What Professional and Personal Strategies Do Successful Principals Possess to Cultivate a School Culture that Promotes Academic Success in a Blue Ribbon School

Carlos LaTeetha McKinney

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WHAT PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL STRATEGIES DO SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPALS POSSESS TO CULTIVATE A SCHOOL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

by

Carlos La'Teetha McKinney

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2012
ABSTRACT

WHAT PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL STRATEGIES DO SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPALS POSSESS TO CULTIVATE A SCHOOL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

by Carlos LaTeetha McKinney

December 2012

Principals who are presiding over schools that have received a blue ribbon certification have evidently used specific professional and personal strategies, as well as behaviors, to enhance the academic and social culture of their schools. The current study examined Mississippi Gulf Coast Schools that received blue ribbon status in the last six years. A survey of administrators, teachers, and staff members was conducted.

The research confirmed that a correlation exists between personal and professional behaviors of the principals who have presided over Blue Ribbon Certified Schools and teacher morale. These principal behaviors are deemed instrumental in the building of a progressive school culture that reflects high expectations, teamwork, teacher/principal collaboration, trust, respect, and student scholar achievement. The empirical data suggests that principals must maintain positive and respectful relationships with teachers and staff members to create and build upon a school culture that is not only steeped in high expectations, but also reflects tremendous respect for teacher input and collaboration. Ultimately, these principal traits and behaviors culminated in student success and the receipt of Blue Ribbon Certification.
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by

Carlos LaTeetha McKinney

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

David Lee
Director

Myron Labat

James Johnson

Rose McNeese

Susan A. Siltanen
Dean of the Graduate School

December 2012
DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this research to my most cherished loved ones: My wife, Christy McKinney, who was instrumental in the accomplishment of this research; my son, Carlos L. McKinney Jr.; parents, Oscar and Pauline McKinney; grandparents, Paul and Susie Myers. The love and dedication that these individuals have shown me throughout my life is the reason that I exist and continue to grow as a scholar, a citizen, and an individual.
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I would like to bestow gratitude on the participating Mississippi Gulf Coast superintendents, principals, and teachers that gave their time to be active respondents for this research. I also would like to thank Dr. Ronald Styron and Dr. Myrick Nix for their mentorship in my time of academic need.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The potential for a principal to lead the students of the new millennia is based on his or her ability to set goals of excellence for teachers, students, staff, and him or herself. The principal must change school culture in a positive and progressive manner to improve student learning. The purpose of this research is to identify the professional and personal qualities and strategies of a successful principal in order to develop a blueprint for all principals to use as a reference to improve their schools student learning. The academic and social growth of students is the primary reason education exists. The principal of a school is the alpha and the omega of the teaching and learning process. If the principal is thoroughly analyzing, implementing, and evaluating the academic and social culture of his or her school, good or great student outcomes are inevitable.

Theorists Blake and Mouton, base their managerial theories on concern for the production (task) and for people (relationship) (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Martin & Jenkins, 2008). Blake and Mouton cited that some leaders are more concerned with the completion of the task than the end result of said task. The theorists cited that the opposing leaders place an emphasis on the people and morale issues that arise from the task. Blake and Mouton (1985) specify five leadership styles that constitute their grid:

1. Team Management: Leaders emphasize a high concern for both task completion and the people completing the task.

2. Middle of the road organization: Leaders maintain what has always been done for the sake of getting along.

3. Impoverished Management: The leader completes the minimum requirements necessary to remain employed.
4. Authority Obedience: Power, authority, and control are used to maximize production.

5. Country Club: The relationship between colleagues and subordinates are more important than achieving the desired results (pp. 10-13).

The obvious combination of concern for people and production is the ideal symbiotic relationship (Martin & Jenkins, 2008). A successful principal understands that the people who are responsible for the end result and the task are linked to the success of the leadership strategies. If teachers are not enthusiastic about their assignments and their morale is low, the end result of the task will not produce the best results (Martin & Jenkins, 2008). On the other hand, if the concern for people is weighted too heavily, the task at hand may not be taken seriously, and the completion of said task might not receive the attention to detail that is necessary to result in excellence (Martin & Jenkins, 2008). The balance between the people and the task is imperative for the principal to maintain equilibrium to ensure the cohesive needs and opportunities of each school. Each school will determine the exact balance between the task and concern for school personnel to foster increased student learning.

The leadership style grid proposed by Blake and Mouton (1985) innately warns principals that the country club, authority obedience, impoverished management and organizational non-management styles of leadership are flawed in their use exclusively to manage organizations. Team management is a conglomeration of the best of the previous managerial styles cited (Green, 1997). The team management philosophy merges the intense concern for people with the emphasis on the completion of the task.
Rationale for Study

In life, sometimes we overlook the understood and assume that principals know and understand what tact is, or practice the art of social interaction for improved morale of staff members. Also, staff development implemented by the principal is an important academic key to improved learning strategies, and furthermore, having the appropriate staff development for a specific school is more efficient and effective for improved student outcomes. This nation is faced with a high percentage of schools not meeting proficiency standards. The administrative obvious is not so clear, and many principals are not performing at good or great academic and social levels of proficiency. Currently, the statistics have shown that our current and future administrators need guidance. It is the intention of this study to find solutions for Mississippi Gulf Coast Schools, which are failing our student scholars. Blue Ribbon Schools offer a good starting point to design solutions for our Gulf Coast Schools. The hope is to create a list of best strategies for principals to lead our learning institutions toward greatness.

Green (1997) stated that there are thirteen characteristics of nurturing schools:

Category 1-Teacher relationships:

1. Teachers exhibit caring attitudes for students
2. Teachers understand their students in and out of school needs
3. Teachers elicit trust and positive relationships with students

Category 2-Professionalism among administration, faculty, and staff:

1. Teachers demonstrate a passion for the curriculum they are teaching
2. Self-actualization is respected and encouraged
3. Ownership of a student’s success
Category 3-Environment of the school and classroom:

1. Community involvement in schools for the betterment of children
2. Empowerment of teachers and staff
3. All positive and creative differences are nurtured and respected
4. A coalition between community and family in the school

Category 4-Students’ self-esteem:

1. Students possess good self-esteem
2. Students have a feeling of safety in school
3. Students have a sense of social acceptance (pp. 17-27)

These thirteen characteristics and many others that are not chronicled by Green must become the foundation on which all principals should start the progressive transformation of their school’s culture. The relationships, self-esteem and respect of the stakeholders cited in the thirteen characteristics are the cornerstone in regards to the embryonic stages of positive change in leadership and the culmination of a progressive cultural change (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

The wonderful aspect about leadership is that a principal can use any one of these leadership styles or any combination of them and become very successful in producing a school culture that is steeped in student achievement and critical thinking. The question is what leadership style is appropriate for an individual school? The school funding, student’s socioeconomic status, and demographics should determine which leadership style a principal will adopt as his or her own for the enrichment of his or her students (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). There is not one blanket leadership style that is consistently beneficial in all situations. A principal must assess his or her school’s needs and then determine the best course of action to take. This process must begin with a self-
efficacious outlook. The principal must not only know his or her school’s needs, but also his or her own strengths and deficiencies. The principal has to be honest about his or her leadership skills, or lack thereof. If a principal is to become successful it is imperative that he or she utilize personal leadership strengths and improve upon their leadership opportunities. One important factor in the academic success of children is the direction the principal leads the flock and the buy-in factor of the principal’s doctrine (DuFour, 2009).

What does successful leadership look like? Successful leadership is producing critically thinking students who are academically, socially, and physically enriched citizens of the world. For many principals, the look of success may be the development of a school’s culture and the buy-in of the leadership that mandates student achievement. This is the primary goal and everything else is secondary. Success could also mean moving a school and its students from mediocre academia to good or great student achievement.

The benefit of this study will be the compilation of professional and personal qualities that successful principals use to administer their leadership strategies for the betterment of their students. Students are the essential winners because the improved leadership strategies will culminate in better classroom instruction.

Support for Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to chronicle the combination of professional and personal strategies and qualities of a principal, which contribute to a positive school culture that culminates with improved student learning. It is the intention of this research, if the data warrants, to compose a list of ten personal and professional strategies used by
principals to produce Blue Ribbon schools. This study hopes to reveal concrete strategies that can help current and aspiring administrators move their schools in a positive direction. Our student scholars will need a plethora of skill sets to compete in the global economy in which we live.

**Beneficiaries**

All stakeholders of our current and future pedagogy will benefit from this study through a logical and systematic use of proven personal and professional principal strategies. The improved instructional leadership will give rise to effective classroom teaching and learning strategies. Ultimately, these improved instructional strategies will lead to better student outcomes.

**Implementation of Leadership Strategies**

The implementation of leadership strategies is imperative to the progressive changes in school culture. These strategies for cultural change are paramount based on the conveyance of said strategies to the teachers and staff. Student achievement is facilitated by a principal’s leadership strategies that lead to a school’s cultural transformation which culminates in a school based upon great expectations (Healey, 2009). It is suggested that progressive cultural change begins with collaborative and collective efforts of principals, teachers, staff, parents, coaches, and students to transform a school’s culture (Healey, 2009).

One key to progressive cultural change is understanding how successful schools place an emphasis on students and their instruction time. Successful schools mandate that teachers instruction time is maximized (Healey, 2009). Much of the progressive cultural change happens as a grassroots effort that begins with the principal and culminates with the teachers. The teachers’ input of ideas and suggestions for cultural changes are
important. The buy-in of teachers is essential to an effective and efficient change of school culture. It is suggested that teachers and students must own the curriculum that will be essential to student improvement (Healey, 2009).

The principal must display a participatory leadership role that fosters a direct connection between the principal and teachers that facilitates a positive cultural change (Leech, 2008). It is suggested that principals become risk takers in regards to re-directing nonprogressive procedures and policies (Leech, 2008). Leech suggested that leaders use their charisma to perpetuate their vision through the teachers and staff within their schools. Trust in and empowerment of teachers and staff by the principal is another intangible that contributes to increased morale and student learning (Leech, 2008).

The principal must become the model of the cultural change through his or her actions directly or indirectly (Leech, 2008). The principal must share his or her decision making with teachers and staff to promote leadership within the hierarchy of the school to successfully build a unified leadership coalition (Leech, 2008). This coalition will have a very positive effect on the morale of teachers and staff. The morale of a school cannot be disregarded as superficial. Morale plays a huge role in the implementation of any leadership strategies. Individuals who have high morale will enthusiastically perform the job and will put an emphasis on getting assignments accomplished (Leech, 2008).

This coalition also elicits the support of the parents; subsequently, they will see their children’s learning experiences improving. The result of the parents buying into the scholastic success of their children is the academic support of their children at home (Leech, 2008). The parents will take increased hands on role with their children’s development.
Subsequently, the transition time for cultural change is dependent upon the rigor with which the teachers and staff push for said change. A field test was done, February 2008, by Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education and Pennsylvania Universities entitled the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) (Olson, 2008). This field test was an assessment to evaluate a principal’s effectiveness. Three hundred schools nationwide participated in this field study, 100 high schools, 100 middle schools, and 100 elementary schools within 53 districts in twenty seven states (Olson, 2008).

The field test had 72 assessment questions that the superintendent, principal, and teachers of each school answered. The scale of measure was five, “outstandingly effective,” to one, “ineffective”. This field test assessed what others thought of the principal’s leadership skills, instruction, curriculum, school learning components, and student achievement (Olson, 2008). The six assessment categories of the VAL-ED were as follows:

1. High standards for student learning: Individual, team, and school goals for rigorous academic and social learning are set.
2. Rigorous curriculum: Ambitious academic content is provided to all students in core academic subjects.
4. Culture of learning and professional behavior: communities of professional practice promote student academic and social learning. The central focus of a healthy school environment contributes to learning.
5. Connections to external communities: Schools forge links to families and other people and institutions in the community that advance academic and social learning.


The professional staff and the school’s students exercise individual and collective responsibility. (pp. 1-11)

The VAL-ED test can be a measuring stick for cultural buy-in for a school and its principal. But, the test does not measure all important intangibles that help a principal become successful in developing a culture that creates students who are critically-thinking world citizens (Olson, 2008).

Research Questions

1. Do principals at Blue Ribbon Schools use personal and professional leadership strategies to improve school culture?

2. Are principals at Blue Ribbon Schools supportive of their teachers and staff?

3. Is teacher and staff morale high in Blue Ribbon Schools?

4. Is the culture at Blue Ribbon Schools progressive?

Hypotheses

H₁ There is a correlation between teacher rapport with the principal and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

H₂ There is a correlation between rapport among teachers and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.
H₃ There is a correlation between instructional issues and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

The intention of this study was to chronicle the combination of professional and personal strategies of successful principals. The definition of a successful school used here is a school that has received Blue Ribbon status. The Research Questions represent concise and direct forms of analysis that compile each principal’s specific professional and personal strategies. Questionnaires were distributed anonymously to the assistant principals and teachers of said Blue Ribbon schools. These questionnaires used a Likert Scale to produce results that have been analyzed. The instruments will determine principal leadership behaviors and teacher morale. The demographics and socioeconomics of each school have been documented to create a blueprint for which principal’s strategies work well in different academic settings. This study is beneficial for all stakeholders in the secondary school system because it compiles professional and personal qualities that successful principals use to administer their leadership strategies for improved student scholar outcomes.

Summary

Prior research has proven that there is a correlation between principal best practices and student academic growth. The point of contention is what specific principal strategies work well with various school and student demographic. A professional or personal strategy implemented by a Blue Ribbon school principal that is used for progressive cultural change in an individual school. However, the same strategy may create chaos in a school in a neighboring district. The question for all educators is: are we
utilizing the correct professional and personal strategies and behaviors to create a culture that transforms students into scholars?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Transformational leadership is a form of leadership that is conducive for improving cultural change and student outcomes in progressive schools. Transformational leadership, when adopted by principals in the United States, has been responsible for many schools improving student outcomes and enhancing school culture. Burns (2003), definition of transformational leadership is a principal using positive and progressive personal and professional strategies to develop academic and social change in their respective schools. The result of transformational leadership is positively transforming teachers and staff members into school leaders. The principal uses transformational leadership to increase morale and motivation of teachers, staff members and students. This leadership process encourages all stakeholders to adopt the principal’s vision and mission of his or her school.

The principal also has to model this progressive leadership style to motivate staff members and students in order to align them with the cultural change. It is imperative that all stakeholders take ownership of their specific segment of day to day school operations. In 1978, James Macgregor Burns introduced the world to the term transforming leadership (Burns, 2003). Burns concludes that leaders, in conjunction with the individuals who follow them, create a symbiotic relationship that produces positive and significant changes in institutional morale and motivation (Burns, 2003). Burns believed that true transformational leaders lead by example and have the ability to articulate the goals of the organization, which promotes a sense of excitement and morale obligation from the followers (Burns, 2003).
Burns (2003) explains that, through this positive cultural change, the leader will invoke the followers to produce greater results because the cultural environment is conducive to collaborative networking, mutual respect, and mentoring. Principals who utilize these behaviors and many others are usually successful transformational leaders that produce improved student outcomes. Styron (2004) explains that the implementation and execution of; establishing academic goals, documenting strengths and opportunities of a school, developing and executing an action plan, creating a Blue Ribbon advisory committee, and setting deadlines for execution of said action plan will help guide a school toward Blue Ribbon status.

Principals of low performing schools and high poverty-stricken communities face problems with the following conditions: student achievement, discipline, organizational school structure, school inadequacies, staffing, and the involvement of parents and community (Duke, Tucker, Salmonwicz, & Leby 2007). What skills are needed to reverse low performing schools in high poverty areas? The skills for reform must encompass a wide range of specialized skill sets to induce a positive and progressive change in school culture. Fiedler (2006) states that the leadership style of a principal is dictated by three circumstances: the relationship shared between the principal and his or her teachers, academic goals of the school, and the autonomy of the principal to praise or replace staff members. Fiedler’s (2006) premise was documented by a contingency theory, which stated the principal’s style must fit the educational situation to produce a positive change. It is imperative that principals alter their leadership styles to maximize the results of their school’s (Duke et al., 2007).

Duke et al. (2007) performed a study that identified five conditions that principals of low performing and high poverty schools face: low student achievement, behavior
issues, staffing, organization, school programs, district level participation, parent, and community involvement. The outcome of this study resulted in twenty four conditions cited by principals that hinder student achievement. The factors contributing to low student achievement that were the main concerns included reading deficiencies, math deficiencies, attendance issues, and discipline problems. The factors that contributed to low student achievement were also a result of inadequate staffing. Difficulty in attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers and staff members, as well as a deficiency in specialists in vital academic areas were catalysts for low student achievement (Duke et al., 2007).

Within the area of organization and school culture the prominent issues that exist are: (a) a lack of focus, (b) unaligned curriculum, (c) ineffective instruction, (d) data depriviation, (e) a lack of teamwork, (f) inadequate infrastructure, (g) ineffective schedule in a dysfunctional school culture, (h) ineffective interventions, (i) a lack of inclusion, (j) inadequate facilities, (k) inadequate academic materials, and (l) ineffective staff development (Duke et al., 2007). District level participation plays a key role in low performing schools due to; central office instability, technical issues, and a lack of district support. Principals also cited the lack of parental involvement and derogatory perceptions of their schools by community members as reasons for the decline of low performing schools (Duke et al., 2007).

Of the 19 schools in the study, no two schools exhibited the same profile issues. It was cited that the 19 schools encompassed every end of the academic and socioeconomic spectrum. However, there were key similarities in all 19 schools that contributed to perceived low performing issues (Duke et al., 2007). Leithwood and Duke (1999) found that the effectiveness of a principal is contingent on how well the leader can use his or
her professional and personal skill set to foster a positive and progressive outcome in all unique academic situations. Leithwood and Duke (1999) support the idea that principals of low performing schools must receive training in the twenty four conditions that contribute to low performing schools. This training can help principals minimize the pitfalls and obstacles that plague low performing schools. The authors also agree that each principal must receive training that is specifically customized for each school (Duke et al., 2007).

Best Practices

The diagnosis of a school’s deficiencies and strengths are imperative for the academic reversal of a low performing school as stated by Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003). Duke et al. (2007) posed the question: “Are some principals unsuccessful because of what they do to address perceived problems, or are they unsuccessful because they misperceive the problems in the first place?” (p. 20)

Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi (2010) stated that there are four categories that contribute to progressive and successful principals: developing people, re-culturing the school, clear and concise school mission, and consistent analysis of classroom instruction. Leithwood et al. (2010) state that the dominant leadership strategies, which were implemented successfully by principals, are overseeing and analyzing classroom instruction. In their study, Leithwood et al. (2010) indicate that the children who have the most to gain academically are scholars from minority and low income families.

Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon (2011) reported that the data from their study suggested a correlation between the principal and support received from the school district is paramount for improved student outcomes. Epstein et al. (2011) suggest that a school’s basic programs must be in place to reach out to the families of scholars, which
will prepare students for more intense challenges in their future. Epstein et al. (2011) indicate that analyzing student outcomes and making adjustments to teacher instruction is imperative to creating a culture of excellence. Epstein et al. (2011) conclude with the results of their study, which suggest that shared school endeavors, evaluation of student outcome data and shared collaborative leadership in a school will promote an academic and social equity for improved school culture. Epstein et al. (2011) confirm that the collaborative support for the families of scholars, as well as the involvement of community members, is the cornerstone of school partnership programs.

Rammer (2007) poses the question of whether superintendents use the 21 responsibilities of successful principals as cited by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) to hire principals. The use of these 21 responsibilities to hire principals is a template for acquiring high achieving administrators. The premise is that high performing schools have effective principals (Hallinger, 2011; Lezotte, 2011). The principal that is an effective leader is the heartbeat of that school’s high performance (Lindahl, 2007). Rammer (2007) suggested that there are specific skills, traits, behaviors and responsibilities that effective principals must possess. Early research conducted by Lezotte (2011) suggested that there is a direct correlation between instructional leadership and effective schools. Sweeny (1982) reiterates the fact that effective principals are the catalyst for high performing schools. Peterson (1999) reported that a principal without a good leadership skill set will be unsuccessful. Principals who are good leaders can cultivate the ideology in which learning is inclusive for all children. This ideology should successfully become the mission statement of the school and then be communicated through the vision of a principal and disseminated to his or her subordinates (Lezotte, 2011).
It is imperative that a principal have a staff that believes in his or her academic and cultural vision to create a culture of positive and progressive learning (Lezotte, 2011). Principals who are successful must have a school improvement plan, vision, adaptability, instructional direction, and knowledge of student’s strengths and weaknesses. These variables are important for principals to use as barometers for the future direction of their schools (Rammer, 2007). Characteristics of a successful school are: effective principal leadership, instructional attention to detail, focused learning, a safe instructional environment, teacher commitment, proficiency for all children, and student outcomes that are measures for program effectiveness (Rammer, 2007).

“Effective schools spend as much time avoiding things that don’t work as they do gravitating to things that do” as cited by Lezotte and Bancroft (1985, p. 26). Lezotte (2011) suggested that there are two expectations for effective schools. The first is that students must show achievement through mastery of curriculum by attaining proficient academic outcomes. Secondly, students must achieve mastery of curriculum across all socioeconomic levels. Zigarelli (1996) contended that there are three traits that embody effective schools: a culture of achievement, the principal’s autonomy to hire and fire, and good teacher morale. The effective principal must set clear goals and expectations for the school, teachers and students (Rosenthal, 2003). The ability of the principal to communicate these goals and expectations is critical to a school’s success (McEwan, 2003).

The responsibilities of effective principals as cited by Waters et al. (2004) are affirmation, change agent, culture of communication, flexibility, discipline, visibility, resources, situational awareness, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum instruction and assessment, knowledge of curriculum, instruction and
assessment, monitoring/evaluating, ideas/beliefs, optimizing, order, outreach and collaborative and meaningful relationships. Waters et al. (2004) believe that the responsibilities for principals are a template for academic and cultural success for any administrator willing to sacrifice and implement said responsibilities. Rammer (2007) compiled research from his study that attempts to answer the question of how superintendents hire principals. This was accomplished by the evaluation of traits, skills, behaviors and responsibilities. Rammer (2007) uses the 21 characteristics cited by Waters et al. (2004) to compile data from superintendents to determine their basis for hiring principals. Rammer’s (2007) theory is simple: it is the ability of the superintendent to choose a principal that is effective because of the professional and personal traits and characteristics to lead a school to academic and cultural prosperity.

The hiring of principals for each school was based on the strengths and weaknesses of the administrator and the school needs. The chosen administrator must begin his or her cultural change through acquiring and retaining highly qualified new teachers. Wood (2005) suggested that principals in large urban school districts develop a novice teacher induction program by building culture, creating instructional leadership, coordinating and facilitating mentors for novice teachers, recruiting of highly qualified teachers, and advocating the retention of novice teachers. In many situations, principals delegate the responsibility of induction of novice teachers to department chairs or assistant principals (Wood, 2005). Johnson (2004) cited that successful novice teacher induction programs have a direct correlation to higher rates of novice teacher retention and improved new teacher performance. Principals who are non-supportive of beginning teachers and lack clear expectations for novice teachers are spring boards for new teachers leaving the profession within the first two years (Richards, 2004).
High performing principals have the ability to match new teachers with appropriate mentors. This balancing act of well-matched teachers along with the time necessary for collaboration for success contributes to student achievement (Wood, 2005). Wood (2005) suggested that effective principals model lesson plans for beginning teachers to facilitate their instructional growth. This instructional growth for the new teacher is essential to his or her ongoing staff development (Wood, 2005). An elementary school principal who participated in the Wood’s study (2005) reports visits to the classrooms of novice teachers every day to provide academic and emotional support (Wood, 2005).

The principals that participated in this study retained new teachers through:

1. Professional development workshops
2. Ensuring novice teachers have appropriate textbooks and resources
3. Curriculum and lesson plan support
4. Providing new teacher assemblies
5. Ensuring new teachers and their mentors attend staff development together
6. Facilitating monthly events for new teachers i.e. dinner and breakfast support groups
7. Feedback for novice teachers concerning their professional development training. (Wood, 2005, pp. 53-54)

Wood (2005) reported that the principals who participated in this study suggest that two of the most effective strategies that were used to produce a supportive culture for new teachers are individualized attention and personal messages specific to that teacher. Many of the teachers that were involved in this study state that their principals were the
consummate role models, and this modeling of instructional and personal behavior inspired these new teachers to new academic heights (Wood, 2005).

Wood (2005) stated that many of the new teachers in this study cited that the emotional and personal support given to them by their principal’s was the reason they did not leave the teaching profession. This study culminates with the premise that effective principals having the ability to recruit good teachers, and also having the skill set to retain said individuals, was key to novice teacher retention (Wood, 2005). Principals must find innovative strategies to help novice teachers through the hard times and also give positive reinforcement when new teachers do positive and progressive things. A study by Moolenaar, Daly, and Sleegers (2010) suggests that their empirical numbers indicate a teacher’s perception of an approachable principal lends itself to teachers developing new teaching strategies to reach all student scholars. Moolenaar et al. (2010) cited that principals whose teachers and staff members seek them out readily for professional and personal advice have a higher rating for their school’s climate and morale.

Nettles and Herrington (2007) stated that the correlation between principal behaviors and student performance is direct and linear. The notion that high performing educational leadership is paramount to improving student achievement is not controversial or new. Effective principals are only secondary to classroom instruction in the process of student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011) reported that principals who are engaged in direct conversations with underachieving students, concerning their reading scores, help facilitate improved student reading test scores the following year. The study done by Silva et al. (2011) stated that there was a significant positive student outcome on the state reading test the following year after a one on one conversation with the principal. Silva et
Silva et al. (2011) cited the potential of a principal showing direct interest in a student scholar has a profound effect on harnessing the ability of all students. Silva et al. (2011) concluded with the premise of principals creating a school culture that will level academic and social barriers for all student scholars. It is suggested that approximately 20% of principals in the United States are modeling the effective leadership that facilitates high performing schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Instructional leadership as defined by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) is *leading learning communities*. This defines a principal as a diagnostic problem solver that encourages and guides the learning environment in a progressive manner. Instructional leadership can be defined by seven principal strategies:

1. Suggestion making
2. Soliciting opinions
3. Modeling effective instruction
4. Giving feedback
5. Promoting teacher collaboration
6. Facilitating professional development
7. Praising effective teaching (Blasé & Blasé, 2000, pp. 130-141)

Education Week (1998) reported that high performing principals possess eight similar traits:

1. Clear communication of the school’s cultural and academic mission to stakeholders
2. Promoting school vision through teaching and learning strategies
3. Defining clear goals and monitoring student progress
4. Facilitating a positive standard for learning and teaching that reflect high expectations and attainable goals
5. Fostering trust and collaboration among the staff
6. Frequent classroom visits and teacher support
7. Refusing to allow ineffective teaching
8. A focus on professional development while building a high performing staff

( pp. 1-6 )

Effective schools are defined by five instructional leadership qualities of high performing principals:

1. Mapping and overseeing curriculum and instruction
2. Communication through defining the schools mission
3. Supporting teachers academically and emotionally
4. Monitoring student progress
5. Facilitating a culture of learning, (Bateman & Bateman, 2001).

A consummate responsibility of a principal is to provide a safe and organized environment that fosters effective teaching and learning (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). A principal’s behaviors and traits help contribute to a school’s safe and orderly culture. These traits are identified by consistent application of behavioral policies, defining and communicating standards for behavior, and consistent and fair discipline sharing, in which discipline is the responsibility of the entire staff (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Leithwood and Walhstrom (2008) stated “when people view leadership as part of the solution, they allow it to influence them.” (p. 455) Leithwood and Walhstrom, (2008) encourage stakeholders of each school to practice ownership and leadership of their institutions to promote progressive school reform. Leithwood and Walhstrom (2008)
contend that effective principal leadership has a tremendous positive effect on student outcomes.

The profound success of schools is linked to a clear vision and mission perpetuated by high performing principals (Cotton, 2003). The theory of transformational leadership is rooted in the ability of an effective leader to improve the overall culture and correct the organization and academic mission of his or her own school (Fullan, 2003). Nettles and Herrington (2007) suggested that an effective principal can garner support and resources from stakeholders outside the school environment to aid in student achievement. Research has reiterated that consistent community involvement is a prominent factor in schools that are high performing (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Research suggested that high performing principals use this community service to facilitate leadership among staff members, foster teen engagement, create learning flexibility and give teachers leadership autonomy (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

*Strategies for Improved School Culture*

The behavior of a principal to monitor student progress closely is a significant indicator of a school that is high performing (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). Principals who are effective attend teacher team level meetings consistently, visit classrooms daily, and are well versed in regards to student achievement in their respective schools (Elmore, 2000). Peterson and Deal (2009) believed that, through personal interactions with teachers a principal can have a profound effect on instruction and learning. The research of Peterson and Deal (2009) suggested that personal interaction with school stakeholders is the most efficient process for principals to produce a school culture that is conducive for academic and social growth. It is suggested as a best practice that principals
consistently evaluate student performance to map instructional decisions (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Research contends that high performing principals’ use of communicating student data to stakeholders, critiquing student data to make adjustments to instruction, assessing the quality of instruction, and evaluating academic achievement are monitoring strategies that work well (Peterson & Deal, 2009). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) stated principals and other school leaders who believe that the end result of education is improved student learning are focused on school issues that are relevant to student achievement. Students in progressive school cultures, in which the principal emphasizes improved student learning, will flourish.

An important factor in building school culture is the principal assuming responsibility for instructional leadership and focusing on key instructional areas in his or her school (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). It is suggested that effective principals facilitate collaborative instructional efforts of teachers (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). It has been cited that the instructional emphasis is placed on monitoring and mapping instruction, communicating precise goals of the school to stakeholders, and building a culture of improved teaching and learning (Peterson & Deal, 2009).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) suggested that a principal who communicates high expectations for his or her school will foster progressive student achievement. Principals that monitor classroom instruction and ensure that the standard of excellence is not sacrificed provide a consistent ideology to which others adhere (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) also reported that high performing principals must expect teachers and staff to analyze school circumstances before implementing a teaching strategy and demand that staff members participate in professional development. The principal must also insist that staff members prioritize, manage, and commit to improved
academic instruction. Lezotte and Snyder (2011) contend that there is a direct correlation between professional development and high performing teachers, and this effective professional development is provided by high performing principals.

Principals who are successful take this a step further by attending the professional development programs and by placing an emphasis on acquiring future professional development to stimulate a progressive school culture (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Nettles and Herrington (2007) contend that research also has been done to link a principal’s behavior and student achievement, but no specific principal professional or personal traits and behaviors have been chronicled. On the contrary (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), lead a meta-analysis of 70 leadership studies and identified 21 behaviors of principals that contribute to student achievement: (a) Culture, (b) Discipline, (c) Order, (d) Resources, (e) Curriculum knowledge, (f) Assessment, (g) Instruction, (h) Curriculum involvement, (i) Vision, (j) Focus, (k) Contingency rewards, (l) Outreach, (m) Communication, (n) Affirmation, (o) Input, (p) Positive staff relationships, (q) Role optimizer, (r) Change agent, (s) Morals and beliefs, (t) Monitoring and evaluating, (u) Flexibility, (v) Situational awareness, and (w) Intellectual enhancer.

These traits when, combined with specific intangibles of each school, provide a framework from which principals can develop strategies to enhance the culture of their schools. Said traits also act as a guide for developing improved teaching and learning skills that will benefit student outcomes. The intension of these specific principal traits provide academic enhancements that are undeniable. The assertion is that principals should possess and execute said traits for the advantage of their students and schools. Waters et al. (2003) suggest that the primary goal of a principal is to possess these traits
and strategies for school improvement and, secondly, know how and when to implement these skills effectively.

Day (2005) suggested that high performing principals have an innate ability to reform and cultivate teaching and learning practices that promote a trusting school culture and community involvement that facilitates student achievement. The importance of a principal facilitating social capital in a school is central to the ideology of schools becoming community-centered organizations (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2005). Ms. Martinez is a principal in the study conducted by Gurr et al. (2005) who is highly revered by the stakeholders in the community. She has conveyed and modeled her behaviors of high expectation and excellence in the classroom, which has been infectious for her students and staff (Ramalho, Garza, & Merchant, 2010). Principal Martinez places an emphasis on her open door policy. Her staff cited that whenever teachers need to discuss personal or professional situations she is always available and accessible (Ramalho et al., 2010).

Ms. Martinez believed that mentoring programs that she has facilitated are an incentive for recruiting and retaining teachers (Ramalho et al., 2010). Principal Martinez does not allow her staff to use the low socioeconomic status of students as a disclaimer for failure. She professes that all children can learn and become successful positive citizens of America (Ramalho et al., 2010). Principal Martinez in accordance to her ideology, will take notes during classroom visits and then allow the teacher to fill out his or her own observation form. Principal Martinez cited that teachers are much more critical of themselves than she would ever be. After the teacher finishes the observation form, Principal Martinez proceeds to have a teacher consultation with the instructor to
discuss strengths and opportunities. This collaboration leads to better teaching and learning techniques that improve instruction (Ramalho et al., 2010).

Principal Martinez suggested that an avenue to facilitate trust among students, staff, parents, and the community is to open the school for events, such as festivals and dances (Ramalho et al., 2010). One of the principals in the study also expects the seasoned teachers to help mentor novice teachers and model the ideology of teaching excellence (Ramalho et al., 2010). The principals in the Gurr et al. (2005) study are meeting state and federal annual yearly progress (AYP) with uncompromising commitment to building school cultures that are progressive, while one half of the student population is considered at risk (Ramalho et al., 2010). Also, the teachers in the study were motivated to provide instruction that placed students in a position to excel academically (Ramalho et al., 2010).

The principals in this study stressed that the expectations for all students are to score better than proficient (Ramalho et al., 2010). The role of the principal is motivator of all things academic and cultural. A principal must have the ability to convey and model high expectations for student achievement and cultural goals. Principal Martinez’s leadership style was considered hands on and personal with the students, staff, and parents. This hands on approach provided a venue to promote trust and exuberance in her school. The study concludes by inferring that the principals who participated sincerely care about their students and staff.

It is suggested that teacher morale is directly linked to student academic growth and accomplishment (Hunter-Boykin, Evans, & Evans, 1995). Job satisfaction, morale, and job performance have a direct correlation with improved teacher instruction. These factors are critical to student achievement when attempting to perpetuate high
expectations and goals for teachers (Hunter-Boykin et al., 1995). In many schools in America the authoritarian model for leadership is used to govern learning institutions (Nystrand, 2001). The authoritarian model is centered on specific boundaries in regards to communicating, job duties, and leadership (Nystrand, 2001). Research has proven that the authoritarian model of leadership is not conducive to academic or social growth of a school. In contrast the democratic model emphasizes shared decision making, collaborative teamwork, and supportive administrators (Nystrand, 2001).

Nystrand (2001) suggested the authoritarian leadership model’s single concern is the completion of the task at hand and is contrary to positive change. Nystrand (2001) stated that democratic principal leadership, on the other hand, places an emphasis on balance between accomplishing the task and the morale of staff members based on decisions made by a principal. Nystrand (2001) also contends that through the democratic leadership style students and community must have a role in the decision making for the school. According to Nystrand (2001) effective principals not only set goals and expectations high for their schools, but they also show genuine concern and compassion for their students and staff.

It is suggested that for a principal to become high performing the task and human relations must equal each other in importance (Nystrand, 2001). Nystrand (2001) believed that the obstacles to this happening are that all principals do not possess the skill set to effectively facilitate expectations and human relations through differing behaviors depending on the academic situation (Nystrand, 2001). Surprisingly, Nystrand cited that many staff members do not want to be included in all the decisions that may affect them. The suggestion from Nystrand (2001) is high performing principals in successful schools have the autonomy to hire and fire, provide clear and concise school structure and build
healthy relationships between staff members that are trusting and professional (Nystrand, 2001). Maulding et al. (2010) suggested that, although the empirical data of their study indicated no statistical correlation between emotional intelligence and school performance levels, emotional intelligence is imperative to positive leadership strategies. The progressive strategies in conjunction with the appropriate emotional intelligence are a catalyst for change that stakeholders of a school community must embrace to perpetuate the vision of the principal (Maulding et al., 2010).

Fiedler (2006) stated that principals must objectively know what their leadership strengths and deficiencies are. Principals must choose schools that fit their leadership traits from a professional and personal standpoint to cultivate a progressive school culture. Vroom, Jago, and Arthur (2007) contend that the contingency theory of leadership is applicable to the circumstances and conditions of a school. The contingency theory suggested that decision making can be shared by the principal and his or her staff (Nystrand, 2001). Delegation of duties and responsibilities is also a strategy that is suggested for implementation in contingency leadership plans in which the principal shares day to day operations of a school (Nystrand, 2001).

Vroom et al. (2007) suggest that the contingency leadership strategy is the most effective style, due to the principal adjusting and adapting decision making based on the circumstances surrounding the opportunity. There are six strategies principals must use to implement and execute the maximum goals and student achievement in accordance with the Contingency Leadership Strategies: rewarding staff members for goals attained, facilitating and fostering student achievement, active involvement in instructional supervision, clear expectations for staff members, reduction of academic obstacles and
performance-based incentives for teachers meeting and exceeding academic goals (Vroom et al., 2007).

Using these behaviors, a principal can maintain recognition as a motivator for teachers that have attained school goals. The principal can also give high performing teachers their choice of classrooms or planning periods. An effective principal must also give direction to a teacher that is struggling with a difficult situation. The effective principal is always willing to clarify school goals and objectives for staff members, which effectively facilitates improved student learning (Nystrand, 2001). High performing principals reduce academic obstacles, acquire transportation for field trips, mediate unrealistic parent requests, and support teacher proposals by attaining central office approval for said proposals (Nystrand, 2001).

Nystrand (2001) believes that staff members of a school require social acceptance and institutional affiliations that provide occupational gratification. Teachers also seek positive reinforcement of their endeavors as seen through their instruction and student outcomes. Teachers and staff members have a desire for rewards that validate their accomplishments in and outside of the classroom. Each staff member in a school must have a self-perception that as an individual he or she has the ability to fulfill goals that are set by the principal (Nystrand, 2001). The educational environment is extremely important to teachers and staff members, and the pertinent variables that must be present are a hierarchy of authority, an understanding of what expectations consist of from an academic platform, and designated curriculum-related teacher focus groups (Nystrand, 2001). Nystrand (2001) reminds us that principals must become cognizant of their own personal and professional traits as well as behaviors in respect to their leadership styles that will shape and mold the culture of the school in a positive and progressive manner.
Principals must also become mindful of what their teachers and staff members perceive of the direction toward which the school culture is moving toward. Self-assessment is paramount to the success of any principal. This self-assessment must happen frequently and consistently to ensure the appropriate quality leadership strategies and to make good decisions to improve student learning (Nystrand, 2001). Research has reiterated that effective principal leadership enhances progressive school culture that subsequently produces high performing schools (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005). It is reported that indications of effective principal leadership are a teacher’s perception of school climate and this perception is directly affected by the principal’s leadership style (Kelley et al., 2005).

Kelley et al. (2005) suggest that the leadership of a principal is the most important factor in student achievement. These authors stated that principals have to process information, implement school procedures, and format this information to fit their school’s growth (Kelley et al., 2005). It is suggested that high performing principals have the skill set to prepare for the future, as well as have plans in place to empower teachers and staff to bring the school’s vision to fruition (Kelley et al., 2005). Styron and LeMire (2009) believed that universities must develop innovative strategies to train our current and aspiring principals in the art of academically and socially reaching all student scholars. Styron and LeMire (2009) stated that many principals are not well rounded leaders until they have the ability to improve student achievement for student scholars of all demographics.

Schools that are micromanaged begin to lose a sense of purpose, as well as their progressive culture. However, charismatic principals with inadequate managerial skill sets will raise academic standards momentarily but will eventually crash and burn
It is suggested that principals can be neither one hit wonders nor have moments of brilliance. School improvement must be consistent and continual (Kelley et al., 2005). Kelley et al. (2005) suggested that the components which are essential to student achievement consist of communication, educational hierarchy, a culture of high expectations, and effective principals. Employee frustration can be minimized by a high performing principal who can facilitate change appropriately (Blake & Mouton, 1985). It is suggested that a principal’s leadership style can facilitate improvement in teaching and learning or hinder the performance of teachers and students (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006). There are variables that compliment a principal’s leadership which are maturity of followers, appropriate leadership style, staff expectations, and school goals (Hersey & Blanchard, 2007).

Hersey and Blanchard (2007) have given the academic world the situational leadership model, which is chronicled by four styles of leadership: democratic (selling), social (participating), laisses-faire (delegating), and autocratic (telling). These two researchers stress that the principal must effectively analyze his or her staff members’ strengths and weaknesses to formulate a leadership style that will maximize student achievement. Hoy and Miskel (2005) explained that school climate is “the set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviors of each school’s members” (p. 185). Kottkamp (2010) cited that a progressive social culture encompasses positive social activities, shared progressive values, and a common purpose. “School climate is the relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, which affects their behavior and is based on their collective perception of behavior in schools” (Hoy, 1990, p. 152).
A positive and progressive school culture propagates morale, staff performance, and student enrichment. School culture is regarded as one of the important variables that leads to progressive school reform (Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009). Children that do not experience a supportive school culture may never achieve proficiency or academic excellence (Rhodes et al., 2009). The culture of a school cannot be taken for granted. The culture of a school will dictate positive or negative student outcomes. Progressive school cultures filter from the top down to the bottom of hierarchical leadership. From the principal to the janitor, progressive school culture must radiate from every person in the building. Progressive culture is infectious; it will continue to propagate into a culture of excellence, becoming the norm and not the exception.

Researchers have deduced that the relationship between administrators and teachers has a direct correlation with a positive student culture (Rhodes et al., 2009). Kelley et al. (2005) believed that if teachers perceive their principal’s leadership style is not consistent, then teacher morale will suffer. Teachers and staff members yearn for a working environment that is challenging, as well as supportive. Teachers thrive in cultural environments that are conducive to positive academic growth.

According to Kelley et al. (2005), if teachers perceive that a principal’s actions and leadership style are consistent in the interactions with the school staff, said teachers are more apt to meet the administrators at a happy medium of academic sacrifice. These three researchers cited that effective administrators have the determination to discern specific opportunities that place teachers in situations of success. The principals of our schools struggle with poor communication skills, inconsistent discipline applications, and use of school activities for their own personal gratification (Kelley et al., 2005). Many principals exhibit a lack of patience, non-tactful communication, and conniving
behaviors. Consequently, in most cases, these leaders are not cognizant of their personalities, and teachers and staff members are not willing to point out these inadequacies to their leaders (Kelley et al., 2005). Principals that are effective promote trust amongst teachers and staff, promote collaborative teaching, produce an environment of honest feedback between teachers and administrators, and produce a school culture that exudes effective communication.

“Leaders must be able to correctly envision the needs of their teachers, empower them to share the vision, and enable them to create an effective school climate” (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 24). It is a principal’s moral obligation to lead teachers and staff members in a manner that is respectful yet challenging, concise yet flexible, conveying excellence but allowing time and opportunity for academic growth. Hoy et al. (2006) stated that building administrators have a significant effect on teacher morale. Leithwood and Duke (1999) suggested that the true essence of a school’s culture is the relationship between the leaders and the followers. If this relationship is healthy, the school’s culture will flourish, but if this relationship is unhealthy, school morale will be affected negatively. This symbiotic relationship between principal and teacher is the foundation that progressive school culture is based upon (Sun, 2004).

Any facet of positive teaching and learning that occurs is because the relationship between principal and staff is healthy. This healthy relationship contributes to growth and enrichment of the learning environment. Sun (2004) stated that the perceived values of the principal by his or her teachers will affect school morale positively or negatively. If these values are shared between principal and teacher, the motivating factors for progressive teaching and learning become easier to implement. Sun (2004) reported that “the issue of authenticity is involved in the multi-directional relationships among the
variables. Any inconsistency not only between actions and words, or values and actions/words, but also between values and motives-manifested by the leader can give rise to in-authenticity” (p. 26). A teacher’s inference of good leadership, which determines what a principal’s leadership style encompasses, is based upon behaviors, values, and knowing the principal as an individual personally and professionally (Sun, 2004).

Sun (2004) reported that teacher commitment is strengthened through the principal providing acknowledgment, support, academic collaboration, modeling, and professional development. Sun (2004) concluded from the research that teachers are more willing to strive for excellence in their instruction methods and learning strategies when supportive leadership is present. Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) state that leadership strategies and teacher collaboration have a direct correlation to instructional best practices in Language Arts and Mathematics. Andrejack (2007) reported that teaming was an integral component for several middle schools who received Blue Ribbon status. Andrejack (2007) stated that the principals in this study deemed teacher teaming as instrumental in the success of their schools. Andrejack’s (2007) study produced several positive results of teaming from middle schools that received Blue Ribbon status. These results were significant teacher collaboration, the formation of teacher/student/parent coalitions, and the reinforcement of academic and social goals. Andrejack (2007) found that the scholastic and social efforts, in conjunction with middle school students having their individual needs met, were the catalysts for these learning institutions receiving Blue Ribbon status.

These authors cited that building administrators have a significant effect on student success, although they believe this effect is more indirect than direct.
Supovitz et al. (2010) stated that through their research, school leadership is the most important factor second only to teaching strategies that help improve student achievement. It is stated that principals must construct a school culture that promotes teacher instruction collaboration, as well as develops trust within the school (Supovitz et al., 2010). Supovitz et al. (2010) emphasizes that the professional collaboration and hierarchal trust are essential to perpetuate a progressive school culture.

Supovitz et al. (2010) conclude that with effective principal leadership the school culture is a determinant which is a significant foreshadowing of a school’s academic success. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) report that there are private and public schools that, along with enriched progressive cultures and cooperative commitment, are the cornerstones of strong organizations. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) believe that it is the principal’s responsibility to transform school instruction, but school leadership has to be trustingly shared with everyone in the building. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) conclude from the research that improved student learning has a direct correlation with principal expectations for classroom instruction. Lyles (2009) suggested that the principals of Blue Ribbon schools use inspirational and behavioral strategies to lead their learning institutions to Blue Ribbon status. Lyles (2009) reports that no two principals have identical leadership traits, but the study provides evidence that principals of Blue Ribbon schools employ positive and progressive leadership strategies. Lyles (2009) study suggested all principals of Blue Ribbon schools use transformational leadership, and they do not engage in negative leadership strategies. Lyles (2009) concludes that principals of Blue Ribbon schools visit classrooms often, evaluate teacher instruction, provide significant feedback for teachers, define and communicate shared goals and provide specific and relevant professional development for teachers and staff.
Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) believe that the stimulus for improved student achievement is the act of principals who seek out the input of their teachers and involve staff members in planning and implementing instructional ideas. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) contend that school culture not only affects student achievement, but also the way teachers greet students, conduct cafeteria duty and collaborate as a professional teams with colleagues. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) cited that principals and their staff, in order to improve school culture, must support organizational goals, continue to foster cultural change, promote by-in from teachers, staff and students, and consistently reevaluate goals and objectives for student cultural improvement.

It is reported that social interactions dictate the culture and academic expectations of a school through social setting development (Peterson & Deal, 2009). Teachers and staff members of all schools are influenced by both negative and positive work place cultures (Adathe & Heinecke, 2005). Teachers that officially or unofficially accept leadership responsibilities in their schools often do so because of a professional obligation for the welfare of students (Roby, 2011). The culture of a school is developed through involved ownership that is the responsibility of all stakeholders in order to maintain a consistent and positive school culture (Brinton, 2007). Educational stakeholders must be kept abreast of alterations to a school’s culture to help facilitate the ongoing student achievement. It is imperative that principals communicate well with stakeholders to promote a trusting relationship.

Alston (2004) believed that all stakeholders must have input in changing a school’s culture as well as support for said cultural change from administrators. Alston (2004) stated that to promote cultural sustenance leaders within the school must understand and model the cultural goals expected. School leaders are the first line of
defense in planning, executing, and analyzing whether the cultural reform taking place in the school is efficient and effective. Principals and school leaders have to ensure that the cultural transition is as uneventful as possible. This cultural transition should have as few obstacles as possible to ensure dedicated concentration on implemented cultural changes.

Brown (2004) cited the following variables for school cultural improvement:

1. A progressive vision and determined mission
2. A curriculum that mirrors this vision and mission
3. Allotted time for student and teacher planning and development
4. Trusting collaborative relationships among administrators, staff, teachers, and students
5. Trust that is backed and supported by principals
6. Decisions that are based on student data analysis. (p. 4)

Teachers who are satisfied with the professional working culture of a school are not often absent and show dedicated commitment to student outcomes. Students who are engaged in a positive and actively involved school culture are well behaved and productive children (Bryk, 2008). McLaughlin (2001) believed that, within the four walls of a school, the premise of cultural commitment, passion, and cohesiveness are paramount to a focused cultural learning environment that promotes academic excellence. The belief that how well a school performs academically is based upon how strong the weave of progressive culture is woven throughout the fabric of each school (Waters et al., 2004). Celebrations and traditions are the cornerstones of progressive schools that possess deep rooted positive culture. Hargreaves (2010) stated that teachers are happier when the culture of a school is clear and concise. The commitment to progressive cultural
longevity by principals is paramount to sustained maintenance and growth of the school’s academic and cultural vision.

This clear cultural vision allows the teacher to focus on instructional improvements and student learning enhancements. Fullan (2010) stated that re-culturing of a school starts with the principal, and the determination to change the status quo culture presently used. Fullan (2010) believed that a principal must remain open minded to cultural change and embrace collaborative efforts of staff members, which will sustain an environment of learning. Roby (2011) reports that the number of years for which a teacher is employed has little to do with how a school’s culture is rated. The variables that hinder progressive school culture as noted by Roby (2011) are obstacles to constructing and maintaining collaborative teacher groups, teacher isolation, non-leadership roles for teachers, lack of support from principals, and non-trusting relationships between staff members and administrators.

Roby (2011) believed that teacher leaders should have the autonomy to conduct a school wide audit to determine the specific areas of need to be addressed culturally. Roby (2011) contends that reciprocal communication between teachers and administrators is the key that opens the door to make positive changes in a school’s culture. Fullan and St. Germain (2006) state that teachers have the profound ability to affect school culture through committed collaborative communication between teachers and administrators for the improvement of student learning. Maehr and Braskamp (1986) suggested that organizational commitment and satisfaction are the catalysts for progressive cultural change. This change requires positive relationships between stakeholders and also a personal investment from all entities. Angelucci (2008) reported that significant and relevant relationships that are developed between schools and families of students are the
cornerstones of sustained and continual student achievement. This sustained success produced Blue Ribbon status for several rural elementary schools. Angelucci’s (2008) study produced four progressive consequences of building a quality relationship between schools and parents. These four strategies are catalysts for success at Blue Ribbon elementary schools: improved communication, promoting trust, commitment from teachers and staff, and visibility of teachers and principals in the school as well as the community.

Roby (2011) concludes that formal and informal leaders in a school can promote a positive cultural change through:

1. Sincere collaborative efforts among colleagues
2. The ability to agree to disagree
3. Finding opportunities and then developing solutions
4. Working toward solutions that are student-centered
5. Developing committed relationships with stakeholders
6. Developing a community of learners
7. Promoting proactive solutions
8. Seeking input from all stakeholders for decision making
9. Professionalism that is consistently emphasized. (p. 788)

Fulllan (2007) believed that school culture is the expectations and beliefs that dictate how a school performs. Fulllan (2007) also stated that public school stakeholders should hold schools accountable for the use of progressive ideologies for teaching, learning, and student outcomes, which are parallel with a school culture that represents the community values. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) cited that the results of cultural change are steeped in professional and social interactions between teachers through
shared decision making and collaborative efforts. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) report that collaborative teamwork among principals and staff members help to generate many solutions to cultural problems from which a school is suffering.

These solutions, when implemented, solidify the positive school culture of trust and professionalism among the stakeholders. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) state that the first tool used in Comprehensive School Reforms (CSR) is to change the culture of a school. The initial cultural change starts with determining which groups of students are not succeeding academically and then find solutions to help improve learning for said students. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) believe that a CSR team should collaborate with stakeholders to improve instruction and curriculum that will meet or exceed the needs of all students. This information is collected by the CSR team and subsequently, a plan is developed to improve teacher instruction and student learning.

The authors state that this plan is discussed with the administrators and staff for responses and revisions. This process culminates with professional development that encompasses differentiated instruction, collaborative planning and teaching, and essential learning strategies. These CSR teams and similar entities are responsible for the collaborative school cultural reformation in many districts in America (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Waldron and McLeskey (2010) reported that the catalyst for improved school culture is effective professional development programs that are implemented in a school to support the changes manifested through the work of the CSR team. Matsumura, Sartoris, Bickel, & Garnier (2009) believed that the use of context-focused coaching (CFC) for teacher professional development can be instrumental in collaborative instruction that will improve the quality of teaching. Matsumura et al. (2009) stated that the principals in the study who allowed the coaches to personalize instructional strategies
for individual teachers; helped enhance the teacher-coach relationship. Matsumura’s et al. (2009) research also indicated that active participation by the principal in conjunction with the coaching professional development was a key element in the success of the CFC program.

The sustenance of school culture reform is imbedded in the implementation of high standard professional development that promotes the best practices theories amongst administrators and school staff. Research has shown that improved professional development has a profound effect on enhancing teacher instruction and producing consistent student learning (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Professional development should encompass teachers collaborating in all aspects of curriculum, professional development programs and participating as facilitators of said programs. These professional development programs must seek to provide:

1. Clear and concise academic material
2. Content knowledge and best instructional practices
3. Complete teacher “buy in” of best practices
4. Consistent, academic driven and maintenance of programs
5. Consistent and constant evaluation of teacher instruction
6. Administrators that promote and perpetuate effective professional development programs. (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010, p. 64)

Richardson (2003) highlights the fact that many teachers in the United States have isolated themselves academically and professionally, which has led to a disconnect in collaborative school culture. The engine that makes this Cultural Revolution run is the principal maintaining an active role in the implementation and administration of effective professional development. The principal must be willing to take risks and think outside of
the box as well as insist that teachers have the autonomy to adjust and tweak new programs implemented in his or her classrooms for the betterment of students (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Counselors, school psychologist, and all school staff in conjunction with the principal must accept leadership roles that compliment cultural changes for each school. Scribner (2007) reminds us that schools which are successful in improving school culture do not rely on one individual to lead, but rather involve all stakeholders in academic and social endeavors. The principal’s ability to understand that sharing leadership responsibilities with school staff members builds the trust factor that empowers the stakeholders to contribute toward significant decision making (Waldron & McLeskey, 2007). The result of this team building exercise is a buy in for cultural change that will equate to improved student outcomes.

The most imperative variable to developing a collaborative culture is the principal understanding and knowing exactly what a collaborative culture looks, walks, and smells like (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). A reoccurring theme that arises from the research compiled over the last decade is that principal modeling of a progressive culture and supporting this positive school culture is essential to cultural growth. Subsequently, the principal will have to become mindful of and address issues and opportunities that will exist during the cultural reformation (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Hoppey (2006) suggested that the principal reinforces this cultural reformation to ensure cohesiveness and coherence for the cultural changes to actually facilitate the improvements to student learning by maintaining stakeholder agreements to maintain cultural goals. Fullan (2007) reports schools that have successfully improved his or her cultures choose the most important issues for their respective schools and implement
solutions for cultural change. The choices of which school cultural issues that need immediate attention must begin with input from all stakeholders. These choices will ultimately determine if cultural reform is prosperous or a failure. It is the principal’s responsibility to hold teachers and staff members accountable for cultural goals and how these goals are implemented and executed (Hoppey, 2006).

Roberson (2011) suggested that many schools have used the default button for school culture. The school culture default is the process of doing what you have always done, which adds to a disconnect between what is learned in school and real world issues. Roberson (2011) stated that school culture should follow four rules:

1. Education should mirror the demands of the workplace
2. Student achievement is the primary goal of schools
3. Student outcomes should represent what is expected in the workplace
4. A holistic approach to teaching and learning which produces well rounded students. (pp. 890-899)

Roberson (2011) believed that public schools are restricted by high stakes testing and the culture of learning for said schools are narrow and limited to core curriculum. Roberson (2011) argues that many schools in the United States are classroom-centered which limits student learning to very narrow curriculum.

This broad curriculum does not prepare students for today’s evolving workplace. Roberson (2011) also argues that the default culture of many schools is restricted by teacher-centered classrooms that are sterile and un-engaging. These teacher-centered classrooms focus on test taking outcomes instead of a holistic cultural approach to student enrichment. Roberson (2011) believed that classrooms should become student-centered and use diverse learning strategies to improve student outcomes.
The default culture is parallel to a manufacturing assembly line, creating cookie cutter students instead of scholars who are critically thinking global citizens. Roberson (2011) believed that students must resemble skilled craftsmen and not assembly line learners. Roberson (2011) contended that the assembly line learning effect has become detrimental to, at risk students who eventually disconnect from the school culture and this culminated with students becoming drop outs. Roberson (2011) stated that a culture of teaching to the middle of the bell curve with little attention afforded to the, at risk students or the over achievers is detrimental to the academic growth of all students. Sparks (2011) states that through the implementation of high stakes testing student outcomes have been changed very little if at all. Sparks (2011) contended that high stakes testing is counterproductive to student learning. Sparks (2011) believed that the high stakes assessments are not broad enough to determine true academic progress. Sparks (2011) states that test validity is compromised because teachers are teaching to the test and not focused on student learning. Educators are required to ensure that all children are afforded the opportunity to maximize his or her academic and social growth in order to prepare scholars for the current job market.

Roberson (2011) suggested that stakeholders in education must stay abreast of changes in the workplace and ensure that what is being taught is applicable to students becoming successful after graduating high school. Dewey (2008) believed that educators should evaluate society periodically to determine evolutionary changes in the workplace that would enhance teacher instruction. This teacher instruction enhancement would prepare students for the present and future workplace.

Dewey (2008) suggested that the workplace should help shape and mold educational practices to meet the demand of industry. Student learning must become the
main focus of educators. Also, education must mirror the job market and require that
students will receive instruction that is holistic in nature and relevant to the twenty first
century. Roberson (2011) contended that the academic chasm is larger than ever between
what is taught in school and what industry is looking for in potential employees. A recent
survey of executives and managers affiliated with the American Management Association
(AMA) consider these variables important to industry success and workplace readiness:

1. Effective communication—the ability to receive and disseminate ideas and
   concepts in oral and written scenarios
2. Problem solving and critical thinking—the ability to solve problems, take
   appropriate actions and making good decisions
3. Innovation and creativity—the ability to discern what is needed and how to
   implement and execute a solution
4. Team building and collaborative groups—the ability to work with groups that
   have opposing ideas, groups that are diverse and the ability to work efficiently
   and effectively with others. (pp. 8-14)

The Secretaries Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Report (SCANS) cited
that the fundamental skills needed by students to become successful in the job market
are:

1. Thinking skills: the ability to reason, learn, think creatively, problem solving
   and decision making
2. Basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics
3. Personal qualities: social skills, responsibility, self-motivating and self-
   confidence. (1990, pp. 8-14)
In accordance with The Secretaries Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Report (1990) (SCANS) has documented skills that will determine what students need to become successful in the workplace:

1. Interpersonal skills, teamwork, and facilitating workplace interactions
2. Workplace etiquette; productive, and efficient workers
3. Information; evaluation of data, communication, interpretation and organization information
4. Technology; tools that apply to technology
5. Systems; organizational, technological and social systems with an understanding of said systems. (pp. 8-14)

The Partnership for the 21st Century Skills (2009) reported that educators should implement the teaching and learning of finances, commerce, business, entrepreneurial literacy, health literacy, environmental literacy, and global awareness in conjunction with core curriculum. The importance of curriculum mirroring industry is monumental in the preparation of students joining the workforce with proficient job skills. These market place skill sets will ease the transition for students into real world occupational opportunities. The culture of any school should resemble a progressive world that is engaging, dynamic, flexible, and trusting which seeks to enhance student enrichment. Roberson (2011) believed that student-centered learning must involve real world problem solving, relevant exploration and unrestrained curiosity to produce critically thinking global citizens.

Roberson (2011) stated that student outcomes are measured by real world scenarios and how well students perform in the job market after leaving high school, not by passing or failing a high stakes test. Prensky (2010) is a proponent for cultural change
through instructional practices. Prensky has chronicled what students want from educators:

1. Students want to decide for themselves their own career paths
2. Students want shared decision making in their futures
3. Students do not want to be lectured to
4. Students want respect and trust
5. Students want the latest and greatest technologies to use
6. Students want to work in collaborative groups
7. Students want peer recognition and to share their thoughts
8. Students want cooperative competition
9. Students want a real world education. (pp. 2-3)

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) reiterate the fact that professional growth and shared decision making by principals and staff members sustain a collaborative school culture. School cultures that use professional development in a teacher interactive manner that places an emphasis on practical learning which is more effective than traditional in-service workshops (Barth, 2006). It is suggested that in the twenty first century principals and teachers reevaluate his or her professional relationships and strive for a team work based culture that empowers and supports the new standards of commitment to student learning (Lieberman, Saxl, & Theles, 2004).

The study of primary motivators written by Leonard and Leonard (1999) identify the primary source of implementing new programs for cultural change are principals. Principals are the cultural change facilitators that analyze, empower and support all efforts to execute plans for cultural change and maintenance of said changes. Seventeen of the nineteen schools in this study identified the principal as the catalyst for supportive
instructional leadership (Leonard & Leonard, 1999). Leonard and Leonard (1999) found that assistant principals were apt to maintain connected professional relationships with teachers and staff members. Assistant principals officially and unofficially are building administrators who have the responsibility of promoting team building and respect in a schools culture.

Leonard and Leonard (1999) state that in many school districts; master teachers, coordinating teachers and department leaders have taken on leadership roles that were reserved in years past for assistant principals. This shared collaborative leadership culture has developed and maintained trusting collegiate environments.

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) reported that two million teachers over the next decade will be hired in American to accommodate for student enrollment numbers that are increasing steadily. This statistic is an ominous fact because the annual cost to replace high quality teachers is an enormous burden on a school district’s budget. The solution is to challenge principals to recruit and retain quality teachers (Minarik, Thorton, & Perreault, 2003).

Progressive culture cannot be attained if collegiately there is not a trusting relationship between all stakeholders. The vision of the school has to be shared and modeled by all stakeholders to create the depth of permeation for positive cultural growth. Minarik et al. (2003) reports those teachers who have left the education profession prematurely because of:

1. Lack of principal support
2. Inadequate teacher induction programs
3. Lack of collaboration and feelings of isolation
4. Lack of professional development and teacher preparation programs
5. No acknowledgements or rewards for a job well done

6. Unsafe working environments

7. Student motivating and discipline issues. (p. 228)

Leonard and Leonard (1999) report that a principal’s failure to address internal opportunities facing their schools and disregard for the development of a collaborative learning culture ultimately does not ensure the retention of quality teachers.

Summary

The morale obligation of a principal to improve themselves is a conscious decision that is based upon the willingness to enhance the lives of the student scholars in which they are responsible for. Our schools are filled with student scholars who need principals to sincerely evaluate their academic and social strategies for school culture improvements. The principal is the leader of our schools, the alpha and omega of the educational domain. The student scholars, community, country and world are depending and expecting educators to develop critically thinking global citizens that have skill sets for our student scholars to enter the current and future job market.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intension of the research is to chronicle professional, personal strategies, and attributes of principals that governed Blue Ribbon schools. If these personal, professional strategies and attributes prove to exist among Blue Ribbon school principals, the research intends to chronicle the specific professional and personal strategies and attributes for current and aspiring administrators to use as a template for success. The research methodology used a non-experimental quantitative approach. Survey design instruments were used to answer the research questions of what professional, personal strategies, and attributes principals at Blue Ribbon schools use to cultivate a progressive culture.

Research Design

The sample of teachers and administrators consisted of 11 Mississippi Gulf Coast Blue Ribbon Schools. Approximately five hundred teachers/counselors and twenty principals/assistant principals participated in the study. A non-random sampling of Mississippi Gulf Coast Blue Ribbon Schools participated in this study. These Blue Ribbon schools represented a broad socioeconomic demographic. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) self/observer thirty item questionnaire was created by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner (2003). It was administered to teachers and administrators of the selected 11 Blue Ribbon schools. In conjunction, a selected sub group (39 questions) of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire was administered to the teachers of these designated Blue Ribbon schools. Each of the questionnaires contained demographic information, as well as, teachers and principals perceptions of school morale, and the personal and professional academic and social strategies of participating principals.
Participants

Eleven Blue Ribbon schools were studied. The participants that filled out questionnaires were the principal, assistant principals, teachers and staff members. Questionnaires were delivered personally to the Blue Ribbon schools. These surveys were picked up five days after distribution to the selected schools. The participants included all stakeholders that fell within the influence of the principal. There are 11 schools on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that have been recipients of the Blue Ribbon school certification within the last six years.

The intention was to survey teachers and staff members who were stakeholders at each school when Blue Ribbon status was awarded. It was also intended to survey the principals who were presiding over each school when the Blue Ribbon award was received. If the principals were not currently in a leadership capacity, I made a concerted effort to locate them and conduct this survey.

Instrumentation

The demographic data was collected from each questionnaire to determine the expertise and proficiency of each participant. The demographic section of each questionnaire was researcher-designed. The demographic portion of the instrument categorized the participants experience, instructional environment and curriculum demographics. The Leadership Practices Inventory self/observer instrument provided quantitative data which aided in the identification of the principal’s personal and professional leadership strategies that have propelled schools to receive Blue Ribbon status. The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) provided data to analyze and interpret teacher morale.
The use of the Leadership Practices Inventory was granted by its creators, Kouzes and Posner (2003) as noted in Appendix F. For the purposes of this study; factor one (Self- Cronbach’s Alpha- .77, Observer- Cronbach’s Alpha- .88), factor two (Self- Cronbach’s Alpha- .87, Observer- Cronbach’s Alpha- .92), factor three (Self- Cronbach’s Alpha- .80, Observer- Cronbach’s Alpha- .89), factor four (Self- Cronbach’s Alpha- .75, Observer- Cronbach’s Alpha- .88) and factor five (Self- Cronbach’s Alpha- .87, Observer- Cronbach’s Alpha- .92) of the Leadership Practices Inventory were used. The sequence of questions will remain in their original order and numbers for the purposes of the study.

Permission to use the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire in this study was granted as noted in Appendix H. For the purposes of this study; only factor one (Cronbach’s Alpha-.96), factor three (Cronbach’s Alpha-.94), and factor six (Cronbach’s Alpha-.73) from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire was redesigned in a manner that seven subscales were omitted. The sequence of questions remained in their original order, but were renumbered for the purposes of the study.
Table 1

*Purdue Teacher Opinionaire Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alphas</th>
<th>Correlation Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher Rapport with Principal</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 33, 38, 41, 43, 44, 61, 62, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 92, 93, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rapport among Teachers</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>18, 22, 23, 28, 48, 52, 53, 54, 55, 77, 80, 84, 87, 89, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Instructional Issues</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>17, 20, 25, 79, 88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Leadership Practices Inventory Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha’s</th>
<th>Correlating Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures

The data was compiled through the analysis of surveys collected at each school. Raters had concise instruction for using the numeric quantities in the Likert scale of the LPI and PTO to rate a principal’s strategies and behaviors as well as school culture. The Likert scale consisted of five clear and concise categories to choose from. The participants were instructed that all surveys were anonymous, but demographic information was collected on each staff member for research purposes only. Once completed, the questionnaires ratings were compiled for each school and then the results of the study were be analyzed through the use of statistical analysis. The results are available to share with any of the participants on upon their request. There are 11 schools on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that have been recipients of the Blue Ribbon school certification during the last six years that were gracious participants in this study.

It was the intention to survey teachers and staff members who were stakeholders at each school when Blue Ribbon status was awarded. It was also the intention to survey the principals who were presiding over each school when the Blue Ribbon award was received. If the principals were not currently in a leadership capacity, I made a concerted effort to locate them and conduct this survey.

Limitations

The initial limitation of this study was the actual number of Blue Ribbon schools available for research on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. A second limitation to internal validity was that the respondents may overstate the effectiveness of their principal because of fear, peer pressure or perceived positive recognition for their individual school. The third limitation to internal validity involved the percentage of participants that return completed surveys.
Data Analysis

Various statistical testing was implemented to interpret the data to evaluate conclusive statistical outcomes. The descriptive data encompassed the use of standard deviations, frequencies, and means to calculate demographic responses by principal and teacher participants. Multiple regression was employed to predict the identifying qualities of the selected variables. The alpha value will be set at .05 for the purposes of this study.

Research Questions

1. Do principals at Blue Ribbon schools use personal and professional leadership strategies to improve school culture?
2. Are principals at Blue Ribbon schools supportive of their teachers and staff?
3. Is teacher and staff morale high in Blue Ribbon schools?
4. Is the culture at Blue Ribbon schools progressive?

Hypotheses

H_1 There is a correlation between teacher rapport with the principal and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart.

H_2 There is a correlation between rapport among teachers and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart.

H_3 There is a correlation between instructional issues and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart.
Summary

Principals who are presiding over schools that have received a Blue Ribbon certification have evidently used specific professional, personal strategies, and behaviors to enhance the academic and social culture of their schools. The intention of this research was to chronicle the professional and personal strategies and behaviors of principals, who are leaders of Blue Ribbon schools. If a set of determined traits exists, the benefit of this study will be the creation of a template listing principal strategies and behaviors for current or aspiring administrators to use as a guide for improved teaching and learning techniques. The ultimate winners are the students, who are transformed into scholars because of the execution of improved principal strategies in schools across the country.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine if a significant correlation exists between teacher rapport with the principal/rapport among teachers/instructional issues and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart. The purpose of the study was to chronicle the specific professional and personal strategies of successful principals, to use as a template for leadership enrichment of current and aspiring administrators. The study identifies if a correlation exists between a principal’s behavioral leadership and teacher rapport with the principal/rapport amongst teachers and instructional issues. This collaborative effort between principal and teacher culminates in improved school culture, increased teacher morale, and student academic success.

Description of Study Participants

Table 3 is the compiled descriptive demographic data of the study respondents. Respondents are as follows; elementary/middle/high school teachers, counselors, and staff members of Mississippi Gulf Coast Schools. Seven Mississippi Gulf Coast school districts participated in the study. Eight of the eleven principals presiding over Blue Ribbon certified schools were asked to participate in the study. The assistant principals who were present during the year of Blue Ribbon certification were also surveyed. Also, teachers, counselors, and staff members of 11 Mississippi Gulf Coast Blue Ribbon schools were asked to participate in this research. Of the eight principals, seven principals, 87.50%, agreed to participate in the study by returning their questionnaires. Of the seven assistant principals, five assistant principals, 71.40%, agreed to participate
in the study by returning their questionnaires. Of the 11 Blue Ribbon certified schools in the study; 263 teachers, counselors and staff members were willing participants after returning their questionnaires. The research methodology allowed teachers, counselors, librarians, and career advisors to participate as respondents in the study. All respondents work for the principal who presided over their schools during Blue Ribbon certification.

The Blue Ribbon principal respondents were comprised of 57.20% female and 42.80% male. The Blue Ribbon assistant principal respondents were comprised of 60.00% male and 40.00% female. On the basis of years of experience, 66.7% of administrative respondents have 15 years or more in the teaching profession. Subsequently, 33.3% of administrative respondents have five to 10 years of experience. The percentage of administrative respondents that are more than 50 years old are 58.3%. The remaining administrators age percentages are; 33.3% are 41-50 years old, and 8.3% are 31-40 years old. The racial demographic of administrative respondents are 91.7% White and 8.3% Black. All administrators were present for Blue Ribbon certification of their schools.

The school staff member respondent’s gender categories are comprised of 84.00% female and 15.6% male. On the basis of years of experience, 41.4% of staff member respondents have more than 15 years. The remaining years of experience categories for staff members are; 25.5% have five-10 years of experience, 18.6% have 11-15 years of experience, and 14.4% have five years or less experience. The percentage of staff members who are between the ages of 41-50 years old are 31.9%. The remaining age categories for staff member respondents are; 30.0% older than 50, 25.9% between the ages of 31-40, 12.2% between the ages of 21-30. The racial demographic of the staff member respondents are as follows; 91.6% White, 6.8% Black, .8% Asian, and .8%
Other. The staff member respondent roles are as follows; 92.8% are teachers, 3.4% are counselors, and 3.8% are career specialists and librarians. The predominate percentage of grade levels taught by respondent's are 9-12 grade at 57.8%. The remaining percentages of grade levels taught by teachers are; K-6 at 28.9%, and 7-8 at 12.2%. The predominate class size of teacher respondents is 21-25 students representing 49.0%. The remaining percentages of class size for teacher respondents are; more than 25 students at 17.9%, 16-20 students at 16.0%, 11-15 students at 14.1%. Of the staff respondents, 74.9% were active participants in their schools receiving Blue Ribbon certification. The remaining 25.1% of staff members respondents work at Blue Ribbon certified schools under the supervision of the presiding principal, who was instrumental in the receipt of Blue Ribbon certification.

Table 3

*Population Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>LPI-Self (Principal)</th>
<th>LPI/PTO Observer (Teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>LPI-Self (Principal)</th>
<th>LPI/PTO Observer (Teacher)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>41.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
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<td>&gt;50</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>Native American</td>
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Table 3 (continued).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>LPI-Self (Principal)</th>
<th>LPI/PTO Observer (Teacher)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>49.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Grade Level Taught</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Role</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Counselor</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>At School When Blue Ribbon Awarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>.4</td>
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</table>
Principal and assistant principal respondents rated their primary leadership traits by using the Leadership Practices Inventory Self (principal). Each administrative respondent rated their primary leadership traits using a Likert rating system that is employed by the Leadership Practices Inventory questionnaire (self-principal). The LPI questionnaire uses a 1 through 10 scale, 10 representing the highest effective leadership traits and 1 representing the lowest leadership traits. The LPI (self) questionnaire is divided into five distinct leadership categories as noted in Table 4. The descriptive data suggests that principals rated themselves slightly higher than did their staff members, according to the 5 subscales of the LPI instrument. The principal respondents rated themselves on average, 8.94 to 9.32, on the five subscales of the LPI instrument (see Table 4). Conversely, staff member respondents rated their principal’s primary leadership traits through the use of the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (staff member). The questionnaires’ for the LPI (self) and LPI (observer) are identical in Likert scale and questions with the exception of I used at the beginning of each question on the LPI (self) instrument. According to the descriptive data, the staff member respondent’s ratings of their principal’s primary leadership traits on average ranged, 8.36 to 8.75, on the 5 subscales of the LPI instrument (see Table 5).
Table 4

*Descriptive: Leadership Practices Inventory – Self (Principal) N=12*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>9.32</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Descriptive: Leadership Practices Inventory – Observer (Teacher) N=263*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.54</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire was used as an instrument for staff/teacher respondents to rate teacher morale (see Table 6). The abbreviated version of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire consists of three subscales; teacher rapport with principal, rapport
among teachers, and instructional issues. The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire is based on a Likert scale, 1 through 4; 1 = disagree, 2 = probably disagree, 3 = probably agree, and 4 = agree. The descriptive data from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire respondents, rate teacher rapport with the principal 3.36, rapport among teachers 3.46, and instructional issues 3.48. The results of the descriptive statistics indicate that teacher morale for each subscale of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire reveals high teacher morale for each of the selected factors.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Purdue Teacher Opinionaire (Teacher) N=263

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapport with Principal</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport among Teachers</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Issues</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests of Hypotheses

To test the results of Hypotheses one, two, and three a Pearson Correlation was used to determine if a correlation exists between the variables. Also, multiple regression was used to test Hypotheses one, two, and three to determine if predictive qualities exists for the selected variables. The results of the study met the $p=.05$ significance level to qualify the statistical results as significant in the research.
Teacher Morale and Principal Leadership Traits

There is a correlation between teacher rapport with the principal and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Hypothesis one was measured by a Pearson correlation and a strong linear positive association was determined between the subscale (teacher rapport with principal) of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire and the five subscales of the Leadership Practices Inventory (Observer) principal traits (see Table 7). A Pearson correlation was used to measure Hypothesis two, which revealed a moderate positive association between the subscale (rapport among teachers) of the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) (see Table 7). Hypothesis three, as tested by a Pearson correlation, yielded a moderate positive association between the subscale (instructional issues) of the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) (see Table 7).

Table 7

*Pearson Correlation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Trait</th>
<th>Teacher Rapport with Principal</th>
<th>Rapport Among Teachers</th>
<th>Instructional Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>.784</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* All correlations are p<.001
There is a correlation between teacher rapport with the principal and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Multiple regression was used to measure Hypothesis one; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between teacher rapport with the principal as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The two subscales of the LPI that were most significant as revealed by multiple regression were; enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. The multiple regression was significant at $F(5,257)=237.164$, $p<.001$, $r^2 = .822$; an analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis (see Table 8). The respondent’s strongly agree that the principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. Enabling others to act and encouraging the heart, as reported by the respondents, have a significant correlation with teacher rapport with the principal.

There is a correlation between rapport among teachers and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Multiple regression was used to measure Hypothesis two; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between rapport among teachers as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction with the LPI, was significant as revealed by multiple regression. The multiple regression was significant at $F(5,257)=10.102$, $p<.001$, $r^2 = .164$; an analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis (see Table 9). The respondent’s agree that the combination of principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the
heart. The respondent’s agree that the combination of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, encouraging the heart have a significant correlation with rapport among teachers.

There is a correlation between instructional issues and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Multiple regression was used to measure Hypothesis three; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between instructional issues as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction with the LPI, was significant as revealed by multiple regression. The multiple regression was significant at $F(5,257)=21.169, p<.001, r^2 = .292$; an analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis (see Table 10). The respondent’s agree that the combination of principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. The respondent’s agree that the combination of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart have a significant correlation with instructional issues.
Table 8

*Teacher Rapport with Principal (Multiple Regression)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.250</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.979</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.941</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.356</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>8.271</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>4.599</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

*Rapport Among Teachers (Multiple Regression)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.158</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>-.467</td>
<td>.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging the Heart</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>1.781</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

*Instructional Issues*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>-.090</td>
<td>-.262</td>
<td>-1.556</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>1.746</td>
<td>.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Summary*

The questionnaires’ of 263 teachers/staff members and 12 principals overwhelmingly yielded results that, *fail to reject*, the three hypotheses. The respondents strongly agree that good leadership matters as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (Observer) and the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire. The statistical data corroborates that there is a strong correlation between the behavioral practices of a Blue Ribbon certified principal and their rapport with the teachers and staff members that they lead. The descriptive statistics also reveal a significant correlation between the behavioral practices of a Blue Ribbon certified principal and the rapport among teachers and instructional issues. One of the significant statistical factors of the study is that the principals rated their leadership traits high, but more importantly their teachers and staff
members agreed that the leadership they received from these principals was excellent, as reported by the high mean scores of the subscales of the LPI (Observer) and the PTO.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary goal of this study was to confirm that a correlation exists between personal and professional behaviors of the principals who have presided over Blue Ribbon certified schools and teacher morale. The behaviors of the principals ultimately culminated in student success and the receipt of Blue Ribbon certification. These principal behaviors are deemed as instrumental in the building of a progressive school culture that reflects high expectations, teamwork, teacher/principal collaboration, trust, respect, and student scholar achievement. Supovitz et al. (2010) emphasizes that the professional collaboration and hierarchal trust are essential to perpetuate a progressive school culture. A progressive school culture is the catalyst for sustainable student achievement and positive longevity of a school’s identity. The research suggests that principals must maintain positive and respectful relationships with teachers and staff members to create and build upon a school culture that is steeped in high expectations, but also reflects tremendous respect for teacher input and collaboration. The morale of teachers is the cornerstone of improved teaching techniques and student success. Principal leadership is responsible for creating a progressive climate for teacher morale to thrive and then subsequently maintaining that positive school culture.

Leadership is insignificant in the absence of trust. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) believe that it is the principal’s responsibility to transform teacher instruction, but school leadership has to be trustingly shared with everyone in the school. The teachers and staff members should feel connected to their administrators and form a bond that results in academic and cultural strengthening of the goals of all secondary school stakeholders.
The level of communication between principal and staff is imperative for sustained growth of school culture. The staff members must have open communication between the principal and themselves to maintain academic continuity, which subsequently reinforces school goals.

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) created by Kouzes and Posner (2003) was used as the instrument to determine principal leadership practices and traits. The creators of this instrument intended their questionnaire to rate what subordinates perceived to be their leader’s practices and traits. The five subscales that are employed by Kouzes and Posner within the LPI questionnaire were used to categorize behaviors of effective leaders. The subscales used as catalysts for organizational success are:

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, pp.3-6)

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) was created by Bently and Rempel (1980). The copyright for the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire has expired and is deemed public domain, but permission to use this instrument was still obtained. This instrument was designed to rate teacher morale. Bently and Rempel intended for their instrument to reflect if teacher morale had a correlation with several factors. For the purposes of this study, three subscales from the original PTO were employed to determine the morale of teachers:

1. Teacher Rapport with Principal
2. Rapport among Teachers

3. Instructional Issues

Summary of Procedures

The superintendents of the seven school districts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast granted permission to conduct the study on Blue Ribbon schools in their district.

Subsequently, the principals of the Blue Ribbon schools were contacted. The principals agreed to participate in the study, thereafter, the Leadership Practices Inventory (self and observer) and the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire were delivered to each Blue Ribbon school. Upon delivery, the presiding administrator distributed the questionnaires to teachers and staff members. The questionnaires were collected and placed in a secure box in the school office. The questionnaires were retrieved one week later and the surveys were numerically coded for statistical analysis. The questionnaires were then analyzed and the data tested to determine the results of the three hypotheses.

Summary of Major Findings

The intention of the research was to study the behaviors of principals who have received Blue Ribbon certification and how these behaviors affect teacher morale which culminates in student achievement. The hypotheses that were tested are as follows:

There is a correlation between teacher rapport with the principal and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

Results: Multiple regression was used to measure hypothesis one; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between teacher rapport with the principal, as measured by the PTO, and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The two subscales of the LPI that were most significant as
revealed by multiple regression were; enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. An analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis. The respondent’s strongly agree that the principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. Enabling others to act and encouraging the heart, as reported by the respondents, have a significant correlation with teacher rapport with the principal. The aforementioned results clearly answer, yes, to the four research questions posed by the study.

There is a correlation between rapport among teachers and a principal modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

Results: Multiple regression was used to measure Hypothesis two; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between rapport among teachers, as measured by the PTO, and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction with one another of the LPI, was significant as revealed by multiple regression. An analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis. The respondent’s agree that the combination of principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. The respondent’s agree that the combination of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart have a significant correlation with rapport among teachers. The aforementioned results clearly answer, yes, to the four research questions posed by the study.
There is a correlation between Instructional issues and a principal modeling the way, inspires a shared vision, challenges the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

**Results:** Multiple regression was used to measure Hypothesis three; which determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between instructional issues, as measured by the PTO, and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction with one another of the LPI, was significant as revealed by multiple regression. An analysis of the data led to the decision to fail to reject the hypothesis. The respondent’s agree that the combination of principal behaviors which were the best predictors are; model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. The respondent’s agree that the combination of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encouraging the heart have a significant correlation with instructional issues. The aforementioned results clearly answer, yes, to the four research questions posed by the study.

**Research Questions**

1. Do principals at Blue Ribbon schools use personal and professional leadership strategies to improve school culture?

Based upon the high mean subscale results of the LPI (Observer and Self) questionnaires, in conjunction with the high mean subscales results of the PTO, teachers, staff members, and principals rated the principal behaviors and teacher morale highly (see Tables 4, 5 & 6). Also, the results of the Pearson correlation of each hypothesis yielded a significant linear positive association (see Table 7). Conclusively, the results of the multiple regression applied to hypothesis one, two, and three yielded a significant statistical
relationship between teacher rapport with the principal, rapport among teachers, and instructional issues as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors (see Tables 8, 9, 10). The answer to research question one is an emphatic, yes.

2. Are principals at Blue Ribbon schools supportive of their teachers and staff? Based upon the high mean subscales results of the LPI (Observer and Self) questionnaires in conjunction with the high mean subscale results of the PTO, these statistics provide sufficient evidence of principal support for teachers and staff members (see Tables 4, 5 & 6). Also, the results of the Pearson correlation of each hypothesis yielded a significant linear positive association (see Table 7). Conclusively, the results of the multiple regression applied to hypothesis one, two, and three yielded a significant statistical relationship between teacher rapport with the principal, rapport among teachers, and instructional issues as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors (see Tables 8, 9, 10). The answer to research question two is, yes.

3. Is teacher and staff morale high in Blue Ribbon schools? Based on the high mean subscale results of the PTO, an instrument which rates teacher morale, as reported by the high morale ratings of teacher and staff member respondents. The answer to research question three is, yes (see Table 6).

4. Is the culture at Blue Ribbon schools progressive? The analysis of the data results, in conjunction with the statistical measurements of each hypothesis support the theory that suggests the schools who participated in the study are academically and socially progressive. The answer to research question four is, yes.
Conclusions

Conclusively, data was collected from respondents after administering reliable and valid questionnaires. The data was analyzed and the results were a reflection of how teachers perceive their principal’s leadership traits and behaviors, and how these behaviors affect teacher morale. The results of the study are consistent with the current literature based upon principal leadership, teacher morale, and school culture. The morale of teachers will enhance a greater level of instruction for students, or the absence of this improved level of instruction may hinder student outcomes. In this study it is evident that the academic and social connection between principal and teacher is paramount in the success of these Blue Ribbon schools. The principal who is deemed the, educational leader, should not only have high expectations for teachers, but must possess traits that include but are not exclusive to; tact, approachability, caring, sensitive to the needs of others, personal and professional knowledge of teachers and staff members, respect for subordinates, the ability to listen, the ability to learn from others, and the willingness to seek out new and innovative teaching and learning techniques. This list of behaviors and traits can become infinite, but the rudimentary fact is finding ways to motivate teachers in a positive manner to gain enriched student growth, academically and socially. The principal is the alpha and the omega; they are the beginning and the end of the academic and social pursuit of student achievement.

Discussion

The results of the study are consistent with the current literature based upon principal leadership, teacher morale, and school culture. A successful principal understands that the teachers who are responsible for the end result and the task are linked to the success of the principal leadership strategies. If teachers are not
enthusiastic about their assignment and their morale is low the end result of the task will not culminate with the best results being produced (Martin & Jenkins, 2008). It is suggested by Fiedler (2006) that the leadership style of a principal is dictated by three circumstances; the relationship shared between the principal and their teachers, academic goals of the school, and the autonomy of the principal to praise or replace staff members. The principal must become the model of the cultural change through their actions directly or indirectly (Leech, 2008). It is imperative that a principal have a staff that believes in their academic and cultural vision to create a culture of positive and progressive learning (Lezotte, 2011).

Leithwood and Walhstrom (2008) state “when people view leadership as part of the solution, they allow it to influence them” (p. 455). It has been reported that the instructional emphasis of principals is placed on monitoring and mapping instruction, communicating precise goals of the school to stakeholders and building a culture of improved teaching and learning (Peterson & Deal, 2009). Day (2005) believes that high performing principals have an innate ability to reform and cultivate teaching and learning practices that promote a trusting school culture and community involvement that facilitate student achievement. It is suggested that teacher morale is directly linked to student academic growth and accomplishment (Hunter-Boykin et al., 1995). Sun (2004) stated that teacher commitment is strengthened through the principal providing acknowledgement, support, academic collaboration, modeling, and professional development. Sun (2004) concluded that teachers are more willing to strive for excellence in their instruction methods and learning strategies when supportive principal leadership is present.
For a principal to become high performing, the balance between task and human relations must equal each other in importance (Nystrand, 2001). Principals must also become mindful of what their teachers and staff members perceive of the direction that the school culture is moving toward. Self-assessment of strategies and behaviors is paramount to the success of any principal. This self-assessment must happen frequently and consistently to insure the appropriate leadership strategies and good decisions are implemented to improve student learning (Nystrand, 2001). A positive and progressive school culture propagates morale, staff performance, and student enrichment. School culture is regarded as one of the important variables that help lead progressive school reform (Rhodes et al., 2009). According to Kelley et al. (2005), if teachers perceive that a principal’s actions and leadership style are consistent in the interactions with the school staff and teachers are more apt to meet the administrators at a happy median of academic sacrifice. Principal’s that are effective promote trust amongst teachers and staff, promote collaborative teaching, create an environment of honest feedback between teachers and administrators, and build a school culture that exudes effective communication.

Lyles (2009) reported the principals of blue ribbon schools use inspirational and behavioral strategies to lead their learning institutions to Blue Ribbon status. Lyles (2009) reports that no two principals have identical leadership traits, but the study of Lyles (2009) provides evidence that principals of Blue Ribbon schools personify positive and progressive leadership strategies. Lyles (2009) study suggests all principals of Blue Ribbon schools use transformational leadership and they do not engage in negative leadership strategies. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) state that the stimulus for improved student achievement is the act of principals who seek out the input of their teachers. These principals also involve staff members in planning and implementing innovative
strategies. The morale obligation of a principal to improve themselves is a conscious decision that is based upon the willingness to enhance the lives of the student scholars for which they are responsible.

Recommendations

The results of the study determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between teacher rapport with the principal as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The two subscales of the LPI that were most significant were; enable others to act, and encouraging the heart. The respondent’s strongly agree that positive principal behaviors have a significant correlation with teacher rapport with the principal. The obvious improvement as indicated by the results of the study is improved student learning through the principal developing a strong positive rapport with their teachers and staff members. This conscientious rapport with the principal, as indicated by the respondents of this study, has had a positive direct effect on high teacher morale. As indicated by the results of the study, principals should seek to build a good to great rapport with teachers and staff members by developing and implementing the behaviors and traits of successful principals. These behaviors and traits include, but are not exclusive to; developing cooperative relationships among teachers, actively listen to teachers, treat teachers and staff members with respect and dignity, support progressive decisions made by teachers, and growing staff members through professional development. Additionally, current or aspiring administrators who are seeking an enhanced teacher/principal rapport should try the following administrative behaviors and traits as indicated by the study; praise teachers and staff members for a job well done, show confidence in the ability of teachers and staff, reward teachers for creative contributions, publically recognize teachers who
personify commitment, celebrate school accomplishments, and show support and appreciation for teachers and staff.

The results of the study determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between rapport among teachers as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction of the LPI, was significant. The respondent’s agree that positive principal behaviors have a significant correlation with rapport among teachers. It is imperative that teachers work in a school culture that embraces collaborative teamwork as indicated by the respondents of the study. A principal that wants to strengthen rapport among teachers as indicated by the respondents of the study should; reinforce common academic and social goals within teacher teams, have experienced teachers mentor new and younger teachers, promote workplace cooperation, and initiate the sharing of teacher best practices among colleagues.

The results of the study determined that there is a significant statistical relationship between instructional issues as measured by the PTO and the five subscales of the LPI (Observer) that measured principal behaviors. The combination of the five subscales, in conjunction with the LPI, was significant. The respondents agree that positive principal behaviors have a significant correlation with instructional issues. Curriculum is an integral part of a schools success or lack thereof. Current and progressive curriculum will decide the inevitable fate of the morale of teachers and subsequently, student outcomes. As indicated by the results of the study, how curriculum is determined and implemented in Blue Ribbon schools had a significant positive affect on teacher morale, and ultimately on higher student outcomes. Principals, as noted by the results of the study, that want to raise their standards and expectations of their school’s
curriculum selection and implementation should; ensure a well-balanced curriculum, ensure differentiated instruction, ensure alignment between school goals and curriculum, and demand that the school’s curriculum is preparing students to become enlightened global citizens.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Ultimately, the consistency and the high mean scores of the Leadership Practices Inventory (Self and Observer), in conjunction with the high mean subscales results of the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire, proclaim a mandate of, *Leadership Matters*. Overwhelmingly, the respondents agree that the leadership of each Blue Ribbon principal is outstanding and has been an integral part of their schools success. The administrators that participated in the study rated their behaviors and traits high as well. The consensus revealed by the study is the principals and the teachers believe that, *good to great*, leadership is present at each of these Blue Ribbon schools. The recommendation for future studies is to do further research on the Blue Ribbon schools in the southeastern region of the United States. This study could compare and contrast each state in terms of administrative leadership and its effect on teacher morale and student achievement. The study could use different instruments with varying subscales which determine if other relevant hypotheses are significant to principal leadership and correlate with student and school success.

**Study Improvements**

The primary goal of this study was to confirm that a correlation exists between personal and professional behaviors of the principals who have presided over Blue Ribbon certified schools and teacher morale, which ultimately culminated in student success and the receipt of Blue Ribbon certification. The following recommendations that
could enhance this study and future studies in the area of improved principal behaviors and traits are as follows:

1. An additional qualitative component along with the quantitative component could add depth to the positive relationships between principals of Blue Ribbon certified schools and their teachers and staff members. These interviews can provide a conscientious view of the respondents participating in the study.

2. An increased number of Blue Ribbon certified schools in the state of Mississippi could participate in the further studies of principal behaviors and teacher morale, which culminates in the receipt of Blue Ribbon certification.

3. Additional instruments could be implemented to analyze the data from the respondents of the Blue Ribbon certified schools.
APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT

November 11, 2011

Dear

As Superintendent of a Coastal School District, I am requesting your permission to survey principals, teachers and staff members that were active participants the year that (Name of School) received blue ribbon status. In addition, I am requesting demographic information from your Mississippi Gulf Coast School District from the year of receipt of blue ribbon status for each school. The results of the research will be reported in the dissertation entitled, What professional and personal strategies do successful principals possess to cultivate a school culture that promotes academic success in a blue ribbon school?

Any identifying information in regards to principals, teachers or staff members of said blue ribbon schools will remain anonymous. Once the dissertation is complete, I will gladly share the findings of the research project with interested individuals. IRB requires that I obtain written permission from the school district’s Superintendent prior to beginning the project. Should you wish to grant the permission, feel free to use the attached letter as a template. I appreciate your assistance in this educational venture.

Sincerely,

Carlos McKinney
Mr. Carlos McKinney  
13539 Brayton Boulevard  
Gulfport, MS 39503  

Dear Mr. McKinney,  

Upon approval from the University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB, you have permission to conduct your study for the purpose of your research entitled, *What professional and personal strategies do successful principals possess to cultivate a school culture that promotes academic success in a blue ribbon school?*  

Please contact me should you have any questions.  

Sincerely,  

Superintendent
APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

Principal

Mr. (Principal Name),

The name is Carlos McKinney and I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at The University of Southern Mississippi. I have successfully completed the course work and soon will be conducting the research associated with the dissertation topic. The topic is entitled, *What professional and personal strategies do successful principals possess to cultivate a school culture that promotes academic success in a blue ribbon school?* The purpose of this study is to chronicle the combination of professional and personal strategies and qualities of a principal that contribute to a positive school culture that culminates with improved student learning. I am requesting to use data collected for Gautier High School in the research project.

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from The University of Southern Mississippi, I would like to survey the high school teachers using a Likert scale survey. The survey does not require any principal or teacher or school identity information and therefore all information is anonymous. Once the dissertation is complete, I will gladly share the findings of the research project with interested individuals. IRB requires that I obtain written permission from the school district’s Superintendent prior to beginning the project. I have been granted permission from your Superintendent, (Name of Superintendent) to conduct this research within a Coastal School District. If you are a willing participant for this study, please provide a letter of consent. I have included a template that you may use when developing your consent letter. Should you wish to grant me permission, feel free to use the attached letter as a template and place it on your school’s letterhead. I have enclosed a stamped envelope for you to return this letter to me.

I appreciate your assistance in this educational venture.

Sincerely,

Carlos McKinney
APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL LETTER OF RESEARCH APPROVAL

Mr. Carlos McKinney
13539 Brayton Boulevard
Gulfport, MS 39503

Dear Mr. McKinney,

Upon approval from the University of Southern Mississippi’s IRB, you have permission to conduct your study for the purpose of your research entitled, *What professional and personal strategies do successful principals possess to cultivate a school culture that promotes academic success in a blue ribbon school?*

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Principal
APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.ssm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 12032002
PROJECT TITLE: What Professional and Personal Strategies do Successful Principals Possess to Cultivate a School Culture that Promotes Academic Success in Blue Ribbon Schools?
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
RESEARCHER/S: Carlos L. McKinney
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: 03/27/2012 to 03/26/2013

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
APPENDIX F

INSTRUMENT USAGE APPROVAL

January 4, 2012

Carlos McKinney
13339
Gulfport, MS 39503

Dear Mr. McKinney:

Thank you for your request to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your dissertation. We are willing to allow you to reproduce the instrument in written form, as outlined in your request, at no charge. If you prefer to use our electronic distribution of the LPI (e.g., making copies of the print materials) you will need to separately contact Lisa Shannon (LisaShannon@wiley.com) directly for instructions and payment. Permission to use either the written or electronic versions requires the following agreement:

1. That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
2. That copyright of the LPI, or any derivation of the instrument, is retained by Kouzes Posner International, and that the following copyright statement is included on all copies of the instrument:
   "Copyright 2003 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All rights reserved. Used with permission."
3. That one (1) electronic copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent personally to our attention; and,
4. That you agree to allow us to include an abstract of your study and any other published papers utilizing the LPI on our various websites.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you indicate so by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to me either via email or by postal to; 1548 Camino Monde San Jose, CA 95125. Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Ellen Peterson
Permissions Editor
Epetersonf@gmail.com

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed) __________________________ Date: 1/9/2012

Expected Date of Completion is: August 1, 2013
Dear Principal,

Thank you for your participation and taking the time to complete this two part survey. This questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. However, by participating, the information that you share will possibly help improve principal leadership skills and strategies. By submitting this document you are giving your informed consent to use your responses for the purposes of this study. Your identity will be kept strictly anonymous for the purposes of this study. Subsequently, your responses will remain nameless, and results will not be reported to the school or district.

At the conclusion of the study, all surveys will be shredded to ensure proper document disposal. If you have any questions or comments, please call Carlos McKinney at 228-324-4552. When you have completed the questionnaire please return your survey to the school’s office where it will be placed in a secure return box and return to the researcher. All questionnaires are to be returned to the school’s office by XXXXXXXXXXX

I. Demographic Information

Directions: Please complete the information in this section by marking the appropriate answer with a check mark (√).

Number of years’ experience: ____<5 ____5-10 ____11-15 ____>15

Age: ____ 21-30 ____31-40 ____41-50 ____>50

Gender: ____ Male ____Female

Were you an administrator at this facility when blue ribbon status was bestowed? ____ Yes or ____No
II. LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY - SELF
James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner ©2003

This part of the survey will give you an opportunity to express your opinion about your primary leadership traits.

Directions: To what extent does you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement. Please do not record your name on this document.

1 = Almost Never  2 = Rarely  3 = Seldom  4 = Once in a While  5 = Occasionally  6 = Sometimes  7 = Fairly Often  8 = Usually  9 = Very Frequently  10 = Always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I set a personal example of what I expect of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I praise people for a job well done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principals and standards we have agreed on.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I actively listen to diverse points of view.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I treat others with dignity and respect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people’s performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I ask “what can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I support the decisions that people make on their own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I paint the “big picture” of what we aspire to accomplish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I speak with a genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contribution.</td>
<td></td>
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II. LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY-(OBSERVER)
James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner ©2003

This part of the survey will give you an opportunity to express your opinion about your principal’s primary leadership traits.

Directions: To what extent does your principal typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement. Please do not record your name on this document.

1 = Almost Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Seldom 4 = Once in a While 5 = Occasionally
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

INSTRUMENT USAGE APPROVAL

PERMISSION TO USE

Requester:
Carlos McKinney
Doctoral Education Student
University of Southern Mississippi

Work requested for Usage (Material(s)): “The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire” by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel; PRF Ref. No. 80099

Work Incorporating the Material (the "Publication"): Purdue Research Foundation (PRF), designated to act on behalf of Purdue University, gives the Requester permission to use the Material solely for academic research as described in the permission request dated December 21, 2011 and attached hereto.

The Material is provided by Purdue University for inclusion in the Publication as consistent with Purdue University’s instructional objective, and its overall mission as a non-profit educational institution.

THE MATERIAL IS PROVIDED "AS IS", AND PRF MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO ANY MATTER RELATING THERETO, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

The Requester will include an acknowledgement of the ownership of the Material as follows. © Copyright 1980, Purdue Research Foundation. All rights reserved.

The authorization provided is valid only to the extent that all of the activities undertaken are consistent with the understanding and conditions as stated herein.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Elizabeth Hart-Wells, Ph.D.
Assistant VP and Director
Office of Technology Commercialization

Date:

1281 Win Hentschel Blvd. West Lafayette, IN 47906-4182 765-588-3475 Fax 765-463-3486
APPENDIX I

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (OBSERVER)
James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner © 2003
And
THE PURDUE TEACHER OPINIONAIRE
Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for your participation and taking the time to complete this three part survey. This questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. However, by participating, the information that you share will possibly help improve principal leadership skills and strategies. By submitting this document you are giving your informed consent to use your responses for the purposes of this study. Your identity will be kept strictly anonymous for the purposes of this study. Subsequently, your responses will remain nameless, and results will not be reported to the school or district.

At the conclusion of the study, all surveys will be shredded to ensure proper document disposal. If you have any questions or comments, please call Carlos McKinney at 228-324-4552. When you have completed the questionnaire please return your survey to the school’s office where it will be placed in a secure return box and return to the researcher. All questionnaires are to be returned to the school’s office by XXXXXXXXXX

II. Demographic Information

Directions: Please complete the information in this section by marking the appropriate answer with a check mark (√).

| Number of years’ experience: | ___<5 ___5-10 ___11-15 ___>15 |
| Age:  | ___21-30 ___31-40 ___41-50 ___>50 |
| Race:  | ___Caucasian ___African American ___Asian ___Spanish |
|       | ___Native American ___Other |
| Gender: | ___ Male ___Female |
| Grade Level Taught: | ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___6 |
| Class Size: | ___11-15 ___16-20 ___21-25 ___>25 |

Were you teaching at this facility when blue ribbon status was bestowed?  
___ Yes or ___ No
The Purdue Teacher Opinionaire
Prepared by Ralph R. Bentley and Averno M. Rempel

**Directions:** This portion of the instrument is designed to provide you the opportunity to express your opinions about teacher morale. Read each statement carefully. Then indicate, whether your (1) disagree, (2) probably disagree, (3) probably agree, or (4) agree with each statement by circling the corresponding number for each item. There are no right or wrong responses. Please do not record your name on this document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Probably Disagree</th>
<th>Probably Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The work of individual faculty members is appreciated and commended by our principal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teachers fell free to criticize administrative policy at faculty meetings called by the principal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Our principal shows favoritism in his relations with the teachers in our school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My principal makes a real effort to maintain close contact with the faculty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Our principal’s leadership in faculty meetings challenge and stimulated our professional growth.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My principal makes my work easier and more pleasant.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My school principal understands and recognizes good teaching procedures.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My principal shows a real interest in my department.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our principal promotes a sense of belonging among the teachers in our school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My principal is concerned with the problems of the faculty and handles these problems sympathetically.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I do not hesitate to discuss any school problem with my principal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My principal acts as though he is interested in me and my problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My school principal supervises rather than “snoopervises” the teachers in our school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>‘Teachers’ meetings as now conducted by our principal waste time and energy of the staff.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Probably Disagree</td>
<td>Probably Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>My principal has a reasonable understanding of the problems connected with my teaching assignment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I feel that my work is judged fairly by my principal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My principal tries to make me feel comfortable when he visits my classes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>My principal makes effective use of the individual teacher’s capacity and talent.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teachers feel free to go to the principal about problems of personal and group welfare.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>There is a great deal of griping, arguing, taking sides and feuding among our teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Generally, teachers in our school do not take advantage of one another.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The teachers in our school cooperate with each other to achieve common, personal, and professional objectives.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members and colleagues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The competency of the teachers in our school compares favorably with that of teachers in other schools with which I am familiar.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>My teaching associates are well prepared for their jobs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Our school faculty has a tendency to form into cliques.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The teachers in our school work well together.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The cooperativeness of teachers in our school helps make my work more enjoyable.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the values and attitudes of their students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Other teachers in our school are appreciative of my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>The teachers with whom I work have high professional ethics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The teachers in our school show a great deal of initiative and creativity in their teaching assignments.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Our school has a well-balanced curriculum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The curriculum of our school makes reasonable provision for the student individual differences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>The curriculum of our school is in need of major revisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>The purposes and objectives of the school cannot be achieved by the present curriculum.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Our school curriculum does a good job of preparing students to become enlightened and competent citizens.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


