive faculty beliefs in the ability of all children in their school to succeed. (p. 485)

Measures of collective teacher efficacy include questions designed to assess both of these factors; however, it is difficult for teachers to separate the analysis of the teaching task from an analysis of teaching competence. Teachers judge their competence through a simultaneous analysis of the task versus their abilities and beliefs. Goddard et al (2000) also confirmed that once the collective teacher efficacy of a school is established, it is a property that is difficult to alter and requires a substantial amount of effort.

Collective teacher efficacy is considered to be a property of a school and helps to define a school's culture, beliefs and practices. A school's culture can greatly impact the learning that occurs within its walls through the intended and unintended actions of the faculty. These school norms can vary greatly from one school to another and are, in part,

determined by the collective efficacy of the teaching staff. Schools with high levels of collective efficacy behave quite differently from those with low levels of collective efficacy. Highly efficacious schools set challenging goals for students, provide mastery instruction, and work longer with students who need additional support. Teachers in these schools work collaboratively with each other as they solve problems and experiment with new teaching techniques. Schools with high levels of teacher efficacy promote practices that encourage shared decision making and teacher empowerment. These teachers are more willing to seek parent involvement and community support than teachers in schools with lower levels of collective efficacy. In the classroom, teachers from highly efficacious schools show increased levels of planning and organization, spend more time on academics, exhibit positive relationships with students and are more likely to engage in student centered instruction than teachers with low collective efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Beginning with Bandura's early work with self-efficacy, there have been four primary sources that have been attributed to developing a sense of collective teacher efficacy in a school setting. These four are identified as mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and the affective state, or emotional arousal as Bandura termed it (1977). Together, these four elements can be effective at impacting collective teacher efficacy.

Mastery experience is noted to be the strongest of the four elements in its relationship to building collective teacher efficacy. Mastery learning has been identified as the practice of providing teachers with successful experiences that increase confidence in their abilities to impact achievement. One such example might be to utilize professional development to instruct teachers on a new teaching methodology and connect the implementation of this methodology to increased student achievement. The idea that success breeds success is a strong one. Teachers who have experienced success in impacting student achievement are more likely to believe that they will be able to do so again in the future. Tschannen-Moran, and Barr maintained, "Teachers who implement proven instructional strategies such as the use of graphic organizers or manipulatives have mastery experiences when students' performance improves on assessment measures" (2004, p. 205).

The most effective means of utilizing mastery experiences to increase collective teacher efficacy is through prior achievement scores of the school. Bandura found that achievement in reading and mathematics measured at the beginning of the year predicted collective teacher efficacy measure at the end of the year (1993). Goddard found that 65% of the variance in collective teacher efficacy could be attributed to a reading test administered one year earlier (2001).

Vicarious learning is the second element associated with collective teacher efficacy. It is related to mastery experiences as it, too, is based upon increasing self efficacy through the use of prior successful experiences. The difference is that, in vicarious learning, teachers learn about the successful experiences of other teachers through observation, reading, videotaping or other methods of documentation. A teacher does not actually experience the success himself, but rather seeks to understand how other teachers impact achievement and begins to develop the idea that he, too, can impact student achievement in a positive manner.

Vicarious learning is most effective when the model situation most closely resembles the actual teaching situation of the "learning" school. That is, a teacher in an urban, high poverty school is more likely to increase his/her feelings of efficacy through studying successful practices in other urban, high poverty schools rather than those practices successful in suburban, low poverty schools.

Whether through mastery experiences or vicarious learning, teachers need to have the opportunity to dialogue about the successful practices that have been witnessed. It is through

this consistent sharing of information and celebration of achievements that a culture of efficacy is established. As these stories of success are told and retold, positive collective efficacy becomes a pervasive, functional, and powerful element of the school culture.

Social persuasion is the third element of collective teacher efficacy and occurs when members of the teaching staff verbally persuade other members into believing that they can increase student achievement. This can be accomplished through planned professional development activities, but more often occurs during informal discussions of teacher expectations, practices and results. Social persuasion is also found to be a strong characteristic of effective leaders. These leaders encourage, cajole, persuade, and challenge their teachers into believing that what they are doing can and does make a difference in the future of their students. Goddard, Logerfo, and Hoy (2004) emphasized:

> Social persuasion can occur when a strong leaders successfully persuades organizational members of their collective capability. A school principal, for example, might persuade a faculty of its capacity to help students learn essential content by fostering an organizational culture that encourages collaboration and innovation .(p. 406)

School principals are not the only ones capable of social persuasion. Goddard, Hoy, and Wookfolk Hoy (2004) elaborated, "Social persuasion may entail encouragement or specific performance feedback from a supervisor or colleague or it may involve discussions in the teachers' lounge, community, or media about the ability of teachers to influence students" (p. 6). The ability of verbal persuasion to impact beliefs depends on the credibility trustworthiness and expertise of the persuader.

Combining social persuasion with vicarious learning can further impact collective teacher efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) stressed, "Social persuasion acts as a powerful tool when teachers and principals network with high-achieving schools and interact in way that support the belief that achievement can be raised through more powerful instructional strategies" (p. 205). Social persuasion alone may not have the capability to create profound organizational change; however, when coupled with successful models, and positive direct experiences; it can prove to be powerful in influencing the perceptions of the staff (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

The affective state of school is the fourth element impacting collective teacher efficacy. According to Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy (2004), organizations are like individuals in that they have affective states and are impacted by collective successes and failures. In essence, the affective state represents the culture and climate of the school and reflects the emotional well being of the teaching staff. Teachers working in a positive school climate will report less fatigue and stress and will respond more positively to student challenges.

While there is evidence that teacher stress has negative effects on individual teacher efficacy (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Gray, 2003), schools with high levels of collective teacher efficacy learn to manage stress effectively. Goddard et al. (2000) emphasized, "Efficacious organizations can tolerate pressure and crises and continue to function without debilitating consequences; in fact, they learn how to adapt and cope with disruptive forces" (p. 484). Leadership is a critical element in developing a positive affective state. The manner in which a school leader reacts to conflict is likely to influence the interpretation of the experience as either a positive or negative impact on efficacy. Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) "Leadership that is calm in the face of conflict goes a long way toward limiting

misinterpretation and either over-or under-reaction" (p. 91). Effective leaders also assist staff and students in managing stressors such as state-mandated testing (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

A fifth element more closely associated with collective efficacy, rather than individual efficacy, was later identified by Bandura as group enablement (1993). Group enablement most acutely impacts the collective agency of the school system. Group enablement is the practice of empowering teachers to make decisions that will impact the achievement of the students. As the group members exert influence over the school and each other, their sense of efficacy as a collective entity will increase. According to Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2004), schools need to be organized to foster collective efficacy and provide teachers with opportunities to influence decisions that are highly relevant to their professional work. A distinction is made between group empowerment and shared decision making. The kinds of decisions that teachers need to be involved in include such activities as the selection and evaluation of curricular materials and activities, student academic placement, and school discipline policy. By involving all teachers in the critical decisions of the school, persistence, commitment and resiliency are increased, thereby, influencing the collective efficacy of the faculty.

There has been a wealth of research over the past 20 years studying the relationship between individual teacher efficacy and student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, M., & Barr, M. 2004). The connection between the two has been well documented by researchers. Bandura (1993) reached two important conclusions in his groundbreaking research: (a) student achievement is significantly and positively related to collective efficacy, and (b) collective efficacy has a greater effect on student achievement than does student socioeconomic status. Goddard et al. (2000) found collective teacher efficacy to be a significant predictor of student achievement in both mathematics and reading achievement and was greater in magnitude than that of any one of the demographic controls (SES, gender, race) (p. 500).

If collective efficacy gains enhance organizational performance, reciprocal causality suggests that resulting performance improvements may, in turn, strengthen collective organizational efficacy. Thus, to the extent collective teacher efficacy is positively associated with student achievement, there is a strong reason to lead schools in directions that will systematically develop teacher efficacy; such efforts may indeed be rewarded with continuous growth in not only collective teacher efficacy, but also student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher taught a school law/finance course at the eighteen hour mark of the TLA program. Conversations with the cohort about their experiences in the course work and the class members involvement in district processes to develop power standards in the reading and math spiked interest within the group in measuring the impact of the TLA teacher leaders on district processes.

In order to provide the administrative team and the faculty with data which could reflect the impact of the additional training of a cohort of teacher leaders, the researcher chose to measure the collective efficacy perceptions of the overall faculty. While unorthodox to make a decision to start measurement "in the middle" of the program, the cohort group felt that this information could be helpful to their faculty development efforts. This study examined the levels of teacher collective efficacy of the entire teaching faculty at the half-way

point in this program and at the completion of the degree program. Since collective efficacy is a group construct, the sample needed to be large enough to represent the entire group and thus the measures were taken of the entire district faculty.

The absence of data collection before the start of the TLA created limitations on the research design as the time frame of the study did not correspond with time frame of the TLA. However, the researcher determined that there might be chance to learn something about the program and its impact on the overall faculty through the measurement of collective efficacy and analyzing the trends in reading and mathematics test results. In addition, as the program unfolded, the teachers in the TLA became particularly interested in developing capacity within the teacher corps to meet the educational needs of Special Education and other at-risk students.   They also felt that their development as leaders, experiences, and new knowledge base might have a positive effect on the faculty as they contributed to district curriculum development activities and building level reading and math initiatives.

The researcher, in collaboration with the cohort members, chose to use the Twelve Item Collective Efficacy Scale (Appendix 1) to measure the perceptions of the overall faculty and on the collective efficacy of the members of the organization (Goddard, 2002). This indicator, paired with student achievement data on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (K-8) and Prairie State Achievement Examination (9-12) assessments was intended to give the district leaders important information on the effectiveness of the tuition support program for the Teacher Leadership Cohort.

This study considered the following research questions:

1. Would the level of collective teacher efficacy change significantly between the mid-point and completion of the degree program?
2. Would the overall student achievement levels as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Test and Prairie State Achievement Examination improve significantly from the 2005–06 measures to the 2008–09 measures?

Descriptive statistics were collected on the eighteen hour and post-program surveys. In addition, an analysis of variance procedure was applied to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in survey items between the two administrations of the survey.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the Collective Efficacy Survey administered at 18 hours completed by the members of the Teacher Leadership Academy and all other faculty members in the district were compared with the survey results at the completion of the program. The independent variable was the course work, research experience and learning gained by the members of the Academy and their leadership work within the school system. The dependent variable was the impact of the TLA initiative on the collective efficacy of the school district faculty and student achievement results.   Since mastery experience is the most powerful factor in increasing collective efficacy, the premise was that by supporting this teacher leadership cohort and improving the skills and knowledge of the cohort, the teacher leaders would be able to influence and shape the schools faculties' approaches to improving student performance.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for both administrations of the survey.   In addition, an Analysis of Variance Test was administered (changing the items which were

negatively structured to positive for statistical analysis) to determine if there were any statistically significant changes in the faculty's level of collective efficacy after the cohort completed their program. Table 1 lists the descriptive data for the survey at 18 hours and at program completion and the Analysis of Variance data for the two groups.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Effects of Leadership Training on Collective Efficacy.

	Eighteen Hours N = 39		Completion N = 50		ANOVA	
Item	$\underline{M}$	$\underline{SD}$	$\underline{M}$	$\underline{SD}$	$\underline{F}$	^{2}
1.Teach and difficulty	2.85	.580	2.74	.664	.682	.411
2. Motivation	3.03	.623	2.88	.659	1.115	.294
3. Belief in learning	3.44	.598	3.22	.715	2.190	.143
4. Teachers give up	3.15	.923	3.26	.818	.366	.547
5. Teacher less skills	3.58	.552	3.46	.613	.885	.349
6. Students ready	2.49	.556	2.60	.571	.875	.352
7. Home advantage	2.03	.486	2.30	.544	6.112	.015
8. Students not motivated	2.74	.685	2.88	.594	1.098	.298
9. Community opportunities	2.38	.590	2.47	.581	.456	.501
10. Learning and safety	3.79	.409	3.57	.645	3.537	.063
11. Drug abuse	3.0	.607	3.02	.654	.022	.883
12. Teachers and discipline	3.28	.560	3.08	.672	2.235	.139

The only item (7) with an effect size that was significant (.015) in the ANOVA was an increase in the perception on the item measuring the district students' home life providing advantages to improved student learning. The item (10) measuring the perception that learning is more difficult at this school because of safety worries decreased slightly and was close to being significant (.063). The other items reflected no significant difference from the 18 hours survey to the completion of the program survey approximately two years later.

Overall, there appears to be little effect of the Teacher Leadership Academy on the overall collective teacher efficacy of the faculty. No doubt, the individuals in the academy improved their knowledge base on leadership, teaching and learning and in leadership skills; however there does not appear to have a significant effect on their colleagues' levels of collective teacher efficacy. It would be difficult, as the review literature indicated, to shift the level of collective teacher efficacy in this short of a period of time.

The Sherrard CSD had very strong standardized test scores overall in 2005-2006. However, the performance of the Students with Disabilities sub-group kept the district from meeting Adequate Yearly Progress in the 2005-2006 school year (IIRC, 2009). These data are displayed in Tables 2–3.

Table 2. Student Demographics Sherrard CUSD 2005–2006.

	District	State
White	96.2	55.7
Minority	02.4	43.0
Free/Reduced	25.3	40.0
LEP	00.0	06.6

Table 3. Adequate Yearly Progress Sherrard CUSD 2005–2006.

State AYP Minimum Target	Reading % Meet/Exceed	Math % Meet/Exceed	Attendance Rate	Graduation Rate
All (47.5)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	74.8	78.9	89.0	85.8
White	74.7	78.6	95.4	85.8
Non-white	No subgroup	No subgroup	No sub	No sub
LEP	No subgroup	No subgroup	No sub	No sub
SPED	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	28.3	44.0	94.9	61.5
Economically disadvantaged	Yes	Yes		
	59.3	64.6		

The demographics of the district were virtually unchanged in 2008-2009. These data are displayed in Table 4 (IIRC, 2009).

Table 4. Student Demographics Sherrard CUSD 200 2008–2009.

	District	State
White	95.5	54.0
Minority	04.5	45.9
Free/Reduced	23.3	41.1
LEP	00.0	07.5

The AYP results for the district in 2008-2009 continued to be strong but the special education subgroup did not make AYP for that year though the scores in reading and math

had improved. For those schools not making AYP because of the IEP subgroup only, 14% is added to the percent Meeting/Exceeding Standards for this subgroup. This calculation is allowed under the new federal 2% flexibility rule for IEP students. In addition, the scores in reading and math improved slightly in the economically disadvantaged subgroup. These data are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Adequate Yearly Progress CUSD 200 2008–2009.

State AYP Minimum Target	Reading % Meet/Exceed	Math % Meet/Exceed	Attendance Rate	Graduation Rate
Meet AYP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
All (62.5)	62.5	75.0	80.0	95.0
White	75.0	80.0	95.0	86.5
Non-white	No subgroup	No subgroup	No subgroup	No subgroup
LEP	No subgroup	No subgroup	No subgroup	No subgroup
SPED	No	Yes	94.9	61.5
	34.0	52.0	97.4	
Economically disadvantaged	Yes	Yes		
	66.1	73.6		

During the period of time that the Teacher Leadership Academy was being conducted in the Sherrard School District, there were several administrative changes including the loss of the superintendent. This was a normal career advancement change in leadership. There was a one year period where a pair of interim superintendents served as the leaders of the district. There were also career advancement changes for the high school principal and for one elementary principal (of three). These positions were filled with individuals from outside of the district and one internal promotion.

The interim district leaders and new hires fulfilled their obligations to the cohort and the members completed their leadership master's degrees. The process of defining and implementing power standards for the district, based on the Illinois Learning Standards continued during this period. The researcher did not have the opportunity to receive information on other district/building initiatives due to limited scope of the study.

The levels of collective efficacy did not rise significantly during the period of study though the district did make small gains in AYP results for the subgroup (SPED) which was of concern to the administration and faculty. It was clear that the cohort teachers had "mastery experiences" in a wide range of leadership and instructional courses. Though this is a powerful contributor to collective efficacy, it is not the only one. Anecdotal conversations with the cohort members indicated that their expertise and willingness to serve as leaders was accepted in some buildings but not in others. Strong leaders will use social persuasion to achieve building goals. However, if the principal felt threatened by the teacher leaders (which was the case in one building), the effect on collective efficacy in that building would be negative.

Cohort members expressed satisfaction with their course experiences and with the Western Illinois University faculty that taught the courses. They were also able to contribute to school improvement processes and instructional operations in new ways. However, the larger concern for both higher education providers and their customers is the efficacy of supporting and rewarding the acquisition of masters degrees, particularly in educational leadership. Salary schedules have traditionally rewarded teachers for service and earning college hours, no matter the degree emphasis. Educational leaders have assumed that gaining knowledge and experiences in degree programs translated into higher teacher effectiveness, and hopefully, in higher student achievement.

Ultimately, the faculty and administration of the district will need to examine the district professional development process and leadership team activities to determine how best to influence improvements in individual teacher performance and overall district performance. A more rigorous research process might reveal other effects of the leadership academy on school improvement activities. While Education Leadership faculty believes that the knowledge and course experiences in leadership contribute to more teacher effectiveness, more research needs to be conducted to establish that relationship. The Educational Leadership Department faculty will continue to re-examine the efficacy of this type of program and the faculty's capacity to enhance school district's efforts to improve student achievement by sponsoring these cohorts.

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN MANAGEMENT

School Safety: A Critical Issue for Leadership at the Summit

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The Columbine High School shooting incident (Pascopella, 2009; Trump, 2009), various natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Ike (Hardy, 2008), and tornadoes and floods (Popke, 2009) identified critical issues for diligent school safety leadership. Trump (2008) described school safety as both a leadership and a money issue and noted that parents may forgive lower test scores, but they will not forgive a school tragedy that could have been prevented through assiduous leadership and better management. In this paper, the researchers presented results of an examination of Texas public school principals' and teachers' perceptions of preparedness for school crises or emergencies.

BACKGROUND

Based on congressional concerns over emergency management in the nation's public schools, the U. S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a study to examine federal and state government roles in providing resources for emergency planning, school district preparedness, and challenges faced by school districts (Emergency Management, 2007). Results of the Emergency Management (2007) study showed that nine states provided guidance, training, and funding for emergency management. Most states provided guidance and training, but not funding. Idaho and Utah provided no guidance, training, or funding, while Louisiana responded to no GAO surveys. Hawaii, Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, and Wyoming reported providing homeland security funding directly to school districts. Individuals drafting the emergency management study report concluded that although most districts had developed emergency management plans, districts would benefit from additional federal guidance (Emergency Management, 2007).

The Texas Legislature enacted *Senate Bill 11* in 2005 that required Texas schools to conduct campus safety audits and develop emergency operating plans (EOPs) to safeguard against intruders and school violence. All Texas school districts were mandated to comply with the requirements by September 1, 2008 (*Texas Safe Schools Act*, 2007).

Researchers have defined crisis in different ways. For example, Coombs and Holladay (1996) defined crisis as an event that threatened an organization's legitimacy, while Lerbinger (1997) identified it as an event that had the potential to endanger an organization's reputation and survival. Lerner, Lindell, and Volpe (2006) defined crisis as "…a traumatic event that seriously disrupts our coping and problem solving abilities" (p. 11).

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Lerner et al. concluded that crises could be unpredictable, volatile, and threatening to survival and noted that a crisis at school could present an unwanted and frightening change in the school environment leading to a sense of vulnerability and helplessness. Trump (1997) differentiated between two types of crises. Trump found that a crisis that did not involve illegal activity was a safety concern, while a crisis resulting in the violation of law was a security concern.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive literature existed covering school safety issues. For the purposes of this review the following categories were included: governmental requirements, violence reduction programs, school violence, and emergency planning and management.

Governmental Requirements

Public Law 107-110, known as the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* (2002), mandated schools to develop state policy giving students the option of attending a safe school. Schools with a high rate of violence were considered persistently dangerous. In addition, students who were victims of violence must be allowed to transfer to another school if they wished. Schools were required to report on school safety (NCLB, 2002). In response to the NCLB legislation, many schools drafted violence-prevention and anti-bullying policies, but many of these policies have been criticized as punitive with little or no input from students or parents (Phillips, 2009). The NCLB legislation has been criticized because of the focus on test results and accountability that caused a decline in social skills development (Phillips, 2009).

The *Safe Schools Act* (2007) of the Texas Education Code marked the first legislative requirement for districts to develop and implement a multi-hazard emergency operations plan. These plans addressed mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to emergency operations. In addition, this act required emergency operation plans that included district employee training, drills for emergency response, measures to ensure coordination with local agencies, and implementation of security audits (*Texas Safe Schools Act*, 2007).

The Texas Education Agency (2008) provided a benchmark in the form of the Texas Unified School Safety Standards. These standards provided guidance without imposing additional regulatory requirements.

Violence Reduction Programs

Following the Columbine High School tragedy, a number of school safety programs were implemented. Two examples follow. In a report issued by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Sheppard (1999) explained the National School Safety Center (NSSC) was created by presidential directive in 1984. The center, located in Westlake Village, CA, was formed by a partnership of the U. S. Department of Justice, the U. S. Department of Education, and Pepperdine University. Special emphasis was placed on efforts to rid schools of crime, violence, drugs, and on programs to improve student discipline, attendance, achievement, and school climate.

Sheppard (1999) described the Youth Violence Project (YVP) that functioned under the auspices of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. Three major goals of this program identified effective policies for youth violence prevention, provided training on youth violence, and conducted and disseminated research on youth violence. This program

sponsored gang prevention through targeted outreach in partnership with the Newport News Boys and Girls Club.

School Violence

School violence remains a major issue for school leaders today. Henry (2000), Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (2003), Dinkes, Cataldi, Lin-Kelly, and Snyder (2007), and Shelton, Owens, and Song (2009) noted that school violence disrupted teaching and learning and had a negative impact on the health and welfare of administrators, teachers, and students. Shelton et al. found that the use of weapons on high school campuses accounted for the majority of violent deaths, particularly among males. Nolle, Guerino, and Dinkes (2007) found that during the 2005–06 school year 86% of the nation's schools reported at least one violent crime or theft had occurred at school. Nolle et al. noted that students between the ages of 12 and 18 had experienced 628,200 violent crimes and 868,100 thefts.

Gainey (2009), in a study of South Carolina school districts, noted the most prevalent crises covered the area of alcohol and drugs, weapons and violence on campus, student discipline, and inclement weather. Gainey noted the Columbine shooting incident continued to be a grim reminder that schools were not safe havens, and complacency concerning leadership responsibilities for effective crisis management remained critical.

Korem (2008) suggested Texas has not experienced a Columbine because of the use of a combination of profiling with implementation of three strategies. The first strategy provided variability and flexibility and avoided autocratic directives. The second provided protective factors such as counseling and provided inclusiveness. The third strategy mentored student decision making to move the troubled students out of the random actor profile into an innovator profile (Korem, 2008). Sheldon, Owens, and Song (2009) noted the importance of recognizing patterns of violence at public schools and suggested school administrators consider more combinations of safety measures together with local resources and services for improved safety and reduced violence.

Emergency Planning and Management

In 2003, then Secretary of Education Paige was quoted as saying "I know how important emergency planning is. Schools are part of the community. They must be part of the community's emergency plan. If you don't have a plan, get one. If you have one, practice it" (Rubelen, 2003, p. 17).

In a 2007 report published by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), 32 states reported having policies requiring school districts to have an emergency management plan (Emergency Management, 2007). The GAO report listed a number of planning items some states required, such as, hazards to be included, district follow-up or planned review, drills and training requirements, parent involvement, first responders involvement, and community partner involvement. Examples of states requiring most of these items included Alaska, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, and Utah. Other states only required two of the various items in their plans such as specified safety drills training and detailing of specific hazards. Examples of these states included Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming. Several states such as Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin, and West Virginia specified no state requirements for school emergency management plans (Emergency Management, 2007).

Gainey (2009) stated, "Far from a passing fad, crisis planning must be an integrated part of effective school district leadership" (p. 267). Gainey listed the greatest challenges for school districts as training of personnel and the level of preparedness within the district. Gainey identified frequent barriers for crises preparedness as lack of time, personnel, and financial resources. Gray (2009) supported challenges to district emergency preparedness noted by Gainey and added administrator apathy, naiveté, and competition for resources given the current emphasis on student achievement.

Other suggestions for emergency planning included conducting regular disaster simulation exercises to test plans (Weins & Garris, 2008); implementing a communication plan (Kollie, 2009); and locating hazardous materials (Kelsey, 2009).

THE STUDY

The components of this study included instrument development and pilot study, research questions, research design, sample and data collection, data analysis, sample characteristics, limitations and delimitations, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and further research.

Instrument Development and Pilot Study

The survey instrument was modified from a survey developed for use in California. The author of the survey was contacted and granted permission for modification of the survey for Texas. Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of school preparedness for emergency operations in four areas: planning, training, conducting drills and exercises, and maintaining equipment and supplies. Responses were measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from one (not at all prepared) to five (very well prepared).

A pilot of the survey instrument was conducted with a convenience sample of 42 Texas public school administrators. Results of the pilot analysis yielded an overall internal reliability of the instrument with a Cronbach's alpha of .62. Face validity of the instrument was established by a panel of experts comprised of administrators in the field and college professors. These experts agreed that survey items addressed content required by *Senate Bill 11* regarding emergency operations in Texas public schools. Specific instrument modifications reduced survey items from 65 to 34. Items were clustered into three groups: preparedness for emergency operations and planning, emergency response training and drills, and emergency equipment and supplies.

Research Questions

Two research questions were developed as follows:

1. What were the perceptions of Texas teachers and administrators as a group regarding their campuses': (a) overall preparedness for emergency operations; (b) emergency response planning; (c) emergency response training; (d) emergency response drills and exercises; and (e) emergency equipment and supplies?
2. Were the perceptions of Texas teachers and principals different regarding their campuses' overall preparedness for emergency operations?

Research Design

An exploratory study was conducted using a non-experimental comparative design. Survey research methodology was selected as a convenient format to assess participant perceptions at one point in time.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample population for this study was comprised of teachers, assistant principals, and principals from randomly selected school districts in Texas who were employed during the 2007-08 school year. A list of all school districts in Texas, including demographic data and contact information, was obtained from the Texas Education Agency's website. The list was downloaded into a spreadsheet and edited to exclude charter districts and districts reporting an enrollment of zero. The remaining districts were divided into three groups: small, medium, and large. Each group was placed on an alphabetical list by district name. The sequence of the list was then randomized using an online random sequence generator. The first 96 districts from each of the three lists represented a random sample of 288 districts. The sample was comprised of three administrators and three teachers from each district. The total sample included 864 teachers and 864 administrators for a possible sample of 1728 individuals. Selected school districts were contacted by electronic mail, and responses were received from 48 districts, yielding a response rate of 17%. In actuality, 133 administrators and 165 teachers responded totaling 298 respondents in this sample from the 48 districts.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to present the characteristics of the respondents and identify the respondents' mean ratings of preparedness with respect to emergency operations, response planning, training, drills and exercises, and emergency equipment and supplies. An independent samples *t*-test was used to identify mean differences between administrator and teacher perceptions of preparedness. Qualitative responses were analyzed through data reduction methods.

Sample Characteristics

Respondents represented 100 small, 67 medium, and 131 large school districts. The largest groups of respondents (58%) represented campuses with student populations ranging from 301 to 800. The smallest group (2%) represented campuses with a student population of 2,501 or greater. Respondents represented 147 elementary schools, 60 middle schools, 62 high schools, and 29 combined grade level campuses. The largest group represented elementary campuses (49%) and the smallest group represented combined grade level campuses (10%). There were 133 administrators and 165 teachers.

The majority of the respondents were female (66%). The ethnic representation of the respondents included 45 African Americans (15%), 16 Hispanics (7%), and 235 (78%) were Caucasian, showing that Caucasians comprised the majority of the respondents for this survey.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Basic assumptions underlying this study included the premise that the participants were familiar with school safety issues including emergency response planning and training, emergency drills and exercises, and emergency equipment and supplies. The limitations of this study were commensurate with survey research methods. The data were collected at one point in time and reflected the experiences and biases of the respondents where responses were strictly voluntary. The response rate was small with only 17% of the contacted districts responding. The majority of the sample included White females representing elementary campuses with student populations ranging from 301 to 800 students. Responses were delimited to teachers and campus administrators employed during the 2007–08 school year in Texas. Thus, this study may not generalize to states outside of Texas.

FINDINGS

The research questions were used as the framework for reporting study findings.

Question 1. *What were the perceptions of Texas teachers and administrators as a group regarding their campuses': a) overall preparedness for emergency operations; b) emergency response planning; c) emergency response training; d) emergency drills and exercises; and e) emergency equipment and supplies?*

Descriptive statistics were used to examine ratings on a scale of one (not at all prepared) to five (extremely well prepared). Table 1 depicts the mean values of respondent rating of perceptions of preparedness.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators Regarding Campus Preparedness for Emergency Operations (N = 298).

Campus Preparedness	M	SD
1. Overall Emergency Operations	3.53	.87
2. Emergency Response Planning	3.66	.89
3. Emergency Response Training	3.35	.99
4. Emergency Drills and Exercises	3.98	.90
5. Emergency Equipment and Supplies	3.19	.97

These findings showed that teachers and administrators as a group perceived at least minimal emergency preparedness across all areas. Although not statistically different, perceptions concerning emergency drills and exercises ($M = 3.98$) may suggest more familiarity with this area and supported the GAO study (Emergency Management, 2007) showing a large number of states included this area in their emergency management plans. Based upon the table of means, the lowest perception of preparedness related to familiarity with emergency equipment and supplies ($M = 3.19$). When asked to identify specific crises

areas related to areas of emergency preparation, teachers and administrators selected severe weather, fires, campus intruders, weapons on campus, and mechanical failure or power loss. These findings were similar to those reported by Gainey (2009).

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare mean perceptions of teachers' and administrators' concerning of responsibility for emergency preparedness. The mean perception of teachers (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 1.2) was significantly lower than the mean perception of administrators (*M* = 4.18; *SD* = .73), *t*(296)= 2.96, *p* < .05. This finding suggested that teachers perceived a lower commitment than administrators regarding responsibility for improving emergency preparedness on their campus.

Information was requested to clarify perceptions regarding emergency response planning. Eighty-one percent reported a designated campus emergency operations crisis team while 74% reported having a personal copy of the campus emergency operations plan (EOP). A mean of 3.35 (*SD* = .99) suggested respondents perceived that they were familiar with the content of the EOP. Eighty percent of the respondents reported they had a specific role or duty in the event of an emergency on campus. For example, teachers were assigned to escort students to an assigned assembly area, while an administrator surveyed the building to ensure complete evacuation. Seventeen percent of the respondents reported no role in the event of an emergency. This finding suggested that although teachers and administrators as a group were prepared, there may be a gap between perceptions and actual preparedness.

In the area of emergency response training, about 50% reported professional development related to general emergency procedures. Thirty-six percent reported receiving cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training within the previous school year.

The orderly evacuation from all buildings in response to emergencies such as fire or bomb threats was required by state law once per month (nine per year). Shelter-in-place drills, the protection of building occupants in response to such emergencies as chemical or biological releases were state recommended once per school year. Lockdown drills, consisting of the orderly movement of everyone behind a locked door in response to emergencies such as intruders with weapons, were state recommended at least three times per school year. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported their campus did not conduct the minimum required building evacuation drills, while 83% reported their campus did not conduct the minimum lockdown drills. Twenty-six percent reported their campus did not conduct the recommended number of shelter-in-place drills.

Respondents were asked to rate their preparedness to shelter students in-place for at least 24 hours. A mean response of 2.49 (*SD* = 1.10) indicated that respondents perceived that their campus was not prepared to shelter students in place for at least 24 hours. Respondents perceived that their campus was prepared to communicate with others in an emergency (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = 1.23). Over 90% of the respondents reported having fire extinguishers, first aid supplies, and student emergency cards (records of student's medical conditions and emergency contact information). Less than half of the respondents (40%) reported having food for emergencies, while 50% reported having water. Supplies for children with special needs were reported by 50% of the respondents. Twenty-four percent of the respondents reported no emergency alert system on campus.

Question 2. *Were the perceptions of Texas teachers and principals different regarding their campuses' overall preparedness for emergency operations?*

Information found in Table 2 showed the means and standard deviations for administrators' and teachers' perceptions of overall preparedness for emergency operations.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Administrators' and Teachers' Perceptions of Overall Preparedness for Emergency Operations (N = 298).

Position	N	M	SD	Std Error
Administrator	133	3.72	.69	5.98E-02
Teacher	165	3.37	.96	7.51E-02

An independent samples t-test comparing the mean perceptions of teachers and principals showed a significant difference between the two groups, $t(296) = 3.54$, $p < .05$. While both teachers and administrators indicated a perception of preparedness, the mean perception of teachers ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .96$) was significantly lower than the mean of administrators ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .69$) that suggested teachers were not as familiar as administrators regarding overall campus emergency operations preparedness.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, Texas administrators and teachers perceived minimal campus preparedness across the areas of emergency operations, response planning, response training, emergency drills, and emergency equipment and supplies. These results were supported in the literature by studies conducted by Gray (2009) and Gainey (2009). Principals perceived significantly greater responsibility for improving emergency preparedness on their campuses. Three-fourths of the respondents reported owning a copy of the campus emergency operations plan (EOP) and were familiar with the plan contents.

In the specific area of training, only one-half of the respondents reported professional development related to general emergency procedures. This finding was supported by Gainey (2009) who suggested the challenge for crisis-ready schools was adequate crises-management preparation training. Similarly, Gray (2009) identified a need to emphasize general emergency procedure training in spite of budget cuts, time, and competition for resources.

Lack of state compliance with the required number of emergency drills was a finding of this study because respondents reported failure to conduct sufficient number of state mandated building evacuation drills, lockdown drills, and shelter-in-place drills. Additionally, respondents did not perceive that their campuses were prepared to shelter students-in-place for a minimum 24 hour period as required by state regulations.

The vast majority of respondents reported having first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, and student emergency information, but emergency food supplies, water and supplies for children with special needs appeared lacking. About one-fourth of the respondents reported not having emergency alert systems on their campuses.

The perceptions of administrators and teachers were significantly different regarding campus overall preparedness for emergency operations. Teachers appeared less familiar than administrators with overall campus emergency preparedness. These findings may be explained by the different roles and responsibilities of teachers and administrators.

DISCUSSION

Survey responses indicated school administrators were aware of federal and state emergency preparedness mandates. However, it appeared that many administrators neglected to conduct the required number of emergency drills, particularly lock down drills and building evacuation drills. Many respondents rated their campus' ability to shelter students for a 24 hour period very low indicating they did not feel prepared to shelter students as required. Teachers appeared to feel less prepared or knowledgeable about emergency preparedness than administrators. Just being familiar with emergency preparedness mandates did not appear sufficient for the safety of school children if implementation of such procedures could not proceed smoothly in all types of emergency situations.

Training appeared lacking. Teachers did not appear to feel knowledgeable about or responsible for emergency preparedness operations although they have a major role in ensuring the safety of their own classes in emergency situations. Lack of training in emergency procedures appeared problematic and is an area of importance for inclusion in educational leadership preparation programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional development training in emergency operations has implications for both school campus and professional teacher and administrator preparation programs. A review of current literature and results of this study show that school districts might enhance their campus emergency operations before the next crisis occurs by taking the following steps:

1. For school campuses, update and implement professional development training related to general emergency procedures required by state and district mandates on a yearly basis.
2. For professional principal preparation programs, develop and incorporate training related to general emergency procedures required by state and district mandates in coursework required for principal certification.
3. Monitor and enforce compliance with state regulations concerning emergency drills and exercises.
4. Ensure adequate supplies of food, water, and supplies for students with special needs are available for emergency situations as well as 24 hour shelter-in-place provisions.
5. Conduct a vulnerability audit to identify potential threats or weaknesses on the campus that could develop into an emergency that would have the most damaging impact and greatest likelihood of occurring, e.g. storage of hazardous chemicals.
6. Emphasize the role of leadership in an emergency. Leaders "frame the meaning of a crisis event, expressing appropriate concern and support, overseeing mitigation, coordinating support, and facilitating timely, open communication" (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003, p. 241).

FURTHER RESEARCH

The study findings suggested the need for future studies. The authors recommend that researchers,

1. Replicate this study on a national basis and include a larger population of male respondents at secondary campus levels with different student population sizes.

2. Conduct a qualitative research study to investigate the lived experiences of educators and students regarding emergency operations preparedness.

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Effects of Principal's Pay and Pay Satisfaction for
Student Achievement at the Elementary School Level

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By most accounts, education of America's youth is a concern for a variety of stakeholders. However, ultimately charged with this task is a public school district, and the performance of a public school district is assessed either formally or informally by two criteria: effectiveness and efficiency. That is, "the public's perceptions of a local school district are largely gauged by outcome variables (effectiveness) and cost expenditures (efficiency)" (Young, 2007, p. 124), and these criteria can be operationalized in many ways.

Among acceptable, albeit not exclusive, ways for operationalizing these variables are outcome measures pertaining to student achievement (effectiveness) and to employee pay (efficiency). In a review of literature addressing production functions, Verstegan and King (1998) indicated sometimes student achievement serves as the dependent variable, while other times employee pay serves as the dependent variable. For both criteria, information is available, and it is common practice for the local press to report results for student achievement assessed by performance-based test scores as well as for costs associated with employee pay.

Clearly, student achievement is used as an indicator for the effectiveness of a school district (e.g., Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Sergiorvanni, 2006) and is assessed according to different instructional units. Included among the instructional units are classrooms (e.g., Achilles, Finn, & Pate-Bain, 2002), school buildings (e.g., Lee & Loeb, 2000) and school districts at large (e.g., Currall, Towler, Judge, & Kohn 2005). Depending on the unit of analysis examined, results vary and have different policy as well as applied implications even within a specific school district.

Efficiency of public school districts is assessed according to employee pay (e.g., Burtless, 1996; Verstegan & King, 1998). Underlying the usage of employee pay as a measure of efficiency is that schooling is not a costless endeavor and that the public expects a return on their investment from a cost-benefit perspective. From a cost-benefit perspective, pay of employees is the largest line item within an operating budget for public school districts (Owings & Kaplan, 2006; Webb & Norton, 2003) and is assessed relative to outcomes for a particular instructional unit as a benefit reflecting a return on investments (Poppink & Schen, 2003).

Revealed recently in this body of literature is that the relationship between student achievement (effectiveness) and employee pay (efficiency) is moderated by the affective reactions of teachers (Currall, Towler, Judge, & Kohn 2005) when affective reactions are operationalized by facets of pay satisfaction (Miceli & Lane, 1991; Scarpello, Huber, &

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Vandenberg, 1998; Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006) and when the unit of analysis is public school districts at large. Given these results, this study advances current knowledge in this research stream by considering an alternate employee group (i.e. school principals vs. teachers),by focusing on a different unit of analysis (i.e. elementary school buildings vs. school districts at large) and by examining the affective reactions of employees from an individual's as opposed to an aggregated group point of view.   That is, the overarching research question explored in our study addresses the relationships among student achievement, pay of employees, and affective reactions of employees to pay for a random sample of male elementary school principals through a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relative to our research question, we reviewed literature for student achievement, for pay amount, and for affective reactions to pay. Specific attention is afforded to these variables in our investigation as well as to the interrelationship among these variables as per our research question. Following our review of literature, certain advancements are noted and specific hypotheses are set forth for empirical test.

Student Achievement

Specifically indicated by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006) as well as by Sergiovanni (2006), student achievement is a major concern for all public school districts as a measure of effectiveness. This concern has a legacy beginning with *A Nation At Risk: The Imperatives for Educational Reform* report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), reinforced by *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (www.ed.gov/legislation/GOALS2000/ TheAct/)*,* and perpetuated by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001). Fundamental to these legislative acts is the availability of public information reflecting student achievement for assessing the performance of public school districts and of their component parts (instructional units) from an outcome as opposed to a process approach.

Based on the emphasis of these legislative acts, measures of student achievement as criteria for assessing effectiveness of public school districts at large and of their instructional units are easily accessible on the Internet, are published in the popular press, and are broken-down often for districts at large as well as for each school building nested within a school district (e.g., see Cupertino Unified School District, n.d.). This information is provided by a specific medium and is communicated by a particular format. The medium is performance-based test scores, and the format for communication is report cards for public school districts/public school buildings.

Depending on performance-based test results, school districts/school buildings seek either to maintain or to enhance the level of achievement for students. For either goal, research is needed according to several avenues of investigation. At minimum, new information/research is warranted about how students learn (e.g., Shapiro, 2004), about how teachers teach (e.g., McLaren, 2007), about how leaders lead (e.g., Wilziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003), and about how districts manage (e.g., Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Sergiorvanni, 2006).

Among these different research needs, our study focused on the management process. With respect to the management process in general, only a specific function and only a particular activity were examined in our study. The specific function is human resource

management (Webb & Norton, 2003), and the particular human resource activity is pay for elementary school principals (Pounder, 1988).

Pay, for elementary school principals, was examined through alternate lenses. It was viewed both from an amount (Heneman, Greenberger, & Fox, 2002) as a measure of efficiency (Verstegan & King, 1998) and from an affective perspective (Heneman & Judge, 2005) as a potential moderator between effectiveness (student achievement) and efficiency (cost). So noted by several investigators, "Among the many properties characterizing work in formal organizations, pay is one of the most important" (Rice, Phillips, & McFarlin, 1990, p. 386), "is at the core of the employment exchange between organizations and employees" (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992, p. 481), "is a major concern for educational administrators in the public school setting" (Pounder, 1988, p.5), and is reported to account for substantial variance in student achievement when viewed as a production function (Verstegan & King, 1998) relating pay to student achievement (e.g., Currall et al., 2005).

Pay in General

Explored in our study is the relationship between pay amount and pay satisfaction relative to student achievement as noted by our research question. According to the general organizational literature as well as to the educational literature addressing pay (Pounder, 1988; Stone, 1985), consideration is given to pay amount (R.L. Heneman et al., 2002; R.L. Heneman et al., 1997) and to pay satisfaction (Micelli & Lane, 1991; Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006) as multifaceted constructs. Paramount both to pay amount and to pay satisfaction is that each measure fails to be a standalone outcome and is influenced by several contributing factors. Addressed in the following review are factors purported to influence pay amount and to influence pay satisfaction of educational employees within the public school setting.

***Factors influencing pay amount*.** Within the private sector (Bloom & Killingsworth, 1982; Lawler, 1971) as well as within the public sector literature (Pounder, 1988; Stone, 1985), pay amount is influenced by organizational and by individual characteristics. Included among these factors purported to influence pay received by an employee are occupations (Kmec, 2005), organizations (Huffman, 2004), focal positions (Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987), human capital endowments (Wang & Hilton, 2005), and personal attributes (Morgan & Arthur, 2005). For occupations, Huffman (2004) indicated that manufacturing occupations pay more than service occupations, i.e., education.

With respect to organizations, private sector organizations pay more than public sector organizations (Kmec, 2005). Among school districts, some are reported to pay more than others both between states and within states. Between states, Connecticut pays more in general than South Dakota (National Education Association, n.d.), and within states, some school districts pay more than other school districts for the same focal position (Webb & Norton, 2003) with rural school districts paying less typically than either urban or suburban school districts (Poppink & Shen, 2003).

Considering focal positions within occupations (Huffman, 2004) and within organizations (Kmec, 2005), Schwab et al. (1987) stated "Middle managers earn more than entry level managers" (p. 131). Even when focal position is held constant within occupations and within organizations, some employees are paid more than other employees based on human capital endowments (Wang & Holton, 2005) and on personal attributes of position holders (Poppink & Shen, 2003; Pounder, 1986; Young & Brown, 1996).

Human capital endowments influencing pay amounts include job experience and education because "a respectable model of human capital must include job experience and education" (Darity & Mason, 1998. p. 69) of the employee. For educational administrators it is reported "Likewise, even when job and organization are held constant, some position holders possess certain attributes with more market value than other position holders (i.e., experienced persons tend to be paid more than inexperienced persons" (Young & Brown, 1996, p. 143). These human capital endowments are found to be important for teachers relative to student achievement (e.g., Verstegen & King, 1998) and are reported to be important for the pay amount received by educational administrators (Pounder, 1988; Stone, 1985).

A personal attribute of employees receiving attention is sex in the professional literature (Morgan & Arthur, 2005), in the general education literature (Nelson, Stone, Frye, & Chown, 2008), as well as for educational administrators within the public school setting, and results of this research indicate males tend to be paid more than females (Poppink & Shen, 2003; Pounder, 1986; Young & Brown, 1996). Given all factors noted in this review and purported to influence the pay amount of educational employees within the public school setting, this study addresses each factor in a systematic way. More specifically, special attention is afforded to the experimental design by holding certain variables constant via sampling techniques. Statistical procedures are used to control for other variables varying across organizations and employees.

Held constant in our study were occupation (Huffman 2004) by focusing only on education, organization (Kmec, 2005) by examining only public school districts, focal position (Schwab et al., 1987) by considering only elementary school principals, and sex of employees (Morgan & Arthur, 2005; Pounder, 1988; Stone, 1985; Young & Castaneda, 2008) by sampling only males within the sampling framework used to collect data. Addressed by the statistical controls are educational attainment (Stone, 1985), job experience of elementary school principals (Pounder, 1988), and location of a public school district (rural vs. non-rural, Poppink & Schen, 2003). By following both approaches (sampling design and statistical controls), specific influences associated with the amount of pay received by elementary school principals are addressed relative to the assessment of efficiency as an outcome variable for this particular group.

In addition to factors purported to influence actual pay received by elementary school principals, attention was redirected to another aspect of pay for this group of administrators relative to student achievement. This factor was pay satisfaction. Pay satisfaction, like pay amount, was purported to have important implications in this body of literature from an affective perspective on a specific outcome variable, i.e. student achievement as assessed at the school district level (Currall et al., 2005) but has been largely overlooked at the school building level.

Affective reactions to pay. Pay has, however, not only economic implications for school districts as employers from a cost perspective (Owings & Kaplan, 2006) and for individuals as employees relative to the purchase of goods (i.e., housing) and of services (i.e., recreation) when defined as an outcome variable involving actual pay amounts (Young, 2007; Young & Castaneda, 2008), but psychological ramifications for individuals as job incumbents when assessed from an affective perspective (Heneman & Judge, 2006; Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006) especially as related to student achievement (Currall, et al., 2005). From an affective perspective of employees, pay has been used as a proxy to gauge the organizational value of positions as well as of position holders (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992). According to

the National Association of Elementary School Principals (n.d.), high school principals are paid more than elementary school principals with the former having more organizational value than the later, *defacto.*

For specific position holders (elementary school principals within a school district) it is not unusual to find some are paid more than others (Webb & Norton, 2003). Differences in pay for elementary school principals within a school district may or may not always be attributable to job demands or to human capital endowments. Thus, pay may have organizational as well as personal implications impacting the affective perceptions of building level principals as noted in the general organizational/industrial literature from a social justice perspective (Andersson-StrAberg, Sverke, & Hellgren, 2007; Greenburg & McCarty, 1990).

Affective reactions to pay within the general industrial/organizational literature have been linked positively to many organizational outcomes (i.e., turnover, e.g., Trevor, Gerhart, & Boudreau, 1997; lateness, e.g., Koslowsky, Sagie, Krausz, & Singer, 1997; grievances, e.g., Greenburg & Wiethoff, 2001) in a variety of settings (for a review see Williams et al., 2006). The affective reactions of employees about their pay relative to organizational outcomes are captured under the general rubric of pay satisfaction. With respect to pay satisfaction, "it has been only in the past 3 decades, for instance, that pay satisfaction has become an intensive area of inquiry" (Currall et al., 2005, p. 614) and has been related to a specific organizational outcome within education that is a focal point for this study, i.e., student achievement.

Pay satisfaction. Within the literature, pay satisfaction is purported to be a function of different facets associated with the pay process (Williams et al., 2006). These facets include pay level, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises (H. Heneman & Schwab, 1985). That is, pay satisfaction can vary for each facet along a single continuum ranging from dissatisfaction to satisfaction (Scarpello, Huber, & Vandenberg, 1988).

Recent research has broached these alternate perspectives of pay satisfaction within the public school setting through structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques assessing the utility of different measurement models relative to facets of pay satisfaction. This research offered empirical support for the notion of pay satisfaction as defined by a global construct reflecting those components suggested initially by H. Heneman and Schwab (1985) involving pay level, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises and as captured subsequently by a latent variable (SEM) with a population of teachers (Currall et al., 2005). Because most principals have been teachers, because principals, as well as teachers, work in the same job setting (school building level), and because principals like teachers are responsible for students under their watch relative to student achievement (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2006), additional research is needed in this area for a largely unaddressed group (i.e. elementary school principals).

Consequently, certain advancements are noted relative to current knowledge in this area as applied to the public school setting. Accordingly, specific hypotheses are set forth for empirical tests via a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. Therefore, attention is directed to particular advancements and to specific hypotheses.

Advancements and Hypotheses

Based on a review of literature, only a single study (Currall et al., 2005) was found that examined collectively the particular variables considered in this investigation (i.e., student achievement, pay amount for teachers, and affective reactions of teachers to pay). Methodologically, the unit of analysis examined in the published study was school districts,

and outcomes for student achievement, pay amount for teachers, and affective reactions of teachers to pay are assessed according to aggregated measures at the district level. Following this particular lead noting promising findings in this important area as measured by effectiveness and by efficiency for assessing the performance of public schools, several advancements were made in our study from a policy as well as from an applied perspective.

Advancements. First, a different unit of analysis was used in our study as compared to Currall et al.'s (2005) study. The unit of analysis addressed in our study was elementary school buildings as opposed to public school districts at large. By considering building level as opposed to district level as the unit of analysis, attention was afforded to a particular educational unit with direct implications for student achievement from a research as well as from an applied concern for the variables considered in this study that are masked when considering school districts as the unit of analysis.

Second, a different employee group (principals as opposed to teachers) was examined in our study as compared to other studies (Currall et al., 2005; Knoeppel et al., 2007; Verstegen & King, 1998) for several reasons. Most notably, pay amounts for principals can vary in important ways as compared to teachers. Pay amounts for principals are determined unilaterally by boards of education and can vary among position holders possessing the same human capital endowments (e.g., education and experience), whereas pay amounts for teachers are negotiated by a bargaining agent (bilateral) according to a fixed salary schedule requiring equal pay for equal human capital endowments (e.g., education and experience).

Third, previous research suggested that affective reactions to pay have implications for student achievement but this relationship was assessed from an organizational (aggregated measures at the district level and at the building level) as opposed to an individual perspective (for specific position holders) via the unit of analysis used in previous research (Currall et al., 2005; Knoeppel et al., 2007; Verstegen & King, 1998). However, pay and reactions to pay are captured better from an individual as opposed to an aggregated organizational level. As such, within our study, pay and satisfaction with pay were assessed for specific position holders (elementary school principals) rather than an aggregated group of position holders (teachers aggregated from a district measure), and these outcomes were assessed in our study relative to the achievement of students under the specific watch of principals at the elementary school level.

By following each of the above described advancements addressing an alternate unit of analysis (building vs. district), a different focal position (principals vs. teachers), a specific method of awarding pay (unilateral vs. bilateral), and a deconstructed level of measurement (individual vs. aggregated); information was provided for the research question noted in our study. This information was provided by testing specific hypotheses. These hypotheses were assessed via a structural modeling approach.

Hypotheses. Pivotal to the SEM approach was the flexibility for addressing both an overall structural model for encapsulating all variables under consideration and for assessing specific paths linking these variables. To capitalize on this advantage, several different types of hypotheses were set forth for empirical testing. These hypotheses included an overall model assessment addressing collectively student achievement, pay amount, as well as affective reactions to pay, and direct path assessments linking these variables as defined by the model.

The structural model considered in this study involved a latent variable (pay satisfaction) and observed variables (pay amount and student achievement). Specifically

addressed by the structural model were the interrelationships among these variables (latent as well as observed). As such, a specific hypothesis was provided for the structural model.

> ***Hypothesis 1.*** *It is hypothesized that a structural model involving pay for elementary school principals, affective reactions to pay (pay satisfaction), and student achievement can define an acceptable model (albeit not an exclusive model) for capturing the interrelationships among these variables.*

Direct Effect Assessments

In the event support is provided for the structural model, additional hypotheses are subjected to empirical tests. These hypotheses focus on specific path coefficients linking these variables:

> ***Hypothesis 2***. *It is hypothesized that the paths for an organizational characteristic (rural vs. non-rural school building) and for human capital endowments of elementary principals (education and experience) will be positive as well as statistically significant for defining amount of pay.*

> ***Hypothesis 3.*** *It is hypothesized that the path between actual pay of elementary school principals and student achievement in their school building will be positive as well as statistically significant.*

> ***Hypothesis 4***. *It is hypothesized that the path between actual pay of elementary school principals and their pay satisfaction will be positive as well as statistically significant.*

> ***Hypothesis 5***. *It is hypothesized that the path between pay satisfaction of elementary school principals and student achievement within their assigned building will be positive as well as statistically significant.*

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

Population. The population addressed was limited to a specific pacific coast state (i.e., California) given two of the major variables considered: (a) student achievement and (b) employee pay. First, student achievement, as measured by proficiency-based scores, is unique to particular states because a national performance measure fails to exist that can be used as a common yardstick. Second, pay for school administrators varies across states due, at least in part, to different funding formulas with some states paying systematically lower than other states (National Education Association, n.d.).

Further refining the population considered in this study is the particular unit of analysis examined, i.e., elementary schools. For this population of elementary schools, only those having male principals were considered because pay for principals is reported to vary by sex of the administrator (Poppink & Schen, 2003; Pounder, 1988). Given these constraints associated with a targeted state (California), a unique focal position (elementary school

principals), and a particular sex group (males), this population contains 1,774 observations meeting all criteria.

Sample. Prior to obtaining the actual sample, considerations were afforded both to requirements for the specific technique used in this study (SEM) and to a likely rate of return for the particular research protocol. With respect to the particular statistical technique, Thompson (2002) indicated "It has been suggested that the ratio of number of people to the number of measured or observed variables (n:v) should be at least 11:1" (p. 272) from a SEM approach, and this study assesses a total of 10 variables in the structural model, therefore, 110 responses are needed at minimum. In addition to actual numbers needed by an SEM procedure, a review of existing studies indicates that only approximately 50% of those sampled and requested to participate in this study will likely take part (Newton, Giesen, Freeman, Bishop, & Zeitoun, 2003).

Based on these *a priori* considerations, these restraints suggest an over sampling within the population. Accordingly, 240 participants were sampled at random and were requested to take part in this study via a two-stage sampling process In stage one, attention was given to school districts because pay amount is a district and not a building level prerogative (Currall et al., 2005) and because both levels of student achievement and of affective reactions to pay may be confounded by district level influences beyond the scope of elementary school buildings.

For the 240 districts having male elementary school principals and selected at random, stage two of the sampling process focused on building level principals. Within stage two, only a single elementary school principal was selected at random from among the potential participants within any particular school district. By following this two-stage random sampling process, independence was suggested relative to expectations for student achievement, among pay practices nested within districts from a policy perspective, and for the assessments of pay satisfaction of elementary school principals across as well as within public school districts

Of those elementary school principals sampled at random and requested to participate (n=240), 145 complied to reflect a response rate of 60%. This number of respondents exceeded minimum constraints suggested by Thompson (2002) for a SEM analysis (n=110) as well as anticipated rates of return implied by existing research (50%) using a similar research protocol (Newton et al., 2003). Descriptive statistics for these elementary school principals are found in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Information for the Sample of Elementary School Principals.

Variables(s)	Factors	Means	Std. Deviations
Human Capital Endowments			
	Educational Attainment[1]	2.24	.68
	Focal Position Experience	6.58	5.73
Organizational Characteristic			
	Rural vs. Non-Rural[2]	1.45	.50
Pay Amount			
	Annual Pay	90861.91	10725.11
	Contract Days	214.79	9.81
	Day Pay	423.58	50.55
Pay Satisfaction			
	Pay Amount	13.88	3.88
	Benefits	19.23	5.40
	Structure	9.69	3.05
	Raises	13.22	3.48
Student Achievement			
	API	752.67	76.00

Note 1: Educational attainment was measured by BA = 1, MA = 2, and Doctorate = 3.
Note 2: Rural school districts scored 1 and non-rural scored 2.

Procedures and Data Sources

This study relied both on multiple data sources and on multiple data collection techniques. Information about actual pay amounts, about human capital characteristics of position holders (education and principal experience), about the location of a school building (rural vs. non-rural), and about facets of satisfaction associated with pay (pay levels, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises) was assessed through survey methodology. For information pertaining to student achievement (proficiency-based test scores), archival information was obtained from a database maintained by the targeted state (California Department of Education, n.d.).

Survey data. As part of the data collection process, principals completed a general survey and an established pay satisfaction instrument (to be described). To obtain this information, all participants received by US Mail an information packet, and this packet was mailed to them at their work site. Contained within this information packet were a letter of introduction, a general survey instrument, a sub-scale for assessing pay satisfaction, and a pre-

addressed stamped envelope for return of information along with a pre-addressed post card for requesting feedback from this study.

Within the letter of introduction, the basic purpose of this study was described, participation was encouraged, and confidentiality was assured as a condition of their involvement. As noted in the introductory letter, an opportunity for feedback of results was provided through the return of a post paid card requesting feedback (included in the information packet). Accompanying this letter was a general survey instrument designed to assess self-reports of experiential data pertaining to human capital variables, of location of their school district relative to being either rural or non-rural, information about amount of pay as well as about the contractual work year, and a standardized measure addressing facets of pay satisfaction.

Experiential data for elementary school principals were collected relative to two measures as suggested for pay as an entitlement. These measures included educational level of position holders (coded according to degree with 1 = BA, 2 = MA, and 3 = doctorate) and experience of position holders in their current job assignment for the focal position under consideration. That is, education was assessed for specific degrees, and experience was assessed according to years of experience.

Location of a school district was defined as rural (coded "1") or as non-rural (coded "2") with non-rural including both suburban/urban school districts for several reasons. From a measurement perspective, actual urban school districts are few in number within all states, and urban as well as suburban elementary school principals reside in close proximity. Thus, cost of living as well as pay is more similar for urban and suburban principals than for rural elementary school principals (Poppink & Schen, 2003).

With respect to pay, principals work different contract years (see Table 1). Because pay amount is a function of time worked, both pay amount and time worked are considered by using a per day rate. Per day rate is operationalized by dividing pay amount by the number of contract days as reported by each elementary school principal.

To capture the pay satisfaction of principals, a subscale of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was used (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). This subscale was part of the total instrument reflecting other dimensions of satisfaction (i.e., work, co-workers, supervision, job in general), and this particular subscale pertains specifically to the affective reactions of employees about their pay as measured by their perception of pay satisfaction from a facet perspective: pay amount (n= 4 items), benefits (n= 6 items), pay structure (n= 4 items), and pay raises (n= 3 items).

Most importantly, this particular subscale of the MSQ is used by Currall et al. (2005) with teachers, and our study follows their lead. That is, pay satisfaction was disaggregated according to the dimensions of pay satisfaction suggested initially by H. Heneman and Schwab (1986). Facet satisfaction measures were provided for pay levels, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises (see Table 1).

For every item as nested within each facet of pay satisfaction, a common metric exists. This metric relies on five anchor points ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5) with higher scores reflecting a greater level of satisfaction than lower scores. Composite satisfaction scores associated with pay amount, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises are assessed, and reliability coefficients were calculated for each facet (.89 for pay amount, .92 for benefits, .87 for pay structure, and .86 for pay raises).

Archival data. In addition to survey data collected from practicing elementary school principals, additional information was gleaned from a state database (California Department

of Education, n.d.). Student achievement associated with a specific elementary school was defined by a composite achievement score as measured by the "Academic Performance Index (API)." This composite achievement score for elementary school students was used to construct a report card for school buildings, was part of the database maintained by the targeted state, and is readily available to the public at large (California Department of Education, n.d.). The API is the bedrock of the competency-based student assessment program within this state and serves as the yardstick for performance measurement within and between school districts/school buildings.

The API was developed by the state Department of Education as a means for compliance with the NCLB Act (California Department of Education, n.d.). As a regulatory requirement for all public school districts via state mandates, the API is less susceptible to sampling biases associated with many achievement measures (e.g., ACT and SAT) because exemptions of students are extremely limited and because self-selection is not an option (Currall et al., 2005). Within this targeted state, almost all public school students take the API even in spite of English language deficiencies, and this measure provides the best available assessment for achievement of students in the elementary school setting both within public school districts as well as across public school districts in California.

Scores on the API for an elementary school building can range from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. Lower scores reflect less academic achievement levels than higher scores. Descriptive statistics for the composite academic scores of the elementary school buildings included in this study are found in Table 1.

Statistical Analysis

This study used a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach involving the assessment of a measurement model and of a single structural model (hypothesis 1). As such, this statistical analysis differs from the traditional approach as found in many studies in important ways. Most importantly, the SEM approach incorporates a latent variable (pay satisfaction) as well as observed variables (pay amount and student achievement) by relying on a structural model assessment.

Also, the criterion for accepting or for rejecting hypotheses differs in the approach used by this study with respect to assessment for the measurement as well as the structural model. Within this study, a maximum likelihood criterion was used rather than the ordinary least squares (OLS) approach. The maximum likelihood criterion was based on the difference between the observed correlation matrix (obtained from sampling) and the inferred correlation matrix (obtained from the proposed model) to yield a residual matrix (actually submitted to empirical testing). Following this approach, initial emphasis was devoted to the measurement model (i.e., a latent variable pertaining to pay satisfaction) because Thompson (2002) indicated, "First confirm that the specific measurement models all fit their respective data; second, then and only then, explore the structural relationships among the latent-synthetic variables" (p.273).

To assess the adequacy of the measurement model involving pay satisfaction, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. This procedure (CFA) differs from an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in an important way. That is, the relationship between observed facets (pay amounts, benefits, pay raises, and pay structure) and a latent variable (pay satisfaction) was designated by the investigator in a confirmatory factor analysis rather than the variables being evaluated by a statistical algorithm (OLS) in an exploratory factor analysis.

Within our study, pay satisfaction was defined from a facet perspective involving a latent variable that included satisfaction with pay level, pay benefits, pay structure, and pay raises as suggested by H. Heneman and Schwab (1985) and as used by Currall et al. (2005) to assess a measurement model for the pay satisfaction of teachers. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis involving pay satisfaction as a latent variable for elementary school principals lend support to this particular measurement model by producing a non-significant chi square ($X^2 = .01$, df = 1, p. $\geq$ .05) for the residual matrix. In addition to acceptance of the null hypothesis for the measurement model, consideration was given also to the fit of the data between the observed as well as the hypothesized measurement model, and these fit statistics were within acceptable ranges (RMSEA of .01; GFI of .99).

Given the adequacy of the measurement model (pay satisfaction), attention was redirected to the structural model (hypothesis 1). Contained in Figure 1 is the particular structural model and reported below are statistics addressing fit of these data. An assessment of this structural model indicated that the residual matrix is non-significant ($X^2 = 32.4$, df = 23, p. $\geq$ .05) and that the fit statistics were within expected ranges (a RMSEA of .05 and a GFI of .97).
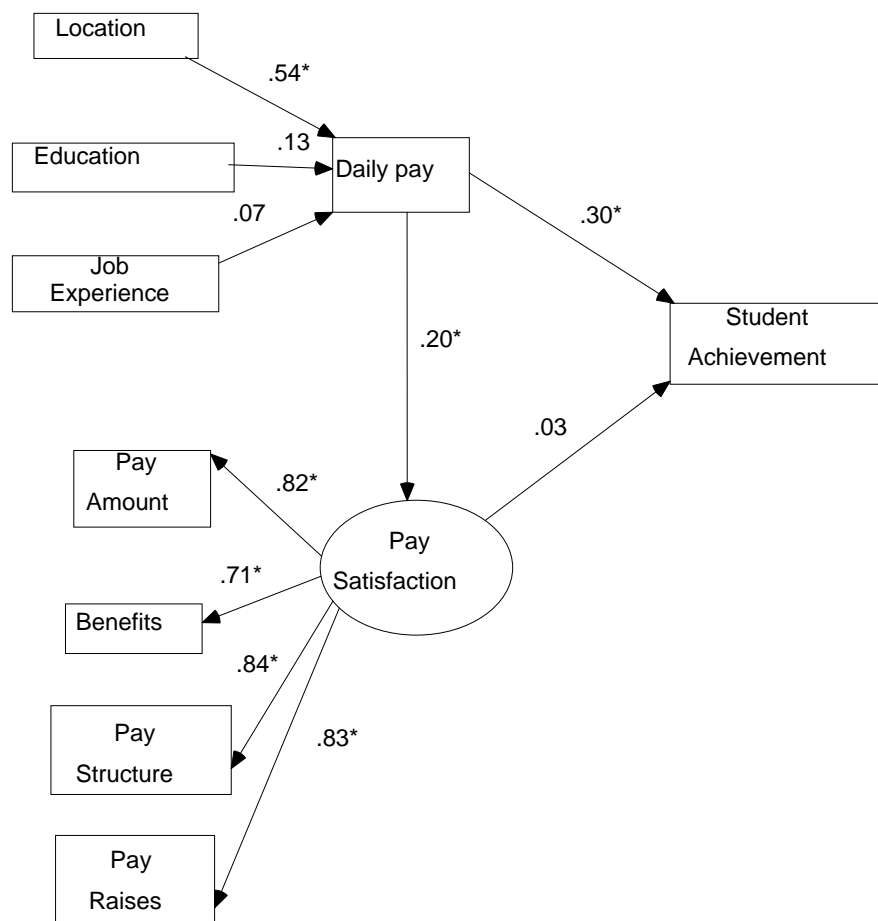

Figure 1. Measurement model pay satisfaction.

In light of these assessments of adequacy both for the measurement model (pay satisfaction as a function of pay amount, benefits, pay structure and pay raises) and for the structural model (involving student achievement, pay amount, and pay satisfaction), support was offered for the structural model considered in our investigation. Foremost, this particular model should be considered as a viable but not an exclusive representation of these data because other viable models may well exist (Arbuckel & Worthke, 1999; Thompson, 2002). Given the viability of this particular model as so defined (see hypothesis 1) and found to meet logical as well as statistical standards, attention was redirected to specific paths suggested by additional hypotheses.

For hypothesis 2, only a single path was found to account for a significant amount of variance in daily pay, and this variable was whether a school district is classified either as rural or as non-rural (B = .54, p. ≤ .05, se Figure 1). Neither path for educational level of principals nor for job experience of principals was statistically significant when linked to actual pay (B = .13 or B = .07, p. ≥ .05, see Figure 1, respectively).

With respect to the path between daily pay and student achievement as specified by hypothesis 3, suggesting pay as a potential incentive, results indicate support both in direction and in magnitude. The path for actual pay was found to account for a significant amount of variance in student achievement, and the direction of this relationship was positive. That is, higher pay for elementary school principals was associated greater levels of student achievement in their school buildings than lower pay (B = .30, p. ≤ .05, see Figure 1).

These data indicate that actual pay received by elementary school principals has affective implications for elementary school principals. Affective implications were measured by a latent variable for pay satisfaction as defined by hypothesis 4. According to these data, higher paid elementary school principals were more satisfied with their pay than lower paid elementary school principals (B = .20, p. ≥ .05, see Figure 1).

However, the path between pay satisfaction and student achievement was found to be non-significant and counter to hypothesis 5. This can be noted by an examination of the standardized path coefficient linking the latent variable for pay satisfaction of elementary school principals to student achievement of building level students. As reflected in Figure 1, this coefficient was fails to be statistically significant (B = .03, p. ≥ .05, see Figure 1).

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study addressed specific criteria for assessing the performance of schools from an effective and from an efficiency point of view relative to a particular instructional unit within the public school setting, i.e. elementary school buildings. Effectiveness and efficiency were operationalized by student achievement and by employee pay, respectively. As stated consistently throughout this manuscript, these operational measures (student achievement and employee pay) were by no means exclusive but are reasonable in light of current practice (Knoeppel et al., 2007; Verstegan & King, 1998) and were supported by the structural model utilized in this study (see Figure 1).

Within the proposed structural model addressed in our study (see Figure 1), student achievement, as a measure of effectiveness, is operationalized by proficiency-based test scores yielded by a standardized instrument (API). This specific instrument was developed, at least in part, as a means for complying with the tenets of the NCLB Act (2001), and scores yielded by the API served as a yardstick for measuring performance of public school districts/school buildings within this particular state. Important to note was that this assessment protocol (state developed proficiency process) was used by most states as a means

for measuring effectiveness at the public school district level, albeit with a different instrument being developed/used across states.

Efficiency of public school districts in our study was examined via employee pay from a cost benefit perspective as a viable consideration for all states for several reasons. Pay, for employees, is a major human resource activity for all organizations (Gerhart & Milkvich, 1992; Rice et al., 1990) including public school districts (Webb & Norton, 2003) and is a concern for individuals because "pay matters to most employees" (Terpstra & Honoree, 2003, p. 67). It has implications for funding bodies (Owings & Kaplan, 2006) from an investment point of view relative to returns on outcomes (student achievement) via cost-benefit and affective implications (pay satisfaction) for employees relative to quality of life issues (Williams et al., 2006).

Given the importance as well as the frequent usage of these criteria for assessing effectiveness and efficiency of schooling in the public setting (e.g., Verstegan & King, 1998), results from this study advanced current knowledge in several ways having both policy and applied implications. More pointedly, past research, like our research, indicated consistently that employee pay is positively related to student achievement but begging an answer in past research is who should be paid more than others from a cost-benefit perspective. This question is largely unanswerable by past research because of the unit of analysis addressed in those studies.

The unit of analysis addressed in some studies is a school district (e.g., Currall et al, 2005). By definition, a school district contains numerous instructional units that vary, no doubt, in effectiveness as defined by student achievement. Even when the unit of analysis is a school building, an aggregated measure of pay is usually calculated for teachers as an employee group (e.g., Knoeppel et al., 2007). Implied by existing research using an aggregated unit of analysis is that pay should be increased for all employees, but ignored by this research is that all employees are unlikely to be associated with equally performing instructional units be these units classrooms, school buildings, or the district at large.

To provide insight from a policy perspective about who should be paid more than others from a cost-benefit perspective, this study followed a different research protocol. Within this study, the unit of analysis was a particular instructional unit (i.e., elementary school buildings) and linked directly to this particular instructional unit was a single employee (i.e., elementary school principal) responsible, at least in part, for the effectiveness of an assigned school building when effectiveness is defined by student achievement (NCLB, 2001). Following this design, results from this study indicated that higher performing school buildings pay their principals more than lower performing school buildings (B = .30, p. ≤ .05, see Figure 1) and, perhaps, should pay more accordingly in light of these findings.

Although the above policy implication linking pay to performance implied a "cause-effect" relationship between pay and student achievement unaddressed specifically in our study, other data exist in our study that should be considered from a contextual perspective relative to a cost-benefit. That is, pay can be considered as an entitlement or an incentive. Pay as an entitlement is based on the human capital endowments of employees (educational attainment and job experience) as is the case for most teachers via a negotiated salary schedule, while pay as an incentive is based, at least in part, on factors other than human capital endowments that can be considered for the pay of elementary school principals.

For elementary school principals taking part in our study, human capital endowments failed to be important factors for pay amount (efficiency) and for student achievement (effectiveness). This can be noted by an examination of direct paths linking education (B = .13, p. ≥.05) and experience (B = .07, p. ≥ .05) to pay amount and by indirect paths linking

education (B = .04, i.e., 13 x .30) and experience (B = .02, i.e., .07 x .30) to student achievement (B = .06, p. $\geq$ .05) as found in Figure 1. Even though this lack of findings for human capital endowments relative to entitlement pay do not necessarily support incentive pay, collectively, all these findings suggested further research concerning incentive pay is well warranted in this body of research from a policy and from an applied point of view as a potential means for enhancing student achievement at the elementary school building level.

Indeed, any means for enhancing student achievement at the elementary school building level has a rippling effect for the schooling process. For elementary school students, early achievement is a sound predictor for future achievement. As such, junior high or middle schools can design curricula to prepare students for high school rather than devoting efforts toward remedial courses.

Turning from assessing the relationships between effectiveness (student achievement) and efficiency (pay amount), this study explored a potential mediator concerning the affective reactions of employees as defined by pay satisfaction. Pay satisfaction was operationalized from a facet perspective involving satisfaction with pay amounts, benefits, pay structure, and pay raises (see Heneman & Schwab, 1985; Currall et al., 2005) and was measured by a standardized instrument used consistently within the professional literature (MSQ). The measurement model for a latent variable defining pay satisfaction was found to be appropriate for elementary school principals taking part in this study (X^2 = 32.4, df = 23, p.$\leq$.05) and to the fit of these data according to commonly accepted measures in the methodology literature (a RMSEA of .05 and a GFI of .97).

With respect to our data, the path between pay amount and pay satisfaction was significant and positive in direction (B = .20, p. $\leq$.05, see Figure 1). That is, higher paid principals were found to be more satisfied with their pay than lower paid principals. At first glance, this finding may seem as a *sine qua non* because others have noted "many people believe that one cannot get too much of a positive reward such as pay" (Heneman, Schwab, Fossum, & Dyer, 1980, p. 146).

However, this notion of "more being better" is far from being resolved in the professional literature and has been long debated without resolution. The major point of contention revolves around whether the relationship between pay amount and pay satisfaction follows either a linear model as suggested by Lawler's (1971) discrepancy theory or a curvilinear model as advocated by Adams' (1963) equity theory. Interestingly, support can be found for each model in the general as well as the educational literature, but these results seem to be moderated by the focal positions considered in particular studies.

To illustrate, pay satisfaction for elementary principals taking part in this study was found to follow the linear as opposed to the curvilinear model. In contrast, pay satisfaction for public school superintendents was reported to follow a curvilinear model when both models are considered (Young, 1997). Collectively, these different findings further reinforced the importance of focal positions in the formation of any policy recommendations given the current state of knowledge in this area of investigation.

Unexpected from the results of this study was that the path between pay satisfaction and student achievement failed to be significant (B = .03, p. $\geq$ .05, see Figure 1). Even though pay satisfaction failed to account for any significant variance in student achievement at the elementary school building level, this finding should not be over-interpreted. No doubt, pay satisfaction may have indirect influences on student achievement unaddressed in this study. For example, pay satisfaction was reported to be related to lateness (Koslowsky et al., 1997), to grievances (Greenburg & Wiethoff, 2001), and to turnover (Trevor et al., 1997) in a variety of settings (Williams et al., 2006), all having implications for job performance (i.e., student

achievement), none of which are addressed in our study, and each of which should be addressed in future studies.

Finally, this study, like all studies, had certain limitations. Findings from this study were limited to a targeted state (California), to a certain type of organization (public school districts), to a particular focal position (elementary school principals), to a designated sex group (males), to a limited organizational characteristic (rural vs. non-rural), to certain human capital endowments of position holders (education and experience), to a unique measure of pay satisfaction (MSQ), to a sole measure of academic achievement (API), and to those actually responding in this study . Without a doubt, other research is needed both to replicate these findings and to expand on these findings in other ways before any broad generalizations are made relative to pay, to affective reactions toward pay, and to student achievement.

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Students with Special Learning Needs and the 65% Instructional Expenditure Ratio Mandate

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Within this decade, much discussion has ensued, as well as legislation, regarding how monies are spent in the nation's schools. In particular, emphasis has been placed on dedicating more monies toward instructional purposes. As such, a 65% rule for instructional expenditures has been encouraged by such persons as George Will, nationally known columnist, and Patrick Byrne, Chairman of Overstock.com, and adopted by many states, including Texas as the House Research Organization (2006) reported, "The idea of implementing a 65 percent requirement in Texas has its origins in the '65 Percent Solution,' a proposal promoted nationally by the advocacy group First Class Education (in 2005)" (p. 1). Jonsson (2006) argued that persons and organizations supporting a nationwide implementation of the 65 Percent Rule tend to focus on the issue of efficiency rather than contributions to improving student academic achievement. Jonsson observed that Patrick Byrne, Chairman of Overstock.com, and primary instigator of the 65% instructional expenditure ratio public policy, would like to see that the public debate focus on how we spend our resources, instead of whether we are spending more or less money or achieving certain performance levels for the amount of money spent by the taxpayer. In other words, effectiveness takes an obvious backseat to efficiency.

Consequently, and largely due to the efforts of Byrne, by 2005, numerous states had adopted some form of the 65% instructional expenditure ratio policy he advocated (Standard & Poor, 2005, 2006). Almost every state has an accountability system that requires some return in student performance for stakeholders. Federal law has also weighed in on such accountability and expectations in the form of Acceptable Yearly Progress or AYP. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) mandates that schools evaluate not only the academic performance of all students but, more importantly, the academic performance of students (i.e., gaps) by subgroups such as economically disadvantaged, at-risk, Limited English Proficient, and students enrolled in special education. Such "closing the gap" accountability is clearly in vogue.

THE PROBLEM

The 65% instructional expenditures ratio mandate, we contend, should be evaluated along the same lines as state and federal accountability systems. That is, the extent to which this mandate affects the academic performance of students with special learning needs is unknown and merits thoughtful attention and deliberate study as a matter of public policy.

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THE LITERATURE

In 1996, Roper studied the relationship between expenditures and student performance using Stanford Achievement Test scores. In this study, Roper examined 127 Alabama public school district scores from fourth, seventh, and tenth grade students. On comparison of applicable homogeneous groups, the instructional support expenditures were not related with achievement. Roper (1996) reported that any relationship between expenditures and student achievement was a curvilinear, rather than a linear relationship.

Turner (1999) conducted a study in which he examined the relationship between fifth grade state reading scores and per pupil expenditure. From a sample of 40 public schools in Georgia, data were collected and analyzed for one school year. Numerous factors were analyzed including average years of teacher experience, district enrollment, percentage of total budget used for salaries and benefits, percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and percentage of teachers with a master's degree or higher. Turner (1999) discovered the presence of a moderate relationship between per pupil expenditure and fifth grade reading scores on a state standardized test. Additionally, a low relationship was indicated between the percentages of total budget used for salaries and benefits and fifth grade state reading scores. However, a stronger relationship was documented between the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch and fifth grade reading scores. Turner suggested one critical implication from the study was that increasing school spending does not necessarily increase student achievement. Further, targeting specific programs or initiatives probably leads to more substantial gains in student performance than simply increasing overall school spending.

In a study of 657 Illinois school libraries, Lance et al. (2003) examined and gathered data on total library expenditures, educational technology, staff and activities, the media collection, hours of operation, and several types of library usage. Lance et al. reported the presence of statistically significant relationships between various dimensions of school libraries and appropriate indicators of academic achievement of students. This study is particularly important because the 65% instructional expenditure policy advocated by Byrne and adopted by many states does not include library expenditures as being instructional expenditures as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics (2003) and thus are excluded from the 65% Instructional Expenditure Rule.

More recently, in a study to determine the efficient allocation of school district financial resources for the delivery of educational services as it related to performance outcomes, Waters (2005) studied student data in Arkansas public schools. Specifically, Walters (2005) documented that high academic achieving school districts, compared to other academic achievement levels, had the highest percent of net current expenditure for instruction, the highest support service cost per student for instruction, the lowest administrative cost per student, the lowest transportation cost per student, and the lowest expenditure per pupil cost. Walters (2005) also indicated that high academic achieving school districts had the greatest number of students in average daily membership, the highest percent of White students, and the lowest free and reduced lunch rate, when compared to the other achievement levels. Hence, Walters' findings were consistent with the results of other researchers (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2005; Roper, 1996; Turner, 1999) that demonstrated that a variety of factors contribute to high academic performance.

In reviewing the extent literature in which researchers have specifically examined the topic surrounding the newly coined phrase "65 Percent Rule," we were only able to locate a few studies. One study, conducted by Standard and Poor's, was completed in late 2005 and

entitled: *The Issues and Implications of the "65 Percent Solution."* Perhaps the most comprehensive to that date, these researchers examined data extracted from the nine states that had implemented mandates of some type using the 65 Percent Rule as of 2005. Specifically included in the study were the states of Minnesota, Ohio, Louisiana, Texas, Kentucky, Florida, Kansas, Arizona, and Colorado. Further, Standard and Poor's utilized state testing data specific for each individual state. One example, for the state of Texas, TAKS data or the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills were utilized.

Standard and Poor's used a linear regression to reveal the lack of a positive relationship between instructional spending allocations and individual student performance. In fact, they further documented "that there is no minimum instructional spending allocation that necessarily produces higher student achievement" (Standard and Poor's, 2005, p. 4). They further concluded, "There is a lack of empirical evidence for mandating a uniform percentage spending threshold across all districts to raise student achievement" (p. 4). Also included in this study was a follow-up addendum to their original study the following year by adding Arkansas to the list of schools. Findings from analyses of Arkansas data were very similar to the results previously delineated (Standard & Poor's, 2006).

Finally, Jones, Bingham, and Jackson (2007) reported, from a study they conducted in Texas, that no relationship was present between school district instructional expenditure ratios and student academic performance on the state-mandated achievement measure. In addition, they investigated whether a relationship was present between instructional expenditure ratios and student performance on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). Jones et al. reported, similar to their results on the state-mandated achievement measure, that no relationship was present between school instructional expenditure ratios and the SAT. Further, Jones et al. (2007) suggested:

> Using the 65 Percent Rule standard or mandate as a dependent variable for prescribing improved student performance negates all other dynamics at play in successful school district operations. Such a uniform standard trivializes the complex nature of the public educational systems across the United States and the task of educating individual children with individual needs. (p. 229)

THE PURPOSE

Our purposes in conducting this study were twofold. First, we sought to determine the extent to which the academic achievement of four groups of students with special learning needs might differ as a function of school district instructional expenditure ratios. Second, we wanted to determine the extent to which findings would be consistent across the four groups of students. With the state mandate that instructional expenditure ratios be 65% or higher, an analysis of its relationship with student performance was clearly warranted.

THE METHOD

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the difference in math percent passing rates as a function of instructional expenditure ratios for each group of students with special learning needs?

2. What is the difference in reading percent passing rates as a function of instructional expenditure ratios for each group of students with special learning needs?

3. What is the difference in science percent passing rates as a function of instructional expenditure ratios for each group of students with special learning needs?

4. What is the difference in social studies percent passing rates as a function of instructional expenditure ratios for each group of students with special learning needs?

5. What is the difference in writing percent passing rates as a function of instructional expenditure ratios for each group of students with special learning needs?

6. To what extent are differences consistent in student academic achievement across the four groups of students?

Participants

Data from all Texas public school districts for the most recent school year, 2007-2008, were utilized in this study. The research questions previously mentioned were addressed for students designated as being Economically Disadvantaged; as being At-Risk; as being Limited English Proficient; or as being enrolled in Special Education. A total of 858 public school districts had passing rates on the five TAKS academic measures for students who were Economically Disadvantaged. For students who were Limited English Proficient, a total of 347 school districts provided analyzable data whereas for At-Risk students, a total of 863 public school districts had passing rates available for analysis. Finally, for students enrolled in Special Education a total of 383 school districts had usable data. The reason for the different sample sizes reflects the manner in which Texas reports educational data. When a small number of students are present at a school, scores are not reported to ensure student anonymity and confidentiality of their scores. Moreover, when all children in a subgroup pass a TAKS measure or fail a TAKS measure, scores are also not reported to the public.

Instrumentation

Archival data were acquired on all Texas public school districts for the 2007-2008 school year. Through accessing and downloading files from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), data that were reported by each public school district were gathered. Specifically, data on the instructional expenditure ratio, overall student performance on each TAKS measure, and student performance by classification on each TAKS measure were obtained. Because the data for these variables were reported to the state by each school district or calculated by the Texas Education Agency, traditional reliability and validity estimates were not appropriate for the variables analyzed in this study. Rather, any errors in these self-reported figures were assumed to be minimal. To determine the extent to which the individual TAKS measures provide reliable or valid scores, readers are referred to the TEA website for the technical manuals for each of the TAKS tests.

The dependent variable of instructional expenditure ratio was defined by the Texas Education Agency as:

This measure, required by TEC 44.0071, indicates the percentage of the district's total actual expenditures for the 2006-07 fiscal year that were used to fund direct instructional activities. The instructional expenditure ratio is a district-level only measure, and is calculated as follows: expenditures reported in function codes 11, 12, 13, 31 and object codes 6112 through 6499 *divided by* expenditures reported in function codes 11-52, 92,and 95 and object codes 6112 through 6499.

Procedures

After accessing the Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System website, connection to each AEIS data file of interest (i.e., school district, financial, and student achievement) was made. Data from each data file were downloaded as .dat files and then merged using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-Version 15. Prior to conducting statistical procedures, the underlying assumptions (e.g., normality of data) were checked. Even though some of the skewness and kurtosis values exhibited a departure from normality (i.e., +/- 3, Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002), the decision was made to use parametric statistical procedures because of their robustness.

THE RESULTS

The results are divided into each of the four subgroups outlined in the research questions.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

To ascertain whether a difference was present in student performance on the five TAKS measures as a function of instructional expenditures for students labeled as being Economically Disadvantaged students, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted and yielded a statistically significant result, $\Lambda = .97$, $p = .003$, $n^2 = .015$. This overall difference was reflective of a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Univariate follow-up Fs revealed statistically significant differences for Math, $F(2, 855) = 9.76$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .02$; for English, $F(2, 855) = 4.68$, $p = .01$, $n^2 = .01$; for Science, $F(2, 855) = 4.00$, $p = .019$, $n^2 = .009$; for Social Studies, $F(2, 855) = 4.74$, $p = .009$, $n^2 = .01$; and for Writing, $F(2, 855) = 6.06$, $p = .002$, $n^2 = .014$. Effect sizes for these statistically significant results were small (Cohen, 1988).

Scheffè post hoc procedures revealed that the school districts in the less than 60% instructional expenditures ratio group and in the 60 to 65% group had statistically significantly lower passing rates in math than the school districts that were at or above the 65% instructional expenditures ratios. The same pattern was present for English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing. When the passing rates of students who were Economically Disadvantaged were analyzed, the poorest passing rates were in school districts in the less than 60% of instructional expenditures ratio schools. An examination of Table 1 shows the average passing rates for each TAKS measure, separated by instructional expenditures group, for students who were Economically Disadvantaged.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics for TAKS Passing Rates in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing by Instructional Expenditure Ratios Group for Students who Were Economically Disadvantaged.

	n	*M*	*SD*
Math			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	120	74.68	10.12
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	445	75.07	8.32
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	293	72.04	10.28
English			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	120	87.46	5.51
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	445	87.97	4.75
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	293	86.72	6.34
Science			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	120	64.24	10.93
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	445	64.26	9.50
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	293	62.06	12.33
Social Studies			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	120	86.71	7.20
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	445	86.77	6.28
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	293	85.10	9.08
Writing			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	120	90.27	5.26
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	445	89.72	6.31
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	293	88.19	7.81

Limited English Proficient Students

To determine whether a difference was present in student performance on the five TAKS measures as a function of instructional expenditures for students who were Limited English Proficient, a MANOVA was conducted and yielded a statistically significant result, $\Lambda = .91$, $p = .0001$, $n^2 = .05$. This overall difference was reflective of a near-moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). Univariate follow-up Fs revealed statistically significant differences for Math, $F(2, 344) = 5.70$, $p = .004$, $n^2 = .03$; for English, $F(2, 344) = 7.51$, $p = .001$, $n^2 = .04$; for Science, $F(2, 344) = 7.62$, $p = .001$, $n^2 = .04$; for Social Studies, $F(2, 344) = 3.99$, $p = .019$, $n^2 = .023$; and for Writing, $F(2, 344) = 3.24$, $p = .04$, $n^2 = .019$. Effect sizes were small for all results (Cohen, 1988).

Scheffè post hoc procedures revealed that the school districts in the less than 60% instructional expenditures ratio group had statistically significantly lower passing rates in math than the other two school district groupings. For English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing, however, only the 65% instructional expenditures group outperformed the other two groups. That is, the lowest two school district groupings did not differ in their percent passing rate from each other on 4 of the 5 TAKS measures. When the passing rates of students who were Limited English Proficient were analyzed, the poorest passing rates were in bottom two groups of school districts. An examination of Table 2 shows the average passing rates for

each TAKS measure, separated by instructional expenditures group, for students who were Limited English Proficient. Findings were commensurate with the results for the Economically Disadvantaged students.

TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics for TAKS Passing Rates in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing by Instructional Expenditure Ratios Group for Students who Were Limited English Proficient.

	n	*M*	*SD*
Math			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	78	66.44	9.72
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	195	64.39	10.43
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	74	60.54	13.46
English			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	78	72.54	8.44
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	195	69.33	9.63
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	74	66.35	11.64
Science			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	78	41.50	13.21
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	195	34.84	12.04
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	74	35.91	14.44
Social Studies			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	78	63.04	12.89
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	195	58.35	14.81
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	74	56.35	18.59
Writing			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	78	82.91	9.48
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	195	79.31	13.51
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	74	78.30	10.99

At-Risk Students

To ascertain whether a difference was present in student performance on the five TAKS measures as a function of instructional expenditures for students designated as being At-Risk, a MANOVA was conducted and yielded a statistically significant result, $\Lambda = .94$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .03$. This overall difference was reflective of a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Univariate follow-up *F*s revealed statistically significant differences for Math, $F(2, 860) = 19.12$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .04$; for English, $F(2, 860) = 8.20$, $p = .001$, $n^2 = .019$; for Science, $F(2, 860) = 6.03$, $p = .014$, $n^2 = .017$; for Social Studies, $F(2, 860) = 10.75$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .024$; and for Writing, $F(2, 860) = 11.04$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .025$. Effect sizes for these results were small (Cohen, 1988).

Scheffè post hoc procedures revealed that the school districts in the less than 60% instructional expenditures ratio group had statistically significantly lower passing rates in math than the other two sets of school districts which did not differ from each other in math passing rates. The same pattern was present for English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing. When the passing rates of At-Risk students were analyzed, the poorest passing rates were in

school districts in the less than 60% of instructional expenditures ratio schools. An examination of Table 3 shows the average passing rates for each TAKS measure, separated by instructional expenditures group, for students labeled as being At-Risk. Findings for At-Risk students were similar to the findings for the Economically Disadvantaged and the Limited English Proficient groups.

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics for TAKS Passing Rates in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing by Instructional Expenditure Ratios Group for At-Risk Students.

	n	M	SD
Math			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	122	64.67	11.39
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	451	63.37	9.61
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	290	58.87	12.50
English			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	122	83.47	6.89
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	451	84.09	5.87
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	290	82.15	8.30
Science			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	122	55.21	11.81
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	451	53.76	10.17
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	290	51.40	12.98
Social Studies			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	122	84.84	8.12
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	451	84.49	6.87
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	290	81.73	10.72
Writing			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	122	86.20	7.60
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	451	85.43	7.77
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	290	82.68	10.48

Special Education Students

To determine whether a difference was present in student performance on the five TAKS measures as a function of instructional expenditures for students enrolled in special education, a MANOVA was conducted and yielded a statistically significant result, $\Lambda = .92$, $p = .001$, $n^2 = .04$. This overall difference was reflective of a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Univariate follow-up Fs revealed statistically significant differences for Math, $F(2, 380) = 4.97$, $p = .007$, $n^2 = .025$; for English, $F(2, 380) = 3.34$, $p = .037$, $n^2 = .017$; for Science, $F(2, 380) = 7.42$, $p = .001$, $n^2 = .04$; for Social Studies, $F(2, 380) = 6.54$, $p = .002$, $n^2 = .033$; and for Writing, $F(2, 380) = 10.29$, $p < .001$, $n^2 = .05$. Effect sizes for these results were small (Cohen, 1988).

Scheffè post hoc procedures revealed that the school districts in the less than 60% instructional expenditures ratio group had statistically significantly lower passing rates in all TAKS areas than the other two sets of school districts. In Science and in Writing, the 65% instructional expenditures group also outperformed the 60 to 65% instructional expenditures

school districts. When the passing rates of students enrolled in special education were analyzed, the poorest passing rates were in school districts in the less than 60% of instructional expenditures ratio schools. An examination of Table 4 shows the average passing rates for each TAKS measure, separated by instructional expenditures group, for students enrolled in special education. In general, the results for students enrolled in special education were comparable with the previous findings for Economically Disadvantaged students, for students who were Limited English Proficient, and for students labeled as being At-Risk.

TABLE 4. Descriptive Statistics for TAKS Passing Rates in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and Writing by Instructional Expenditure Ratios Group for Students Enrolled in Special Education.

	n	*M*	*SD*
Math			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	81	63.06	14.89
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	222	61.49	13.74
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	80	56.20	17.79
English			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	81	76.06	12.39
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	222	73.87	11.34
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	80	71.05	14.80
Science			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	81	42.83	16.26
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	222	37.98	15.08
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	80	33.60	14.48
Social Studies			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	81	68.60	14.77
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	222	64.60	14.78
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	80	59.95	16.72
Writing			
65% and Above Instructional Expenditures	81	80.46	9.92
60 to 64.99% Instructional Expenditures	222	76.25	11.99
Below 60% Instructional Expenditures	80	71.19	17.59

DISCUSSION

As suggested in our premise, we believe that examination of the extent to which the 65% instructional expenditure ratio mandate affects the academic performance of students with special learning needs is largely unknown and merits study. The question regarding the monies needed for instructional expenditures, we believe, is critical to any discussion concerning efforts to "close the gaps" among sub-populations or groups. The extent of Texas public school districts' compliance with the 65% instructional expenditures ratio was statistically related to the academic success of four groups of students with special learning needs: Economically Disadvantaged, At-Risk, Limited English Proficient, and Special Education. Specifically, schools spending less than 60% instructional expenditures have student performance that yields statistically significant differences within each of these groups

on the 2007-2008 Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills Math, Reading, Social Studies, Science, and Writing measures.

All groups of students with special learning needs who were enrolled in school districts that spent less than 60% of their monies on instructional expenditures had the lowest percent passing rates in all five TAKS tests. This consistent set of findings is particularly important when considering the plethora of studies cited that have demonstrated little to no relationship between a 65% instructional expenditure ratio and student academic performance. These results are also particularly important in reference to the Jones et al. (2007) study in which they analyzed TAKS data from a previous year and reported no statistically significant relationships between the 65% benchmark and student academic performance. Though the 65% Instructional Expenditure Ratio may indicate no relationship to student academic performance when it comes to the Texas state-mandated assessment, the TAKS, relationships do appear to be present at levels below this 65% instructional expenditure ratio when examining these four subpopulations. Given the potential of millions of dollars represented by a single percentage point in the ratio, we contend that our findings are quite relevant.

With the mandate placed on public school districts across the country to have all students academically proficient by 2014 by the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts need to examine the manner in which they spend their dollars. Clearly, in our study, instructional expenditures were related with student achievement among student subgroups specifically defined in the No Child Left Behind Act. To the extent that school districts continue to spend their monies in ways other than instructional expenditures, they may find that their student subgroups do not meet the 100% proficiency mandate. As such, school districts may find themselves experiencing the penalties prescribed by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Lest readers over-generalize from these findings, several caveats are in order. First, this study represented a causal-comparative research design and, as such, does not yield cause-and-effect results. Second, a limited set of variables was examined that related to instructional expenditure ratios and student academic performance. Third, data from only one state were analyzed. Fourth, data from only a single school year were analyzed. Therefore, readers are urged to be cautious in the extent to which they make generalizations from this study. Researchers are encouraged to extend this study by investigating other schooling financial variables. Clearly, as a matter of public policy and public money, the sub-population results in this study dictate further inquiry of its relationship with instructional monies spent.

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The Relationship of School District Size to Academic Performance and Cost Expenditures in Alabama's Public Schools

Ronald Lindahl

School district size has been a critical policy issue for well over a half a century in the United States. From World War II to the mid-1960s, the prevailing sentiment was in opposition to small districts (Webb, 1989). Lawrence, Bingler, Diamond, Hill, Hoffman, Howley, Mitchell, Rudolph, and Washor (2002) noted that the average U. S. public school district rose from 217 to 2,617 students since 1940, with the largest gains occurring between 1949 and 1976. Similar figures were presented by Guthrie (1979) and the Rural School and Community Trust (2006). In the 1970s and 1980s, sentiment shifted to caution against large districts (Webb, 1989). Currently, more than 75% of the districts in the nation serve fewer than 2,500 pupils (Yan, 2006).

In its 1971 meta-analysis of district size and performance, the Educational Research Service examined 26 studies completed between 1939 and 1969. It concluded that optimum sized districts ranged from 9,800 to 50,000 students. It further concluded that minimum acceptable district sizes ranged from 500 to 12,000 students, with 10,000 students being the most common recommendation. The variation in these results suggests that this issue had not been fully resolved by 1971. Subsequently, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which severely criticized the quality of public schools in the U. S., and the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* which brought considerable pressure upon all schools to improve their students' achievement, represented only two of a multitude of stimuli for states, districts, and schools to identify strategies which would improve their performance. With ever mounting financial pressures, concerns for performance had to be weighed in relation to the expenditures needed to improve that performance. In 2007, such concerns prompted Maine's governor to propose a reduction from 290 districts to only 26, a measure he predicted would save the State $250 million in the initial three years. New Jersey was reportedly considering a similar large scale reduction in the number of school districts (Maxwell, 2007).

Although considerable research has been conducted on school district size since the 1971 meta-analysis by the Educational Research Service, the results cannot yet be considered definitive. In part, this is because the research base has tended to confound school size with school district size. Although there is undoubtedly a positive correlation between these two variables, they both merit individual attention. Another confounding factor is that considerable variation exists among states in their patterns of district size, partially as a result of state policies and educational finance structures, and partially as a consequence of geography and population density.

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Against this background, this descriptive population study examined the relationship between Alabama's school districts' size and student performance. It also examined the relationship between school district size and various per-pupil expenditure measures.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the relationship between district average daily membership and: the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, the percentage of students enrolled in career or technical programs, the district's projected four-year dropout rate, expenditures per pupil in the district, the percentage of the district's budget funded by the State, the percentage of the district's budget spent on instruction, the percentage of the district's budget spent on administration, the percentage of the district's budget spent on transportation, and the district's local mill levy?
2. To what extent do the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, the percentage of students enrolled in career or technical programs, the district's projected four-year dropout rate, expenditures per pupil in the district, the percentage of the district's budget funded by the State, the percentage of the district's budget spent on instruction, the percentage of the district's budget spent on administration, the percentage of the district's budget spent on transportation, and the district's local mill levy vary by the size category of the district?
3. To what extent does student performance on third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade math and reading standardized exams differ among size categories of school districts in Alabama?

METHODOLOGY

All data in this study were derived from the Alabama State Department of Education data set for school year 2006–2007, with the district as the primary unit of analysis. Because all 131 public school districts, which excluded those serving only special populations, were included in the study, descriptive, rather than inferential, statistics were used to analyze the data. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated between the highest and lowest means for each variable examined.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Considerable research has been conducted on school district size, using both national and state-specific data. Primary foci of this research have been on the relationships between district size and academic performance, retention rates, entrance to higher education, *Annual Yearly Progress* toward goals established in relation to the *No Child Left Behind* (2002) legislation, the percentage of *highly qualified teachers* (again defined by states in response to *No Child Left Behind*), staff to pupil ratios, cost factors, and administrative processes. However, no study restricted to Alabama's public school districts could be located.

As Johnson and Strange (2007) pointed out, Alabama presents some characteristics that make it important to have a state-specific study, including the fact that "Alabama ranks in the top ten percent nationally in the average size of its school districts" (p. 41). Jewell (1989) reported that "Alabama ranked 14th in terms of the average size of its school districts (5,619), with 29.86% of its students enrolled in districts with more than 20,000 students" (p. 143). Johnson and Strange's study reported on the condition of Alabama's rural school districts, not on school district size, per se. However, because rural school districts tend to be smaller than their urban or suburban counterparts, many of the characteristics presented by Johnson and Strange would bear significance on a general school district size study. They calculated that of all states, "Alabama ranks second in regard to the importance of rural schools to the educational performance of the state" (p. 19). Yet, they noted, "Alabama's policy context is among the least conducive for rural education" (p. ii). Alabama is "one of the 13 states with the poorest educational outcomes" (p. ii), is "fourth lowest in per-pupil funding for rural students" (p. v), has "a graduation rate in rural schools of less than 70%, and ranks seventh in terms of socio-economic challenges facing its rural communities" (p. 41). Only "76.3% of Alabama's rural adults have at least a high school diploma, second worst in the nation" (p. 41). It ranks "11th worst in employment among rural adults (6.7%), 5th lowest in median rural household income ($39,048), 5th highest in rural family poverty levels (19.7%), and 9th highest in the percentage of rural children qualifying for free or reduced price school meals (51.4%)" (p. 41). Finally, its "rural youth scored second lowest in the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math exam, fifth lowest in reading on the NAEP, and fifth worst in high school graduation rates (62.3%)" (p. 41). Consequently, a state-specific study of district sizes was deemed important.

RESEARCH REVIEW ON DISTRICT SIZE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

In a 1975 national study, Bidwell and Kasarda found no statistically significant relationship between district size and student achievement. Also in 1975, Weaver found no relationship between district size and student achievement in a Massachusetts study. Similarly, Yan (2006) found no evidence of such a relationship in Pennsylvania's public schools. However, thses results differed from those of other researchers.

Jewell's (1989) national study found a slight, negative relationship between district size and Scholastic Achievement Test scores (r = -.222, p = ≤ .05) and a more substantial negative relationship between district size and ACT scores (r = -.432, p = ≤ .05). In both cases, students in smaller districts outperformed their peers in larger districts. In their 1987 study of school districts in New Jersey, Walberg and Fowler found that third, sixth, and ninth graders in smaller districts scored higher on State and national exams than did their counterparts in larger districts. This relationship was highest in ninth grade reading (r = -.56, p = ≤ .05) and lowest in sixth grade math (r = .22, p = ≤ .05) (p. 9).

Several researchers conducted analyses of the relationship of district size to student performance while statistically controlling for other variables. For example, in their 1975 study of 144 California school districts, Niskanen and Levy controlled for student intelligence quotients and found a consistent negative relationship between district size and student performance. In another study of California school districts, Friedkin and Necochea (1988) concluded that as the socio-economic status of a district rises, the relationship between district size and performance moves from negative to positive. They found this relationship particularly strong in the lower socio-economic districts. In a 2008 study on Texas public schools serving grades six through eight, Early-McBrayer examined eighth grade math scores

and found that they correlated well with district size (r = .644, p = ≤ .05) when instructional expenditures were statistically controlled.

Driscoll (2008) examined subsequent enrollment in higher education as a surrogate measure of academic performance in Massachusetts. He found that students in districts with fewer than 2,000 students enrolled in higher education at a 3.7% higher rate than did their larger district peers.

RESEARCH REVIEW ON DISTRICT SIZE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Driscoll (2008) found that in Massachusetts, smaller school districts had higher percentages of *Highly Qualified* teachers than did their larger district counterparts, with these small districts averaging 1.6% more *Highly Qualified* teachers than the state average. He also found that smaller districts had more favorable staff-to-pupil ratios than did the larger districts. However, in their nationwide study on secondary special education students, Fairweather, Stearns, and Wagner (1989) found that larger school districts provided more services to more secondary special education students with a wider range of disabilities than did their smaller district counterparts.

In a study of school board turnover in the state of Washington, Alsbury (2004) found that school board turnover for politically-motivated reasons and because of election defeat increased as district size increased. However, superintendent turnover was highest in schools with fewer than 500 students and lowest in schools with between 5,000 and 9,999 students. In their study of the relationship between school superintendents and district size in California, Hentschke, Nayfack, and Wohlstetter (2009) found that superintendents from four smaller, high-performing urban districts were more hands-on and more personally engaged in instructional leadership than their counterparts in larger districts. In a case study involving six school districts in Ohio, Crandall (2008) found that large school districts are more likely to buffer information than smaller districts. These studies are too small and too isolated to provide much insight into the relationship of district size to administrative processes, but they do suggest that differences may exist related to size.

RESEARCH REVIEW ON DISTRICT SIZE AND
COST-EFFECTIVENESS/COST-EFFICIENCY

Although student academic performance is the primary goal, public school districts generally operate within strong financial constraints. Consequently, measures adopted to increase academic performance must be, at a minimum, cost-effective and cost-efficient.

Jewell's (1989) national study found no significant relationship between district size and per pupil expenditures (p. 148). Although this finding did not indicate an advantage to one size district or another, it suggested that the relationships that should be examined in determining optimal district size are in the areas of performance, not cost. Swanson, Klemic, and Mitrani's (2006) national study of 600 school districts found that large district (>25,000 students) superintendents earned an average of more than 80% more in salary than did superintendents of districts with less than 2,500 students. Their high school principals earned 27% more than those in small districts. However, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, and librarians earned the most in mid-size districts (2,500 to 25,000 students).

Two major studies on district size and expenditures per pupil have been conducted in the state of New York over the past couple of decades. Monk's (1984) study found that both very small and very large districts spent less per pupil on human resources than did mid-size

districts (p. 60). Lankford and Wyckoff's (1995) study complemented this, finding that small districts (<1,000 students) spent a higher proportion of their funds on central administration than did larger districts, but a lower proportion on teachers, on serving students with disabilities, and on maintenance and operations (p. 206).

Driscoll's (2008) study of districts in Massachusetts found that the mean per-pupil cost of school districts with fewer than 2,000 students exceeded the state average by $165. Although this could cost the largest of these small districts over $300,000 extra per year, it is a small enough sum for performance issues to take precedence over cost issues in most of these districts.

SUMMARY OF THE EXISTING RESEARCH

In short, district size is not strongly enough related to per-pupil expenditures to allow financial considerations to assume a major role in determining the optimal district size. None of the large-scale research presented investigated the relationship between factors such as geographic size or topographical features, and optimal district size. However, considerable research has been done on the relationship between performance and district size. The conclusion reached by this researcher in examining the findings of those studies was that smaller districts appear to hold a slight advantage in student academic performance, as measured on standardized exams. However, moderating factors such as socio-economic status and student intelligence levels may obliterate these perceived advantages.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Alabama's public school districts ranged from a low average daily membership (ADM) of 510 to a high of 61,398. To address Research Question 1, the initial analysis conducted was a Pearson Product Moment correlation between the ADM of the districts with selected district demographic and financial variables. The results of those correlations are presented in Table 1. In general, these correlations are quite small and of little practical significance. Small districts spend a slightly higher proportion of their budget on administration ($r = -.316$) and have slightly higher percentages of their students enrolled in career and technical programs ($r = -.253$).

Because these overall correlations tend to mask non-linear relationships and to obscure patterns in test score data, in order to respond to Research Question 2, the next step was to convert the ADM into a categorical variable. Initially, the visual binning feature of SPSS Version 16 was used to examine the ADM variable. It grouped almost two-thirds of the districts into its first category (62.4%) and the remaining 32.6% into a second category. As this was not deemed to be a useful classification scheme for analysis, the ADM variable was divided into quartiles, labeled *small districts, moderately small districts, moderately large districts,* and *large districts.* Each category contained 33 districts, with the exception of the large district category, which contained 32 districts. This classification scheme was utilized for the remainder of the data analysis. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics on the size of the districts within each district size category.

Table 1. Correlation of Districts' Average Daily Membership with
Selected District Demographic and Financial Variables.

Variable	Correlation
% of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	-.168
% of Students Enrolled in Career or Technical Programs	-.253
Projected Four-Year Dropout Rate	-.052
Expenditures per Pupil	-.016
% of Budget Funded by the State	-.181
% of Budget Spent on Instruction	-.120
% of Budget Spent on Administration	-.316
% of Budget Spent on Transportation	-.036
Local Mill Levy	.014

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on the Four District Size Categories.

Size Category	N	Minimum ADM	Maximum ADM	Mean ADM	Standard Deviation
Small	33	510	2,089	1,448.85	355.16
Moderately Small	33	2,092	3,032	2,548.39	265.47
Moderately Large	33	3,038	5,993	4,115.30	888.77
Large	32	6,022	61,398	14,686.44	11,824.20

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of each of the variables examined in Table 1, broken out by district size category. No discernable patterns related to district size can be identified, other than that smaller districts spend slightly larger percentages of their budgets on instruction and administration than do larger districts. Even the effect sizes between the lowest district size category for each variable and the highest were generally small, other than the percentage of the overall budget spent on administration ($d = -1.40$). In this case small districts spent a considerably higher percentage on this category of expense (5.04%) than did the large districts (2.85%).

In addressing Research Question 3, Table 4 presents third grade student performance on the reading and math portions of the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT), by district

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Selected District Demographic and Financial Variables, by District Size Category.

Variable	District Size	Mean	SD	Effect Size
% of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	Small	66.00	19.93	-0.57
	Moderately Small	60.53	17.83	
	Moderately Large	54.09	21.82	
	Large	48.17	15.29	
% of Students Enrolled in Career or Technical Programs	Small	61.59	12.52	-1.13
	Moderately Small	64.20	11.71	
	Moderately Large	57.91	13.81	
	Large	50.90	11.79	
Projected Four-Year Dropout Rate %	Small	10.60	1.38	NaN
	Moderately Small	7.96	0.98	
	Moderately Large	7.36	0.89	
	Large	0.09	0.73	
Expenditures per Pupil ($)	Small	8,480.81	930.12	-0.48
	Moderately Small	8,233.08	631.33	
	Moderately Large	8,565.71	972.57	
	Large	8,130.85	822.21	
% of Budget Funded by the State	Small	56.61	12.13	-0.58
	Moderately Small	59.81	8.60	
	Moderately Large	52.66	15.30	
	Large	55.13	13.14	
% of Budget Spent on Instruction	Small	65.83	6.34	-0.43
	Moderately Small	65.52	6.07	
	Moderately Large	62.68	8.09	
	Large	63.84	4.96	
% of Budget Spent on Administration	Small	5.04	1.06	-1.40
	Moderately Small	4.41	0.84	
	Moderately Large	3.60	0.99	
	Large	2.85	0.93	
% of Budget Spent on Transportation	Small	4.77	3.57	-0.20
	Moderately Small	5.49	3.58	
	Moderately Large	5.05	2.74	
	Large	5.27	1.53	
Local Mill Levy	Small	35.29	15.53	-0.30
	Moderately Small	31.95	13.19	
	Moderately Large	32.10	14.47	
	Large	40.08	36.24	

Table 4. Third Grade Reading and Math Test Performance, by District Size Category.

Exam	District Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Effect Size
Reading, Level I	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	1.44 0.81 0.85 0.84	1.51 0.63 0.65 0.54	-0.54
Reading, Level II	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	16.68 15.46 14.10 12.76	9.12 5.49 6.64 4.57	-0.54
Reading, Level III	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	41.33 39.49 36.08 35.62	8.86 7.32 9.14 4.53 7.97	-0.81
Reading, Level IV	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	40.55 44.54 49.35 50.78	15.38 11.82 15.09 8.49	-0.82
Math, Level I	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	8.44 6.61 5.78 5.46	6.17 3.60 2.90 2.59	-0.63
Math, Level II	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	20.58 17.35 15.62 15.51	10.52 6.92 7.41 4.17	-0.63
Math, Level III	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	28.32 29.97 27.44 29.02	6.75 5.96 6.51 3.51	-0.41
Math, Level IV	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	42.65 46.06 51.15 50.01	18.19 14.23 15.12 8.51	-0.51

Note: Level I = Not Meeting Standard; Level II = Partially Meeting Standard; Level III = Met Standard; Level IV = Exceeded Standard

size category. Level I refers to the students who did not meet the standard; Level II refers to those who partially met the standard; Level III students met the standard; and Level IV students exceeded the standard. Although moderate effect sizes (Range d = -0.41 to -0.82)

were found for most test categories between the highest and lowest performing district size categories, no pattern of performance was discernable among the four categories. The same findings applied to student performance data on the fifth grade versions of the same examinations (see Table 5) and to the corresponding eighth grade data (see Table 6). Effect sizes on the eighth grade examinations were slightly lower, ranging from d = -0.14 to -0.64.

Table 5. Fifth Grade Reading and Math Test Performance, by District Size Category.

Exam	District Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Effect Size
Reading, Level I	Small	1.99	1.42	-0.88
	Moderately Small	1.36	0.99	
	Moderately Large	1.08	0.74	
	Large	1.06	0.46	
Reading, Level II	Small	18.46	8.664	-0.76
	Moderately Small	15.68	6.82	
	Moderately Large	14.33	6.62	
	Large	13.30	4.23	
Reading, Level III	Small	34.99	6.61	-0.66
	Moderately Small	34.46	7.09	
	Moderately Large	31.43	9.61	
	Large	31.22	4.75	
Reading, Level IV	Small	44.56	14.08	-0.84
	Moderately Small	48.50	12.50	
	Moderately Large	53.16	16.06	
	Large	54.42	8.79	
Math, Level I	Small	1.54	0.25	-0.74
	Moderately Small	0.89	0.15	
	Moderately Large	0.81	0.13	
	Large	0.75	0.08	
Math, Level II	Small	26.44	11.89	-0.51
	Moderately Small	23.02	9.19	
	Moderately Large	20.74	10.44	
	Large	21.41	6.87	
Math, Level III	Small	37.93	6.84	-0.46
	Moderately Small	37.98	6.75	
	Moderately Large	34.47	8.35	
	Large	36.53	4.21	
Math, Level IV	Small	34.09	15.75	-0.59
	Moderately Small	38.12	13.47	
	Moderately Large	43.98	17.80	
	Large	41.31	10.03	

Note: Level I = Not Meeting Standard; Level II = Partially Meeting Standard; Level III = Met Standard; Level IV = Exceeded Standard

Table 6. Eighth Grade Reading and Math Test Performance, by District Size Category.

Exam	District Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Effect Size
Reading, Level I	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	1.06 1.62 1.48 1.86	0.96 1.07 1.38 1.57	-0.61
Reading, Level II	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	26.22 29.03 28.57 31.23	9.88 10.69 11.15 9.46	-0.52
Reading, Level III	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	37.79 38.70 39.40 39.90	5.10 5.83 5.38 4.13	-0.22
Reading, Level IV	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	34.93 30.65 30.55 27.01	13.44 14.97 11.85 12.33	-0.30
Math, Level I	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00	0.01 0.02 0.00 0.00	-0.25
Math, Level II	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	32.36 35.87 36.07 38.97	14.46 15.61 14.37 13.09	-0.64
Math, Level III	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	45.59 45.34 45.11 44.92	7.65 8.30 6.68 6.58	-0.14
Math, Level IV	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	22.05 18.78 18.83 16.11	12.42 13.93 10.83 12.53	-0.48

Note: Level I = Not Meeting Standard; Level II = Partially Meeting Standard; Level III = Met Standard; Level IV = Exceeded Standard

Table 7 presents the student performance data on the 11th grade application of the Alabama High School Graduation Examination. The only categories of performance presented are for students who passed the examination and for those who passed it with

advanced (meritorious) scores. Although the effect sizes between the highest and lowest performing district size categories on each variable were in the moderate to high range (d = -0.51 to -0.82), no pattern of performance differences among the four size categories could be discerned.

Table 7. Eleventh Grade Reading and Math Test Performance, by District Size Category.

Exam	District Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Effect Size
Reading, Percent Passing	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	88.83 82.63 82.84 77.00	15.13 15.80 15.15 13.51	-0.82
Reading, Percent Passing, Advanced	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	49.00 37.92 38.65 30.14	27.73 28.89 27.46 22.89	-0.74
Math, Percent Passing	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	68.76 67.20 63.51 67.09	12.04 11.81 14.90 8.48	-0.55
Math, Percent Passing, Advanced	Small Moderately Small Moderately Large Large	15.83 18.45 22.79 20.24	12.04 11.81 14.90 8.48	-0.51

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the data from this study were interpreted to indicate that district size is not related to student performance, student dropout rates, or to most of the financial variables examined. The Educational Research Service (1971) study of district size concluded that optimal districts would serve between 9,800 and 50,000 students. Only 11 of Alabama's 131 districts fell within this optimal range. One was larger (ADM = 61,398) and the remainder were smaller. However, the Educational Research Service study considered that districts with as few as 510 students were acceptable; Alabama's smallest district served 510 students. Consequently, only Alabama's largest district, Mobile County (ADM = 61,398), fell outside the acceptable or optimal parameters established by the Educational Research Service. Jewell's (1989) study found the national mean district ADM to be 5,619; twenty years later, this corresponds very closely to Alabama's mean district ADM of 5,631.

Bidwell and Kasarda (1975), Weaver (1975), and Yan (2006) all found little relationship between district size and student performance on standardized examinations. The findings of this study on Alabama's districts parallel their findings.

Jewell (1989) found no relationship between district size and per-pupil expenditures. This finding matched well with the Alabama data, where the relationship between these two

variables was a correlation of only .016. Lankford and Wychoff (1995) found that small districts spent a larger percentage of their budget on administrative expenses than did larger districts, a relationship also supported by the Alabama data (r = -.316).

Further research on district size is warranted in Alabama. For example, Hannaway and Kimball (2001) asserted that larger districts have better resources than do smaller districts. Is this the case in Alabama? If so, why do student performance and expenditures per pupil not reflect these superior resources? Alabama has two basic types of school district, county and city, each with very different governance structures. City districts had a mean ADM of 3,910 pupils (SD = 4,529), whereas county districts were considerably larger (M = 7,275, SD = 9,765). The contingency coefficient for this distribution was .281 (p = .010). The effect size for this difference was moderate (d = -0.44). What implications might this governance variable have? Pending further research, however, the conclusions of this study are that the size of the school district is not a significant factor in Alabama's public educational system.

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN CURRICULUM

The Quandary of Best Practices in Curriculum:
Critical Issue for Educational Leaders

Vance Vaughn
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For almost two centuries, there has been controversy over what curriculum is and ought to be. According to some researchers, the historical discourse dates back as far as 1828 (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). John Dewey (1859-1952) elevated this controversy with his contributions to educational and curricular thought. By 1918, many scholars had given credit to Franklin Bobbitt for his work, *The Curriculum*, as the birth of curriculum as a field of study (Kliebard, 1975, 1986; Giroux, Penna, & Pinar, 1981; Jackson, 1992). For decades following, research studies and publications highlighted curriculum issues and curriculum concerns, and of course the discourse continued. The discourse is not isolated in academia, but is also prevalent in the practitioners' arena as well. The fact that practitioners are involved in this controversy illuminates the significance of this research study. Particularly, as this century unfolds, campus principals are still sifting through the quandary of best practices in curriculum.

Our 21st century educational leaders (principals in particular) are bombarded with national and state accountability issues that force them to find creative ways to raise student achievement for all students and close the achievement gap between minority and Anglo students (Elmore, 2005; Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005). Federal and state mandates to increase student academic performance on national and state standardized tests and to close the achievement gap between minority and Anglo students have been the impetus for legislatures to reform education. Reforming or restructuring our educational system on a national and state level has occurred in different ways. As examples of reform, legislatures over time have focused restructuring on longer school days, increases in teacher pay, more days for students to attend school, more professional development for professional staff, mandated curriculum, accountability measures and other structural types of reforms. A considerable amount of capital has been expensed to fund these efforts. All of these structural reform strategies were implemented to improve student academic performance.

Research, however, supports that quality learning is a function of the interaction of the teacher and student in the classroom (Marzano, 2003; Haycock, 2005). Thus, quality instruction is vital to student academic success (Elmore, 2005). Quality instruction includes not only using sound instructional techniques but also best practices (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005). This study suggested that not only is instruction important in student academic success, but instructing using best practices in each discipline is important so that teachers are teaching the most appropriate curriculum in the most appropriate ways, using the most appropriate research available to them.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

O'Day and Smith (1993) argued for systemic reform that involves restructuring curriculum and monitoring curriculum which is closest to teaching and learning. Quality learning requires quality teaching; therefore, quality instruction coupled with best practices in each discipline forms the best theoretical foundation, and it is within this context that the study was conducted. Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) supported O'Day and Smith in that they concluded if teachers are systematically using the most appropriate strategies and techniques that have been proven to increase student academic performance in the classroom and also to increase student motivation, participation and attention span, student achievement can be improved. Simply put, what and how the teacher teaches has a lasting impact on student learning. Effective teachers have high expectations for students and take full responsibility for student learning (Cawelti, 1999; Elmore, 2005). They are confident students can reach their full potential, and reach the goals teachers set for them. Effective teachers are prepared for classroom instruction. They teach students as opposed to subject matter. They recognize the cognitive level of the student and are able to provide instruction at that level. Effective teachers are capable of adapting to the learning style of the student (Cawelti, 1999; Elmore, 2005). Effective teachers maximize time-on-task (McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover, 2003). Finally, effective teachers utilize best practices in their instruction (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005).

O'Day and Smith concluded the way to increase student academic performance and close the achievement gaps is to intervene closest to where learning occurs, which is in the classroom with the teacher and student. Other researchers supported O'Day and Smith in their conclusion (Haycock, 2005; Elmore, 2005; Reyes and Wagstaff, 2005; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005). Given this conclusion, any restructuring or reform efforts in education should focus on using research based, best practices in curriculum and instruction.

What Is Best Practices?

According to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005), "The expression 'best practices' was originally borrowed from the professions of medicine, law, and architecture, where 'good practice' or 'best practice' are everyday phrases used to describe solid, reputable, state-of-the-art work in a field" (p. vi). Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) stated:

> Best practices are about excellent teaching and powerful learning. Its principles
> come from authoritative and reliable sources—the major professional
> organizations, research centers, and subject-matter groups in American education.
> Its recommendations draw upon scientific research of rigorous design, both
> experimental and qualitative. (p. v)

The term "best practices" has not always been used in education. Teachers have basically been given a curriculum to teach, and have been left in isolation to use whatever strategies appropriate and available to teach that curriculum. In other words, much autonomy has been given to teachers. Many veteran teachers have decided to teach the way they have taught for years, thereby ignoring the need for research based strategies in the classroom. Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) stated, "If a professional is following best practice standards, he or she is aware of current research and consistently offers clients the full benefits of the latest knowledge, technology, and procedures" (p. vi). Zemelman, Daniels, and

Hyde have developed a set of teaching strategies and procedures that are unique to a certain discipline, and a set of strategies and procedures that transcend every discipline. The strategies and procedures are not necessarily new. Practicing teachers and future teachers have studied about and performed these strategies and procedures at one time or another.

In addition to a long list of best practices for each subject area, Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) offered seven structures of best practice teaching that are common to all subjects. Those seven structures are "small-group activities, reading as thinking, representing-to-learn, classroom workshop, authentic experiences, reflective assessment, and integrative units" (p. 227). They also provided examples of how these practices can be implemented in the classroom. Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (2005) also stated:

> All of these seven activities have one thing in common: they take the teacher off stage. They do not cast the teacher in the familiar role of information-dispenser, font of wisdom, expert/presenter/lecturer. In each of these key classroom structures, the teacher is somewhere farther in the background, acting as a moderator, facilitator, coach, scribe, designer, observer, model—everything *but* the standard, normal, stereotypical conception of the *teacher* as….well, as a teacher. (p. 260)

In essence, Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) defined best practice as "a shorthand emblem of serious, thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching" (p. vi).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This study was not designed or intended to continue or enter into the discourse or debate about curriculum theory. It is not a study of what curriculum is and ought to be. Instead, this study was conducted to determine if practicing principals in a small area of the state had knowledge of best practices, as defined by Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005), and whether they searched for these practices during their classroom observations with their teachers. In addition, this study sought to discover how much of the principal's daily time was spent on training teachers to assure that they incorporated best practices in their classroom instruction.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Best practices are supported by national organizations that oversee curriculum issues in this country, and educational leaders in academia and practitioners need to be abreast of the current trends and research that supports student achievement—especially in an era of high stakes testing and accountability. This research is important to educational leadership professors and educational leadership practitioners because quality instruction utilizing best practices in a particular discipline might be the necessary combination for continuous student improvement for all students. In a time of accountability and assessment where educational leaders are being held responsible for student learning, providing these leaders with an understanding of whether practicing principals are currently searching for best practices in their observations of teachers is critical. Our principals and those who are responsible in their schools for monitoring and ensuring quality instruction must recognize research based strategies, and recognize whether they are being observed—especially since the No Child Left

Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 requires researched based strategies for improving student achievement.

METHOD

This research study used qualitative methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Mills, 2003) to study the extent to which principals are conducting classroom observations searching specifically for best practice strategies and techniques that teachers are incorporating in their instruction. As part of a classroom assignment on monitoring best practices in classrooms, 30 students in an educational leadership class studying for their master's degree and principal certification interviewed their principal, assistant principal or instructional specialist. Four assistant principals and four instructional specialists were interviewed because the principal was out of the office on vacation as data were collected in the summer of 2009. After students were introduced to best practices in the class and assessed for their understanding of the concept, together the professor and students designed a list of questions that could be asked of practicing principals to determine if they were observing best practices when they observed their teachers. Collecting data through interviews is an appropriate form of data collection (Blaikie, 2006). Creswell (1998) and Merriam (1998) also supported collecting data through interviews as part of a qualitative study.

When the class members agreed on the list of questions, the professor and a student collected data from two principals in the same school district to determine if the questions would provide the data needed to answer the research questions. When it was determined that questions were acceptable, the students conducted interviews with their campus principals. The students used pen and paper to record the answers to the list of questions that were already prepared by the professor and students in the class. Upon completion of an accurate account of responses, the students submitted the assignments to us. We analyzed, compiled, and made meaning from the data.

Participants

Participants were practicing principals, assistant principals, and instructional specialists who had the responsibility to monitor instruction on their respective campuses. The participants were 30 administrators located in the East Texas area who volunteered to participate in the study. Twenty-two of the participants were practicing principals of either elementary, middle, or high school campuses. Four of the participants were assistant principals and four were instructional specialists. Instructional specialists were used because they were the campus leaders who monitored instruction with teachers. Nine of the participants were women, and 21 of them were men. All of the participants were Anglo.

Questions Guiding the Research

The students were given six questions to ask the principals during the interview process. Two of the six questions were used to guide this research study and to collect data. The two questions were: 1) In a classroom observation of a teacher, what techniques and strategies are you searching for that tell you the teacher is using best practices? 2) How much time during the school day do you spend working with teachers training them in best practices in curriculum?

FINDINGS

Research Question 1

In a classroom observation of a teacher, what techniques and strategies are you searching for that tell you the teacher is using best practices? Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) have taken the national standards in all disciplines, along with years of research and reported what best practices are for reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and fine arts. These best practices represent their understanding of how subject matter should be taught based on advice from the experts in each field. This question was designed to determine if the participants were familiar with these best practices, and to listen to any evidence that they were requiring their teachers to use best practices in their instruction.

All 30 of the participants provided a response to this question. One of the elementary principals stated, "I look to see if the students know the objectives, and if strategies are being used. I look at the success of the students." A middle school principal said, "I am looking for student success on benchmarks, standardized tests, and the student's engagement in the classroom." A high school principal reported, "The key is student engagement. I look for a culture where students are comfortable and they get their money's worth. I really don't follow the lesson cycle straight on. What I want to know is do students feel safe to make comments and take chances in being involved with the lesson?" This response is evidence that this principal is aware of how important it is for students to feel safe and comfortable in a learning environment. Three of the principals said they use the state mandated teacher assessment system, which is the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) instrument to determine if teachers are using best practices in curriculum and instruction. An early childhood principal stated,

> First [I conduct] walk-throughs so that [I] get a formative evaluation on them. I have a checklist that I use. I look to see if children are on task, are learning and happy. I look to see if the teacher is on task with the children and if what they are doing is TEKS based. That is really my objective as I am in the classroom. I highly expect everyone to have a high score on PDAS. If they don't, I keep going back to them. If someone has gaps, then I talk to them about those gaps and so then they know what I am looking for. If there are still gaps, then there is some misunderstanding. Because everyone wants to get it right. If there happens to be things that are not excellent, we talk about those things.

This statement sounds as if the PDAS is the driving force behind evaluating best practices. Another high school principal stated, "The criteria used for evaluation is provided by PDAS, and of course, the end products, which are the students' performances on the TABE and GED testing." One of the high school assistant principals reported, "I look predominately at the teacher-student interaction. Are the students engaged? If they are, that is a big indicator that best practices are being used."

Twenty-one of the 30 participants used the terms "student success and/or student engagement" to mean that if students were successful, and if students were engaged then best practices were being used by the teacher. Their responses indicated that student success and student engagement were proof that best practices are being utilized regardless of what type of instruction is being used, thus failing to understand that student success and student engagement are products of best practices. Any notion that best practices are driven by student

success and student engagement leads principals to believe that best practices are not being used if students are not successful, and this is not necessarily the case.

An elementary principal came very close to understanding how to search for best practice techniques as she proclaimed,

> I can go in and observe a 5E model, and I see the teacher engaging the kids, following all the components of the 5E model. [I] see the exploration, engagement, elaboration and then you go back and evaluate if it's a continuous process. It doesn't end there. If I see that in a teacher and going back and checking for understanding, then I know that that teacher understands what they're teaching. That is one thing I look at. I also look at artifacts in the classroom. Are they student-centered?

Perhaps, the most appropriate response that best practices were being used by his teachers came from a high school principal who stated,

> When I walk into a classroom setting, I'm looking for a series of things that provide evidence to me that best practices are being utilized in our classrooms. The first thing that I notice is the type of instruction. Student-led instruction is always a plus versus the traditional teacher-based instruction for the entire time period. I look at how the students are engaging the material. If they are on task and have a hands-on approach to their education, I believe that learning is taking place in that classroom. I also prefer seeing group work during an assignment period to help students build their social network and expand ideas by sharing information with others.

Student-centered instruction, collaborative learning environments, hands-on activities (manipulatives) and social networking are all teaching strategies incorporated in the seven best practice strategies that transcend all disciplines (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). This statement suggested that this principal has some knowledge of how to recognize best practices in instruction. Two of the 30 participants in this study understood how to decipher best practices in an instructional setting.

Research Question 2

How much time during the school day do you spend working with teachers training them in best practices in curriculum? This question was included in the research study under the assumption that these participants were familiar with best practices. Their responses suggested they interchange best practices with curriculum, or they were uncomfortable using the expression. The participants did answer the research question. However, when participants answered the research question, only three of the 30 participants used the concept "best practices" in their responses. Instead, they used the expressions "instruction", "curriculum" or both. One elementary principal said, "This all depends on the day. I really don't have a schedule. I would say on average about 30 percent is spent on curriculum issues, it varies, should be more."Another elementary principal stated, "The percentage of time is low usually. We work on curriculum issues throughout the year as needed based on our data from the previous year and present performance." Fifteen of the participants said that managerial duties consume over 50 percent of their time. Specifically, an elementary principal stated,

> Definitely, over 50 percent of my time goes toward managerial duties—parent conferences, community involvement, general teacher issues, building operations, etc. When I meet with department chairs twice a week, though, a bulk of those meeting times goes toward best practice in instruction/curriculum.

This elementary principal was the second individual who actually used the phrase "best practices." The first time the expression was used was when a high school principal stated,

> To be honest, I do not get to spend as much time as I would like to with best practices in curriculum issues. It is sad because this is a very important part of being an educational leader. When it is all said and done at the end of the day I more than likely spend 15 percent of my time on curriculum issues, 80 percent on managing school operations, and 5 percent on discipline issues.

One of the elementary principals was one of 30 participants who did say she spent 40 to 50 percent of her time on curriculum issues. This was the same elementary principal who said she enters teachers' classrooms to observe the 5E model of instruction. She stated, "Forty to 50 percent of the day is spent on curriculum issues, in classrooms or dealing with resources for curriculum and instruction. I am in classrooms all the time."

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this study, we sought to develop an understanding of whether principals observing classroom instruction searched for best practice strategies. We found that these participants were not searching for best practices in each subject matter. They did not have a working knowledge of best practices as defined by Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, (2005). The implications of these findings to the profession are important and must be shared with instructional leaders and those who teach and prepare these practitioners.

The first implication is for educational leadership programs. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) requires that teachers use research based techniques in their classrooms. One could suggest that this preparation is the prevue of undergraduate preparation. Even if preservice teachers are prepared to utilize best practices in their respective disciplines it is unlikely they would have received any training in other disciplines in which they are not certified. Thus, we have many educational leaders who are providing supervision of curricular areas in which they have no formal preparation. The solution to this quandary is for educational leadership programs to incorporate best practices in curriculum in their formal preparation. Future educational leaders should be exposed to best practices in each discipline, and have the opportunity to observe classrooms to analyze whether these best practices are present.

Once principals are certified and in practice, the second implication is that principals continue to view restructuring as structural changes as opposed to changing the way they view and teach curriculum. There are researched-based curriculum strategies available to begin the dialogue on restructuring schools through restructuring curriculum, but these participants were not aware of the research that is available. These participants spent less than 50 percent of their workday on curriculum issues. In addition, their responses to the second research question supports that their understanding of best practices is minimal. Similar to a doctor who uses outdated medical procedures that are not supported by research, lack of use of best

practices should be considered malpractice in education. There must be a commitment on the part of individual principals to engage in continuous professional development in the area of best practices in curriculum as these practices continue to be illuminated. The expectation should be that principals will lead their respective faculties in using best practices, and their efforts should be reflected in the evaluation system used for principals. As the adage says, "What gets evaluated gets done."

The third implication is that the state's teacher assessment/evaluation instrument addressed and incorporated best practices in curriculum. Principals assumed if they used this instrument, it would assure them that best practices were being assessed. Irrespective if this is true or not, the process of supervising the curriculum should be viewed as a highly conceptual skill that requires the individual to engage in critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making. Thus, the more one knows about best practices, the better one is to provide instructional leadership to his or her school.

The mandates to increase student academic performance on national and state tests and to close the achievement gap between minority and Anglo students have been the impetus for legislatures to reform education and are considered a moral imperative. Historically, reform has been structural. Researchers support restructuring schools through restructuring curriculum. If principals are requiring teachers to use best practices, and if principals are searching for evidence of best practices during their observations, they are on the edge of restructuring their schools.

In conclusion, one could view the aforementioned implications and recommendations as being relatively harsh. However, one of the authors of this study was a new assistant principal and just beginning his doctoral studies, and the other author of this study had recently completed his undergraduate work and was entering the field of education as a teacher when the landmark education study *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was published. One particular statement in the treatise has remained with them over the years, "We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" (p. 5). One could suggest we have come so far, yet little has changed.

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A Critical Issue for School Leaders: Promoting Math Achievement through the Development of Student Resiliency

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Stressors in the educational environment have been augmented by high-stakes testing for students (Choi, Seltzer, Herman, & Yamashiro, 2007; Paris, 2000; Vogler & Virtue, 2007). For example, the Texas Education Agency (2008) reported results for the state exit level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in a cumulative summary report for all tests taken. This report affirmed only 69% of Texas students in grade 11 have passed all exams and are eligible for graduation. The cumulative grade 11 cohort and exit level retests only reported 84% passing all tests, which was equivalent to over 40,000 Texas students who have not met the requirements for graduation.

Concern over the possible negative and unintentional consequences of high-stakes testing has led to further exploration of the effects of academic failure on students, schools, and communities (Armstrong, 2006; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Grant, 2004). An unacceptable number of students are leaving school each year without a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certification (Laird, DeBell, Kienzi, & Chapman, 2007), resulting in potential life-long, wage-earning consequences (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections, 2007). In fact, a recent report from Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) suggested that the students across the nation who dropped out of the Class of 2009 will cause the United States to lose nearly $335 billion in additional income over the course of their lifetimes. Constantine, Benard, and Diaz (1999) and Thomsen (2002) agreed that in the search to understand how some students negotiate educational stressors, environmental risks, and other challenges and keep trying rather than lose hope and drop out of school, positive evidence of resilience factors seems to surface. The Texas mathematics test reflects some of the largest challenges because of low passing rates statewide (Texas Education Agency, 2006-2007 AEIS Report). Accordingly, the purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between math achievement and student resiliency among high school seniors.

Research Questions

In order to explore the relationship between Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (*TAKS*) math achievement and student resiliency, specific research questions included the following:

1. Is there a relationship between total Internal student resiliency scores and student scale scores in *TAKS* math?

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2. Is there a relationship between total External student resiliency scores and student scale scores in *TAKS* math?
3. Is there a relationship between resiliency scores on the subscales of the External Assets consisting of School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment and exit *TAKS* math scale scores as disaggregated by all students, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In some schools, educational practices have changed significantly since the enactment of No Child Left Behind, with some changes cited as controversial and damaging (Armstrong, 2007; Grant, 2004; Gunzenhauser, 2006; Hursh, 2005; Paris, 2000). Armstrong (2007) stated that the emphasis in all human development theories is upon the human as opposed to the academic. He also alleged that an emphasis on academic achievement and testing is more content focused rather than learner-centered and consequently narrows the curriculum and the way it is taught.

Hursh (2005) stressed that NCLB has been promoted as reducing the achievement gap. Even though this is the intent, heavy sanctions on schools where students do not perform well on the tests have sometimes resulted in targeting groups of students falling closest to the passing standard for intervention while poorly achieving students or highly achieving students receive little extra attention. Such practices actually prohibit students from equal access to a quality education (Choi, Seltzer, Herman, & Yamashiro, 2007; Hursh, 2005). Many educators have concluded that these unintended results have actually harmed students and have left behind the very students NCLB intended to address (Grant, 2004; Hursh, 2005; Paris, 2000).

Resiliency theory. Even though consequences of high-stakes testing can induce ominous stressors that have a particularly high impact upon minority and low-socioeconomic students (Tirozzi, 2007), there is always the student who continues to strive for academic achievement after repeated failure (Benard, 2004; Thomsen, 2002). Bosworth and Earthman (2002) explained that researchers began to study why some of these children experienced positive outcomes in life despite having conditions, backgrounds, and other circumstances that placed them at risk for failure. They stated that resilient children are those that thrive under conditions such as poverty, racism, lack of family support, family psychiatric illness, alcoholism, or abuse. Benard (2004) described resiliency as an innate capacity for self-correction and survival in the face of adversity. Resiliency theory has evolved from the beginning of its study in the 1970s from focusing on risk behaviors of youth to the strengths that help youth survive in spite of diversity (Benard, 2004; Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Richardson, 2002). Benard added that resiliency is a universal capacity that exists in everyone. She argued that many of those in the worst of circumstances and at greatest risk somehow manage to harness the self-righting ability of resiliency in order to make a better life for themselves. Benard (1991) found that in the environment there were similar experiences that resilient people encountered that helped them overcome environmental stressors. Some of those factors included: (a) taking care of others, or having others who depended upon them; (b) having at least one good relationship with an adult that made a difference in their lives; (c) being involved in activities that brought out their talents; and (d) feeling that they were capable people and necessary.

External assets of resiliency. Constantine, Benard, and Diaz (1999) proposed a resilience framework in which external environmental protective factors are composed of three clusters: caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation occurring within four environments: school, home, in the community, and with peers. The three external protective factors predict the development of the internal protective assets which includes social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. Benard (2004) warned that even though these external protective factors may be discussed as individual components, they are actually part of a dynamic protective process that must work together. For example, she noted "Caring relationships without high expectations or opportunities for meaningful participation foster dependency and co-dependency, not positive youth development" (p. 44).

Caring relationships. Henderson (2007) described caring relationships as those that provide oneself and others with "positive regard, love, and encouragement" (p. 10). Werner (2007) argued that a close bond with a competent, emotionally stable caregiver is vital for children to overcome adversities. This adult may be in the school, in the family, or in the community. Thomsen (2002) listed the following characteristics found in homes, schools, and communities that provide support and caring environments:

1. In the home, children are provided: (a) positive long-term relationships between adults and youth, (b) routine family activities and traditions, and (c) supportive parents and siblings;
2. In the school, children: (a) have principals, teachers, and support staff who communicate concern for the whole child, (b) are provided mechanisms for support such as newcomers' groups, peer leadership and so on, (c) are provided resources for both academic and personal growth, and (d) have staff members who avoid labels;
3. In communities, there is availability of resources such as: (a) mental health counseling, (b) youth programs and social and recreational networks, (c) adults who value and enjoy kids, and (d) adults who advocate for kids. (pp. 20–22)

High expectations. Benard (2004) stated that schools, families, communities, and peers can contribute to high expectations. She described this developmental asset as positive messages that communicate an adult's belief in the young person's ability to be self-righting. Benard (2004) and Thomsen (2002) affirmed that adults have the power to help youth understand their innate resilience and then help them reframe the narratives of their lives from the victim to the resilient survivor through the messages of high expectations. Thomsen listed the following characteristics found in homes, school, and communities that communicate high expectations to youth:

1. In the home: (a) parents or other caregivers believe in the youth's abilities, (b) structure, order, and discipline with logical, fair consequences are provided, and (c) mutual respect between parents and children exists;
2. In schools (a) teachers and staff believe and behave as if all students have potential, (b) an academic climate with both high expectations and adequate support is provided, (c) children internalize high expectations for themselves, and (d) tutors and other support staff are provided so that students can be successful;

3. In communities: (a) youth are seen as resources, (b) clear messages about acceptable behavior are given, (c) adults set and model standards for positive community norms, and (d) adults enforce policies and laws fairly and offer logical consequences for rule infractions. (pp. 20-22)

Meaningful participation. Benard (2004) reasoned that creating opportunities for youth participation flows naturally from caring relationships and high expectations. Youth need opportunities to participate in groups or cooperative activities, such as extracurricular activities, 4-H Clubs and other groups. Youth also need opportunities to contribute and give voice to issues that have meaning to them in their homes, schools, and communities, and have opportunities to problem-solve and make decisions about these issues. Thomsen (2002) listed the following characteristics found in schools, families, and communities that provide meaningful participation for youth:

1. In homes (a) children are provided meaningful ways to participate in the household such as chores, caring for elders, or younger siblings, (b) children are provided opportunities to learn skills from adults in the home that make them feel worthy and capable, and (c) children are given a voice in family decisions;
2. In the school: (a) roles and jobs for students that are valued and meaningful are available, (b) there are ways for students to shine in addition to academics and athletics, (c) students are involved with service-learning, and volunteer in school and community, and (d) peer mediation for students is available;
3. In communities: (a) youths are asked for their help and ideas, (b) youth have roles and responsibilities, (c) adults show youths how to do important tasks, and (d) youths have mentoring programs and jobs. (pp. 20–22)

Internal assets of resiliency. Constantine, Benard, and Diaz (1999) listed three clusters of internal assets that are the outcomes of the external protective factors previously discussed. These three clusters of internal assets are social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. When the external protective factors are in place, they influence the development of these internal clusters of resiliency traits. Within the three internal assets clusters are the following factors: (a) cooperation and communication, (b) self-efficacy, (c) empathy, (d) problem solving, (e) self-awareness, and (f) goals and aspirations.

Social competence. Benard (2004) argued that youth have social competence when they have the skills to form relationships and positive attachments to others. Werner and Smith (1992) found that this temperament in youth could predict the ability to adapt. Benard (2004) agreed that social communication skills enable youth to develop relationships. Cross-cultural communication skills and cultural competence are also important for social competence. Benard maintained that it is important for minority youth to accommodate the dominate culture without assimilating into it. Minority youth are able to accommodate the dominate culture through the internal asset of social competence.

Empathy and caring are other important pieces to the social competence cluster (Constantine, Benard, & Diaz, 1999). Benard (2004) stated that empathy is a hallmark of resiliency as it helps to form the basis for caring relationships and compassion. Being able to read the nonverbal cues of others is a skill that resilient youth develop. Werner and Smith (1992) found that non-verbal problem-solving skills that were demonstrated at age 10 predicted successful adjustments in adulthood. Benard (2004) stated that planning,

resourcefulness, critical thinking, and insight contribute to problem solving. When children plan they engage their sense of control over their environment and hope for the future. Resourcefulness connects youth to available environmental resources. Benard also argued that the development of critical thinking and insight is important to social competency as this allows youth to develop an awareness of the structures of oppression, whether from alcoholic parents, or a racist society, or any number of reasons. Youth are then able to develop strategies to overcome the oppression.

 Autonomy and sense of self. Benard (2004) described autonomy as the ability to feel a sense of control over one's environments. Autonomy involves an ability to act independently and have a feeling of competence and positive identity. Brown (2008) reported that among racial minorities, racial socialization contributes to autonomy and positive identity. Racial socialization is a set of behaviors or communications between parents and children. For example, this communication may involve how African Americans should feel about their cultural heritage, or how to respond to hostility or bias. These conversations enable ethnic minority youth to develop positively valued ethnic identities.

 Benard (2004) reported that self-efficacy is the belief in one's power to determine personal outcomes and is vital to success. When students have good self-efficacy beliefs, motivation and achievement as well as effort and persistence are enhanced. Werner and Smith (1992) conveyed that self-esteem and self-efficacy were increased when youth took on responsibilities commensurate with their abilities. This could be reflected in jobs or caring for younger siblings when adults were incapacitated.

 According to Benard (2004), another factor in the resiliency traits of autonomy and sense of self is the ability to be self-aware and mindful. Benard conveyed that self-awareness is an ability to observe one's own thinking, and feeling. When one is self-aware, one can step back from the grip of emotion and can reframe the emotion to see oneself in new ways (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

 Sense of meaning and purpose. Thomsen (2002) reported that people who feel that they are needed by others have a purpose in life. Werner and Smith (1992) agreed that at some point the Kauai children in their longitudinal study who developed into resilient adults carried out some task that prevented others from experiencing discomfort or distress. This act of helpfulness contributed to their future resiliency as adults.

 Thomsen (2002) stated that believing that one has a positive future is enough to keep resilient people working toward achieving that future. Benard (2004) agreed that the future-oriented strengths, such as goal direction, achievement motivation, and educational aspiration, help young people succeed in school, provide a feeling that they can control their environment, prevents them from engaging in risk behaviors, and may help them stay in school instead of dropping out. Most of the resilient children in Werner and Smith's (1992) study had hobbies and avenues to express their creativity. These interests were of great comfort to some when faced with extreme challenges. This interest could be painting, music, dance, or drama. Wolin and Wolin (1993) agreed that creativity and imagination play a key role in overcoming adversity.

METHODOLOGY

 This quantitative study utilized a survey methodology. A correlational research design was used to determine if there were relationships between the resiliency scale and other

variables of the research questions (Isaac & Michael, 1995). Demographic variables were identified using a demographics survey, while math achievement was determined by using the participant's scale score on the 2008 TAKS exit level math test. *The Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment (HKRA)* was utilized to measure resilience (Constantine & Benard, 2001).

Data Collection

All senior students from nine small to mid-sized high schools in southeast Texas representing a pool of approximately 1,000 students were asked to participate in the study by filling out the demographic and *HKRA* surveys. Campus administrators chose the classes through which data would be collected. Therefore, not all available seniors were selected to participate. Of the 521 students selected to participate by the administration, 457 surveys were complete. Sixty-four surveys were not used because of unavailable 2008 TAKS Math Exit scores or because surveys contained an unacceptable amount of missing data. Student participation was voluntary and anonymous. Students and parents gave permission for the researcher to obtain the TAKS exit level scale scores from the schools.

The sample was one of convenience and included three demographic groups. White students consisted of 303 cases and were 66.3% of the group. Black students consisted of 72 cases and were 15.8% of the total group. There were 74 Hispanic students representing 16.2% of the group, while eight students represented the other category at 1.7% of the total group.

Data Analysis

Data were gathered from the *HKRA* survey and scored. An overall scale score was calculated for both the external assets and the internal assets. External and internal assets scores are not combined for one overall score on the resiliency survey. Therefore, each participant had two separate scores representing external assets and internal assets.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was utilized to analyze the research questions. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Outliers were checked for accuracy, but were not manipulated or discarded as the mean and the 5% trimmed mean did not show significant differences.

FINDINGS

The external assets are composed of three clusters of caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in the four areas of School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment. An underlying premise of this study was based upon Constantine, Benard, and Diaz's (1999) hypothesis that each of the three clusters (external assets) of caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation influence the development of the three internal assets or internal resilience traits in their framework. Those internal traits or clusters are composed of social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose. These are demonstrated in the *HKRA* resiliency scale through Cooperation and Communication, Self-efficacy, Empathy, Problem Solving, Self-awareness and Goals and Aspirations. Benard (2004) maintained the internal assets predict healthy behaviors and are a direct outcome of strong external assets. In this sample, the relationship between external assets and internal assets as measured by *HKRA*

was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. A strong positive correlation existed between the two variables, $[r = .732, n = 456, p <.001]$ which means the higher the participant's external resiliency score, the higher their internal resiliency score. These results concurred with Benard's assertion that providing caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation develops the internal assets of social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and a sense of meaning and purpose

Research Questions One and Two

Research questions one and two examined the relationship between the total internal and external student resiliency scores and student scale scores in math. A small significant correlation existed between total internal resiliency scores and TAKS math $[r = .170, n=456, p<0.01]$ and the external resiliency scores and student scale scores in the TAKS math $[r = .165, n = 456, p<0.01]$. In other words, the higher the internal or external resiliency scores, the higher the student's math score.

Research Question Three

Research question three inquired if there were relationships between the subscales of the total External Assets (the School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment) and exit *TAKS* math scale scores. Correlations were studied as reported by all students, and disaggregated by gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. Each subscale measured the impact of caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in each of the four environments.

All students' correlations. All External asset subscales demonstrated a small positive correlation with exit TAKS math scores for all students. Caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in the School Environment demonstrated the largest correlation (see Table 1). The second largest correlation among the subscales for all students was caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in the Peer Environment. Community Environment exhibited the third largest, while Home Environment displayed the smallest correlation. In other words, all students' scores had small, statistically significant correlations with each external environment subscale and higher math scores. Therefore, the higher their scores on each subscale, the higher their scale scores on math TAKS.

Disaggregation by gender. Female scores did not reach statistical significance on any of the External asset subscales of Home Environment, School Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment when correlated with *TAKS* math scale scores. Alternately, for males, statistical significance was reached on all subscales except Home Environment. School Environment produced the largest correlation for males (see Table 1). Peer Environment was the second largest correlation with math *TAKS* followed by Community Environment. Home Environment for males demonstrated a correlation that was not statistically significant and could not be generalized to the population.

Disaggregation by socioeconomic status. The analysis of students' scores who were not participating in free and reduced lunch demonstrated statistically significant correlations on all four subscales of the External Assets (except Home Environment) with exit math scale

scores. School Environment shared the highest correlation (see Table 1). Community Environment indicated the second highest correlations followed by Peer Environment. Home Environment was not statistically significant and could not be generalized to the population. Analysis of the correlations of low-socioeconomic students could not be generalized to the population because none of the environmental subscales reached statistical significance for this group.

   Disaggregation by ethnicity. The only ethnic group that reported statistically significant correlations was White (not of Hispanic origin) students. There was a small positive correlation between all External asset subscales and exit math scale scores. The largest correlation for White students was School Environment (see Table 1). The second largest correlation was Peer Environment, followed by Community Environment, and Home Environment.

   In other words, caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation measured in the School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and with Peers resulted in a statistically significant positive relationship with *TAKS* math scores for White students. Higher environmental subscale scores produced a higher *TAKS* math score. The highest correlation was School Environment.

   Even though the analysis of scores of both Black and Hispanic students did not reach statistical significance, it was interesting to note that all correlations among Black students with the four subscales and exit math *TAKS* scores produced a negative correlation. Peer Environment was the largest negative correlation for Black students followed by Community Environment, School Environment, and then Home Environment. These negative correlations suggested that the higher the negative correlation on the environmental subscale, the lower the math *TAKS* score. Hispanic students' scores indicated no statistically significant correlations, but also displayed two negative correlations. Home Environment and Community Environment was negatively correlated with exit math scale scores for Hispanic students.

   Table 1 indicates the significant correlations for the subscales of the External Assets and *TAKS* math scale scores.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

   Based upon the findings, this sample confirmed the hypothesis of Constantine, Benard, and Diaz (1999) regarding the relationship of external and internal assets. The development of internal assets may clearly be influenced by the external assets youth possess. These external assets include caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in the School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment.

Research Question One and Two

   Research questions one and two examined the relationship between total external student resiliency scores and student scale scores in math, and total internal resiliency scores and student scale scores in math. Findings suggested there was a small correlation between both the external student resiliency scores and the internal resiliency scores and TAKS math scale scores. The impact of resiliency on math achievement is limited by the correlation to math TAKS scale scores. This correlation does not explain the student who is resilient and fails, yet does not lose hope; nor does it explain the student who is resilient and fails, but works

Table 1. Significant Correlations for External Assets Subscales.

Group	Subscale	Correlation Subscale and *TAKS* Math	
All	School Environment	Pearson Correlation	.155**
	(n – 457)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	Home Environment	Pearson Correlation	.105*
	(n – 456)	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	.024
	Community Environment	Pearson Correlation	.110*
	(n - 457)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019
	Peer Environment	Pearson Correlation	.138**
	(n – 456)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
Male	School Environment	Pearson Correlation	.185**
	(n – 246)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	Community Environment	Pearson Correlation	-147*
	(n-246)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021
	Peer Environment	Pearson Correlation	.175
	(n – 245)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
High-SES	School Environment	Pearson Correlation	.175**
	(n – 317)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	Community Environment	Pearson Correlation	.127*
	(n – 317)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024
	Peer Environment	Pearson Correlation	.126*
	(n – 316)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026
Ethnic Group White	School Environment	Pearson Correlation	.201**
	(n – 302)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	Home Environment	Pearson Correlation	.166**
	(n – 301)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	Community Environment	Pearson Correlation	.184**
	(n – 302)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	Peer Environment	Pearson Correlation	.199**
	(n – 301)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

**Correlations are significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlations are significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

at the top of his ability level because TAKS math scores are simply one score in time based upon criterion-referenced material. Perhaps, students may be overachieving as a result of healthy environments that develop positive internal assets, yet they still do poorly on TAKS because of lack of ability. Correlation with exit level math TAKS scale score also does not measure growth in achievement over time as a result of building resiliency.

Educators can change the school environment and help students build resiliency. An increase in internal and external assets does correlate with an increase in math achievement as measured by math TAKS. Most importantly resiliency building helps to produce healthy behaviors in youth. This suggests the importance for educators in schools to provide environments rich in the external assets illustrated by Henderson and Milstein's (1996) Resiliency Wheel and fulfilling Benard's (2004) assertion that schools can develop student needs of belonging, competence, and autonomy by:

1. Helping students develop caring relationships with adults and peers, establishing unconditional positive regard, creating a culture of care and respect and providing care and support;
2. Setting high expectations for academic performance and behavior and communicating that students are capable of achieving these expectations, teaching conflict resolution, providing consistent rules and procedures;
3. Providing opportunities for meaningful participation, increasing opportunities for pro-social bonding by using group processes throughout the curriculum, validating home language, linking the curriculum to students' experiences, and structuring the curriculum so that every child succeeds.

Research question three. Question three investigated the relationship between the resiliency scores on the subscales of the External Assets consisting of School Environment, Home Environment, Community Environment, and Peer Environment, and exit *TAKS* math scores when disaggregated by all students, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. In all instances the resiliency score on the School Environment subscale was more highly correlated with high math *TAKS* scores for all students, male students, those who were not participating in free or reduced lunch, and among White students. Females, students participating in free and reduced lunch, and students of color did not show significant correlations with the subscales of the External Assets. Home Environment did not demonstrate significant correlations with *TAKS* math scores except for Hispanic students. Peer Environment was the second highest subscale for all groups. Schools where educators provided caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation for students impacted student achievement above all other environments. Still, marginalized students appear not to be reacting to these environments in the same manner as White students, males, and high-SES students. This suggests that schools need to identify ways to create environments that build resiliency in marginalized students. Teachers may have lowered expectations of students in poverty. Auwarter and Aruguete (2008) suggested that students from higher SES backgrounds are looked upon more favorably by their teachers than those from low SES backgrounds. They posited that teachers may feel that students' socioeconomic status is beyond their control. Consequently, if teachers also believe that SES predicts student success, they may not feel that their efforts in teaching have any influence over student achievement.

As educators attempt to help students navigate educational stressors caused by high stakes testing, developing resilient students becomes increasingly important. There are many factors that influence math achievement including ability, the quality of the curriculum, the quality of the teacher, class sizes, school climate and others that are beyond the scope of this study. Since school environment is the most significant correlation with improved math achievement, the findings of this study provide implications for educators to use in building caring environments for all students, in providing high expectations, and creating opportunities for meaningful participation.

The subscales of the External Assets include providing caring relationships, meaningful participation, and high expectations in four environments: school, home, in the community, and with peers. Since the School Environment exhibits the largest correlations with math achievement of all four External subscales, it is important that teachers and administrators understand the type of school environment that promotes resiliency in students. In schools where there are caring adults, resiliency is promoted. All students should have at least one, if not several, adults who care about their well-being. Administrators might implement mentoring programs utilizing teachers and staff. Educators should communicate

high, but reasonable expectations for all students. Teachers need to realize that high expectations may look different for each student and instruction should involve differentiation without using techniques such as academic grouping or tracking. Cooperative learning activities involve differentiation strategies that provide every student opportunities to participate in meaningful ways. School leaders need to provide staff development activities involving differentiation of instruction and cooperative learning. School leaders should consider building into the schedule student support to reach the high expectations of the school. Extra- and co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to feel connected with school and their peers and are an important part of the school day. Opportunities should be available for students to make meaningful contributions to their school, the classroom, as well as in the community through school activities. Leaders may consider including service learning activities in their schools. Training should involve teaching strategies and school structure techniques that are culturally responsive and respond to the need for developing resiliency in all students.

Peer environment was generally the second largest correlation among groups showing significant correlations. Educators must develop practices that encourage prosocial behaviors. Students should be encouraged to become involved in before-, after-, and in-school activities and groups. Teachers should structure learning to include cooperative learning activities that allow students to practice social behaviors in groups. Allowing students to have choices in projects or activities helps to build autonomy and pride in their work. Schools in which educators emphasize the arts help students to find a place to demonstrate their talents among peers.

Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) argued that a supportive academic environment, a sense of belonging in school, and cultural loyalty may be significant factors in the achievement of Mexican American youth whose culture emphasizes strong family affiliation. They continued by saying that for Mexican American youth, cultural loyalty may provide strong connections and support as opposed to those who have rejected their cultural backgrounds. Brown (2008) examined the importance of racial socialization and social support among African American students and found that the largest predictor of resiliency for these students was when they received racial socialization messages and social support. These racial socialization messages emphasized racial pride and learning about one's heritage. When those messages emphasized the existence of racism and racial barriers, the effect on positive outcomes was mixed.

Educators in schools need to develop mechanisms for support and caring and organize groups such as newcomers groups. Leaders should be aware of discipline practices that further marginalize students by disconnecting students from their school environments. An example would be the excessive use of out of school suspension. Instead, educators should consider peer mediation, teen court and other strategies to keep students connected with school and their peers. The presence of ethnic groups or clubs should not just simply soften the cultural divides by embracing cultural appreciation, but should address the reasons the club should exist in the first place. Service learning projects provide students opportunities to make important contributions to their communities. Make certain that those students involved enter into service projects on equal footing with those they are serving rather than viewing themselves as saviors which would perpetuate further marginalization.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In general, this study found that significant positive correlations existed between the external and internal student resiliency factors and exit level math TAKS scores. This

affirmed that the school environment is the most important of the four External Assets for correlation to academic achievement. Educators need to ensure that all students have equal access to a school environment with caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation. Benard (2004) asserted that teachers can provide their students with turn-around relationships and positive messages that communicate the adult's belief in a student's ability to become self-righting. This type of message challenges youth and expresses high expectations for a good life. If indeed resiliency is a universal innate capacity for self-correction that contributes to survival in the face of adversity (Benard, 2004), then developing resiliency must become a critical issue for educators. Thus, creating schools where students develop caring relationships high expectations, and engage in meaningful participation is a challenge that educators must meet.

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Improving Rural Student Writing: A Critical Leadership Issue

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INTRODUCTION

In the 2000 legislative session, the Nebraska legislature passed Legislative Bill 812. A new state writing test was to be enacted uniformly throughout the entire state in order to increase accountability and improve writing achievement for all students in Nebraska. As a heavily rural state, however, Nebraska had traditionally embraced a local approach to educational decision-making. Legislative Bill 812 required a shift toward a more unified, top-down approach, and therefore represented a bold step for the state of Nebraska.

To fulfill the requirements of Legislative Bill 812, Nebraska school districts adopted the *6+1® Writing Model* developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) (Roschewski, Gallagher, & Isernhagen, 2001). The development of this model began in 1983, when the NWREL reviewed a range of assessment models and finally proposed six traits of writing – at the time, they were ideas/content, organization and development, voice/tone/flavor, effective word choice, syntax/sentence structure, and writing conventions (Steineger, 1996). These traits were later defined as the *6+1® Writing Model,* which included ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, convention, and presentation. In Nebraska, this model was referred to as the Six Trait Writing Model.

The Six Trait Writing Model focused on building writing literacy among teachers as well as students. Thus it emphasized teaching writing as a process to help rural teachers improve their own teaching and their students' achievement. It also provided rural principals and teachers with a common language in their school building with which they could make comparisons about the growth of students across grade levels relative to writing. This common language and basic understanding of the writing model were considered imperatives for principals in Nebraska. One principal underscored the importance of a school building sharing a common language: "The best learning for our staff is that we are able to communicate on the same level. It's allowed us to have more professional dialogue, not only what needs to be taught, but what are the best practices to teach that?" (Isernhagen, 2005, p. 88). Due to the current focus on student achievement in the educational community, principals are looking to heighten progress in all areas. A common language—such as that facilitated by the Six Trait Writing Model—is necessary for the fulfillment of this goal.

The process created a vehicle of universal instruction that was supported by a statewide network of intermediate agencies (Educational Service Units) trained by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to provide professional development and support to rural schools for the new writing process. The Educational Service Unit (ESU) staff developers began the process of training educators from each district in the state.

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The statewide writing assessment process. Along with the Six Trait Writing Model, Nebraskans felt that using statewide assessments to inform teaching and learning was critical to the improvement of writing instruction. Teachers were the main stakeholders in the development of writing prompts and the scoring of the assessments, although principals were also heavily invested in the success of the State Writing Assessment.

Prompts for the Statewide Writing Assessment changed yearly. In the fall of each year, teachers were recommended by their district superintendent or assessment contact person and selected by the NDE to take part in the writing prompt development task force. The task force consisted of three panels consisting of 10 to 15 teachers. They represented grades four, eight, and eleven, and came from a variety of school sizes and geographic regions. A one-day workshop facilitated by the NDE provided opportunities for participants to practice scoring, learn about research on best practices, discuss criteria for effective writing prompts, and review writing prompts used in previous statewide writing assessments.

Once developed, multiple writing prompts were field-tested across the state. Teachers conducted the field-testing at the appropriate grade-level and administered assessments according to the testing protocol. Student participants in the field-testing were at the appropriate grade level and completed assessments according to standard administration procedures. At the conclusion of the field-testing, the NDE conducted a review to finalize the Statewide Writing Assessment scoring process. Each sample of student writing was read and scored by two trained teachers. A panel of teachers for each grade level used analytical judgment to determine the proficiency of blind scored writing samples based on performance level descriptors. This process resulted in a range of proficient scores recommended for each grade level; "cut scores" were established by the Buros Center for Testing based on these recommended ranges.

Cooperating with the NDE, Nebraska principals recruited teachers to score the writing assessment in each year of this study. Two trained teachers, using rubrics based on the Six Trait Writing Model, scored each writing assessment holistically. A third scoring was completed if there was a two-point or greater discrepancy between the scores. The scoring used a range of 1 to 4 with plus (+) or minus (–) intervals, resulting in a 10-point scale. For the first three years, scoring was done at three sites in Nebraska. Scoring is now conducted at one site to improve reliability (Dappen, Isernhagen, & Mills, 2006). In addition to writing papers being scored by Nebraska teachers, a sample of 500 papers per grade level were scored by an independent contracted testing company to ensure consistency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The value of statewide writing assessments has been a point of serious contention. Some studies concluded that statewide writing assessments were not accurate measures of how well students can write (Freedman & Daiute, 2001; Hillocks, 2002; Mabry, 1999; Wiggins, 1998). However, Spandel and Stiggins (1997) found that large-scale writing assessments promoted reliability of scoring, set higher standards for student performance, and were overall positively linked to writing instruction.

In addition, teachers were found to believe that their statewide writing assessment supports a desirable writing program (Anderson, 2007; Hillocks, 2002). This was confirmed by the generally positive teacher responses to Nebraska's Statewide Writing Assessment process. In a study by Gallagher (2003), 73% of Nebraska teachers indicated that they placed more emphasis on sharing assessment criteria in class, while 69% placed more emphasis on practice writing assessments than they had in the past in the teaching of writing.

Teachers also began to focus more on the Six Trait Writing Model: 73% placed more emphasis on explicit instruction in the six writing traits, and 88% of teachers agreed or agreed strongly that the six traits scoring rubric used to score the state writing assessment was useful for instruction. Gallagher noted in 2007 that using student friendly rubrics helped students and teachers share a common language about writing. Comparable studies were reported by Anderson in 2005 and 2007 that revealed similar findings regarding raters' perceptions of the effectiveness of the scoring experience on classroom practices.

Crucially for administrators seeking to help their schools improve, Gallagher found in 2003 that 75% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the state writing assessment supported the learning objectives teachers had for students. Black and Wiliam (1998) concluded that "formative assessment does improve learning" (p. 49), while Anderson (2007) concluded that teachers who served as raters for the Statewide Writing Assessment confirmed their instructional practices and contributed to students becoming better writers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine rural statewide district writing achievement data for fourth, eighth, and eleventh grades from 2001 to 2007. This data would carry implications for the success of the Statewide Writing Assessment and the Six Trait Writing Model, which combined with current literature would yield insight into strategies that are critical to principal leadership of rural schools. The following research questions were addressed: What were the average percentages of rural students rated proficient or better on the Nebraska Statewide Writing Assessment? What were the differences in year to year comparisons of the average percent of rural students rated proficient on the Nebraska Statewide Writing Assessment?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Definition of Rural

Classification of rural schools was based on Locale Codes as described by Johnson (1989). The Johnson Codes were developed specifically for use with schools. Codes ranged from one through eight with codes six, seven, and eight described as rural schools for the purposes of this research. Locale Code assignment for the participating rural districts was taken from the National Center for Educational Statistics *Common Core of Data* (2002). School districts officially began reporting fourth grade scores in 2001-02. Eighth grade was reported for the first time in 2002-03 and, finally, in 2003-04 all three grades (4, 8, and 11) were reported for the first time. While this writing assessment had characteristics that enabled inferential statistical analysis to be used, there could be some question from the traditional measurement community concerning this practice.

Sample. In 2001, Nebraska had 495 school districts, with 484 (97.8%) classified as rural. In 2007, due to consolidation of small school districts across Nebraska, the number of public school districts dropped to 254. Of the 254 districts, 243 (95.7%) were classified as rural. Thus, any statewide efforts for school reform, restructuring, or improvement in Nebraska would focus on rural schools and districts. Data for this study were drawn from each of Nebraska's 243 rural school districts.

Procedure. The scores reported in this study were the average percentage of students in rural districts across the state that scored at or above the statewide cut score for that specific year. Scores were examined for grades four, eight, and eleven, from 2002 to 2007. Both descriptive data and inferential statistics were reported and discussed.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, writing results indicated that rural eighth grade students made significant gains from 2003 (79.77%) to 2007 (91.43%). This 11.66% increase was the largest of all three grades.

Table 1. Statewide Writing Assessment 2002–2007: Mean District Percent of Rural Student Scores at the Proficient Level or Higher.

Grade	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2002 to 2007
4	76.79%		81.00%**	84.70%**	83.47%**	85.29%**	+8.50%[‡‡]
8		79.77%**	85.60%**	86.33%	87.05%	91.45%**	+11.66%[‡‡]
11			89.30%	91.06%	92.00%	92.27%	+ 2.97%

*p<.05 compared to the previous year   **p<.001 compared to the previous year
[†] p<.05 compared to the baseline year   [‡‡]p<.001 compared to the baseline year
Note: 2002, 2003, and 2004 were baseline years for grades 4, 8, and 11 respectively
[a] Percent of students scoring proficient or higher was calculated for each district and then averaged across the state.

Rural fourth grade students also made significant gains from 2002 (76.79%) to 2007 (85.29%), increasing by 8.50%. Rural eleventh graders did not demonstrate significant gains from 2004 (89.30%) to 2007 (92.27%), increasing by only 2.97%. However, eleventh graders' baseline proficiency percentage (89.30%) was higher than the baseline percentages of either fourth or eighth graders. Likewise, in 2007, more eleventh graders rated proficient or higher on the Statewide Writing Assessment (92.27%) than did fourth or eighth graders.

The percent of rural fourth-grade students scoring proficient increased from 2002 to 2004, from 2004 to 2005, and from 2006 to 2007, but decreased by 1% from 2005 to 2006. The percent of rural eighth-grade students scoring proficient increased every year that they were tested, from 2003 to 2007. Eleventh-grade students scoring proficient or higher increased every year that they were tested as well, from 2004 to 2007, although these increases were not significant.

Thus rural fourth and eighth graders made significant gains from the initial testing dates of 2002 and 2003, respectively. Eleventh graders demonstrated no significant gains from 2003 to 2007; however, researchers noted that eleventh grade began testing two years later than fourth graders and baseline scores were much higher than either fourth or eighth grade students.

IMPLICATIONS

Nebraska writing assessment results showed significant improvement for rural students in grades four, eight, and eleven since the inception of the Statewide Writing Assessment. Nebraska principals and teachers consistently indicated that their involvement in the Six Trait Writing Model and the use of scoring rubrics in their classrooms positively impacted both their teaching and students' performance. The Six Trait Writing Model and the training that accompanied it provided a way for principals to ensure that writing in their K-12 school continued to improve. Using this model, principals could discover areas students are deficit in. They could make this a target area for professional development and develop strategies to use within the model that would make students more successful in the classroom. A rural female special education coordinator shared, "We look at that data to see our strengths and weaknesses. With our state writing, we're testing all grades instead of just fourth, eighth, and eleventh graders, so we can identify weaknesses faster so that we can improve" (Isernhagen, 2009, p. 15).

Discrepancies in gains across grade levels in rural schools could be explained by the degree of staff collaboration when first learning about the scoring and writing process. Collaboration can be a great advantage to helping teachers adjust to a new assessment. For example, one language arts teacher in rural Nebraska shared that in her case, "Several times a year [the other eighth grade language arts teacher and I] give the same writing assessment and we grade each others' assessments and get feedback of what we are both doing well, or need to improve on" (Isernhagen, Florendo, & Guerrero, 2009, p. 57). Therefore, principals need to exhibit strong leadership skills in encouraging all teachers to actively participate in an adjustment to a statewide assessment. One superintendent in Nebraska explained the characteristics of strong, engaging leadership: "You have to model it. I try to demonstrate it by just getting in the trenches. I will not expect anyone to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. I try to be visible. I try to be involved and show [teachers] that we value their professionalism and what they're doing in the classroom" (Isernhagen, 2006, p. 30).

Teachers became more knowledgeable about the writing process by participating in training and scoring both at the district level and the state level. Anderson (2007) shared that "participation in scoring of the 2007 Statewide Writing Assessment was perceived by a majority of raters across all grade levels as beneficial to their classroom practices in the teaching of writing" (p. 175). Anderson also found that serving as a statewide rater increased teacher understanding of the qualities of good writing, helped to build confidence in teaching writing, and was helpful for providing student feedback. Administrators also gained experience working with assessments and standards because they accompanied teachers to training sessions. One rural male superintendent shared:

> One of the practices I've had that has been good for me is when I've asked my teachers to take training, I went with them. When we did six-traits writing, I did the training with them. If I send them or encourage them to go, if at all possible I go with them so that I can at least keep up with the vocabulary. If I expect them to be using these programs or to find merit in them, I need to be able to talk intelligently with them about what they are doing. It's indeed a challenge. (Isernhagen et al., 2009, p. 86)

Participating in as much of the training process as possible also demonstrated the strong, engaging leadership necessary to guide a school through the implementation of the Statewide Writing Assessment.

Every year, principals in rural Nebraska examined test scores with their teachers to determine how they could improve their students' writing. Throughout the implementation of the new writing process, communication between principals and teachers about how to improve writing provided insights about formative assessment. These insights not only impacted language arts teachers' instructional strategies but bubbled over into other subject areas of the curriculum. A particularly effective strategy was the use of rubrics to improve learning. One Nebraska administrator explained the strategy of rubrics: "If we were proposing a rubric for evaluating paragraph writing on the 9th grade level, we'd have to show the teacher what would go into the rubric, how it would be created, and the advantages of it. It would make the evaluation of students more efficient" (Isernhagen, Dappen, & Mills, 2006, p. 44). Writing was the first content area that used a scoring rubric and produced classroom-based data for improving the performance of students. This data provided incentive for principals to encourage teachers to adjust their daily lesson plans to include rubrics as they established needed expectations for student performance. One teacher in Nebraska elaborated on the widespread use of rubrics at their school, saying, "We use rubrics for evaluating speeches, evaluating all of our writing assignments, and other things as well. We use them for a world geography project that goes across the curriculum with the English department, and we share those rubrics with the students in advance of the project so they know what our expectations are" (Isernhagen et al., 2006, p. 44). Crucially, teaching with rubrics increased communication between students and teachers.

Given these techniques, principals in rural schools were able to make effective use of the Statewide Writing Assessment and Six Trait Writing Model. These tools engaged teachers and students in the writing process, leading teachers to take the responsibility for improving their own instructional expertise as well as building their expertise collectively with their colleagues. This led students to become actively engaged in learning the Six Trait Writing Model and thereby improving their writing. Ultimately, formative assessment, school improvement, and writing achievement all needed to center on the students of the school. A student-centered culture of continuous improvement allowed teachers and administrators to build on each other's strengths so they could focus on teaching and learning. Nurturing this culture was the key to success. By committing to a statewide writing model, Nebraska principals and teachers also committed to the continuous improvement of writing achievement for all students.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Based on the experience of rural teachers in Nebraska throughout the Statewide Writing Assessment implementation process, several administrative behaviors that would promote successful statewide writing assessments and adoption of the Six Trait Writing Model could be identified. It is crucial that principals are collaborative partners with teachers during training as well as during implementation. This process is best carried out with consistency and reliance on accurate data. Therefore, a sound knowledge about the preparation of data is a vital skill for new principals coming into the field that should be taught in educational leadership preparation programs. An elementary principal emphasized the importance of working with data in today's schools: "I think the biggest thing is making it

the norm to look at that data, assess it and think about it. Five years ago that wasn't happening. eachers now have data at their fingertips. They can see the trend, they can see the themes, and they can see the problem" (Isernhagen & Mills, 2007, p. 84). Principal candidates in educational leadership preparation programs must also develop the strong communication skills required to discuss writing improvement with teachers and other stakeholders in their schools. Finally, educational leadership programs should prepare principals to be strong leaders who are aware of the importance of accountability and high level of responsibility in their position. A superintendent for a school district in Nebraska stated, "The board holds me accountable and therefore, I hold the school building administrators accountable that we're moving students in the right direction [and] improving student performance" (p. 79).

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