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## Impact of Transformational Leadership Behaviors of Administrators as Predictors of High Performing and Low Performing Schools in Mississippi

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IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF  
ADMINISTRATORS AS PREDICTORS OF HIGH PERFORMING AND LOW  
PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Audra Ann Rester

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Education and Human Sciences  
and the School of Education  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the relative impact of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status. Teachers from schools that have been assigned the labels of A, B, C, D, and F by the Mississippi Department of Education were surveyed. A quantitative design was used to test six research hypotheses to see if any differences exist between the perceived leadership behaviors of school administrators by teachers among the accountability labels. The principal leadership behaviors, which were based on transformational leadership theory, were (1) provides vision, (2) models appropriate behavior, (3) fosters a commitment to goals, (4) provides individualized support, (5) provides intellectual stimulation, and (6) holds high expectations. The results from this research can improve professional development provided to school principals by district personnel as well as give guidance in hiring and placement of school principals.

While the research suggests that principals have an indirect relationship in student achievement, finding the behaviors that best support student learning will help future principals make better-informed decisions to improve student achievement. It is worth researching if a difference exists between administrators of schools with A and B labels and those who have a C, D, or F label assigned to the school. Because it is widely understood that the effects of school leadership on students are largely indirect (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), answering the question of how the principal affects student learning means searching for the most powerful factors of leadership influence on student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). Principals play a critical role in the schoolwide efforts to raise standards and expectations in teaching and

learning; however, evidence of what makes successful leaders remains elusive (Day, 2000).

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## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family without whom I could accomplish nothing. Eddie, your support and encouragement make me a better person. Sydney, your commitment to learning for learning sake is a joy to watch and an inspiration. Ann Claire, your perseverance and grit are one of the reasons I finished this project. I love you all.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>EL</i>	English Learners
<i>ESEA</i>	Elementary Education and Secondary Education Art
<i>ESSA</i>	Every Student Succeeds Act
<i>MAAP</i>	Mississippi Academic Assessment Program
<i>MDE</i>	Mississippi Department of Education
<i>PLQ</i>	Principal Leadership Questionnaire
<i>SBE</i>	State Board of Education

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Beginning with modern K-12 education, the principal has played a key role in the school community. The primary task of the principal prior to the 1980s was the hiring and management of staff as well as the management of students and budgets. The expectations of principals began to shift when “A Nation at Risk” was published (1983). Principals were expected to be instructional leaders and produce effective schools. This expectation became high stakes under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. As a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, schools were forced to look at different subgroups of students and close the achievement gap between them.

In 2009 in Mississippi, the accountability system focused on several key issues. First, a performance classification designation would be issued to both schools and districts. In addition to an achievement component and a growth component, a graduation/dropout component was included for high schools and school districts (MDE, 2019). With the implementation of grades 3-8 standardized tests, Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP), which includes proficiency and growth for all students in Language Arts and Math, proficiency and growth of the lowest performing students, as well as the academic growth of the lowest performing students. Increased pressure was placed on teachers and administrators to ensure students achieve at high levels and continue to grow academically so that students are college and career ready by the time students graduate from high school.

In the Spring of 2017, a Task Force from MDE was established to review and update Process Standards 29, 30, and 31 as well as their related checklists and monitoring forms. Editorial changes were made to the Process Standards, while the monitoring

forms, checklist, and related documents were updated with a scheduled release date for the 2017/2018 school year. In June of 2017, the SBE approved Mississippi's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, the federal law that reauthorizes and modifies the Elementary Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The SBE adopted the ESEA plan to improve transparency, provide support for underperforming schools and districts, increase accountability for results, and focus professional training for better quality teachers and school leaders to positively impact public education in Mississippi. (MDE, 2019). As part of the review from the task force, English Learners' proficiency was added to the accountability standards. An EL performance component will be calculated for each school and district beginning with the 2017 - 2018 school year and will be included in the calculation of accountability grades beginning in the 2018 - 2019 school year (MDE, 2019).

In this current environment of school accountability, there is an apparent need for administrative leadership. Transformational leadership has been shown to be an effective way of supporting teachers and students. Numerous studies have shown that better student learning, engagement, and teacher commitment have been associated with school principals demonstrating transformational leadership (Boberg & Borgeios, 2016; Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). By conducting this research, principals can be more informed as to where to best utilize time and effort, and district leaders can make better decisions regarding the professional development of principals. All school leaders should seek out the best practices for improving student learning. Hauserman and Stick (2013) detailed that principals must intellectually stimulate, nurture, provide emotional support, be good role models, encourage cooperation, work

collaboratively, emphasize facilitation, and support empowerment. Research has shown that the most effective way for the principals to achieve these goals is through transformational leadership. By researching the principal leadership behaviors that best influence student learning, all school leaders can improve instructional practice and make better, more informed decisions as to the professional growth needed. With the addition of the academic growth model as well as the EL proficiency used in the Mississippi accountability, this research can add to the body of evidence as it relates to both proficiency and academic growth.

The principal's role as an instructional leader and direct relationship on changing instructional practices to improve student performance has been researched extensively (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). A large body of research has sought not only to define salient behaviors but also to study if and how leadership affects students' learning (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood, Anderson, et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). The influence of the principal on student achievement emerged as a result of this research. Today, the term "leadership for learning" has come to assume aspects of instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and shared leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; MacBeath & Cheng, 2008). School leaders are capable of having significant positive effects on student learning and other important outcomes (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Because it is widely understood that the effects of school leadership on students are largely indirect (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), answering the question of how the principal affects student learning means searching for the most powerful factors of leadership influence on student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, et al., 2010). Principals play a critical role in the schoolwide efforts

to raise standards and expectations in teaching and learning; however, evidence of what makes successful leaders remains elusive (Day, 2000).

In 1992, Leithwood and his colleagues conducted three studies designed to better understand the effects and meaning of transformational leadership in schools. Their results suggest that principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors have three common goals: a) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; b) fostering teacher development; and c) helping teachers solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood, 1992). These factors found in principals have shown to promote student learning. Leithwood identifies six specific behaviors that embody a principal's transformational leadership behaviors.

**Principal Leadership Behaviors:**

1. Identifying and articulating a vision: Behavior on the part of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his/her school staff members and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with a vision of the future
2. Providing an appropriate model: Behavior on the part of the principal that sets an example for the school staff members to follow that is consistent with the values the principal espouses
3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals: Behavior on the part of the principal aimed at promoting cooperation among school staff members and assisting them to work together toward common goals
4. Providing individualized support: Behavior on the part of the principal that indicates respect for school staff members and concern about their personal feelings and needs



5. Providing intellectual stimulation: Behavior on the part of the principal that challenges school staff members to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed
6. Holding high-performance expectations: Behavior that demonstrates the principal's expectations for excellence, quality, and high-performance on the part of the school staff (Leithwood, 1996)

By identifying and improving the performance of these behaviors, principals can influence transformational changes within schools and make informed decisions on improving student achievement.

After a five-year longitudinal study of educational leadership practices across the United States, including participants from nine states, 43 school districts, and 180 individual schools, Leithwood and Louis (2012) described what they found to be leadership behaviors most associated with student learning. These researchers acknowledged the use of instructional leadership, a strategy created specifically for the education sector beginning in the 1980s that focused on specific coordination and direction of curricular and instructional decisions, but Leithwood and Louis (2012) contended that “the evidence to date suggests that few principals have made the time and demonstrated the ability to provide high-quality instructional feedback to teachers,” and the researchers dismissed instructional leadership as an effective independent strategy because of foci that are poorly defined and underpinning assumptions that “rest on shaky ground” (p. 6). Instead, Leithwood and Louis (2012) recommended following the advice of Marks and Printy (2003): that educational leaders supplement instructional leadership practices with those aligned to transformative leadership theory, which focuses on

cultural or organizational change through engagement and motivation of individuals toward a common goal, to enhance student learning. This combination of instructional and transformational leadership models first suggested by Marks and Printy (2003) has been called integrated leadership theory. Avci (2015) added that such leadership, prominent in the literature surrounding educational leadership in traditional K-12 settings, can be the “single and most important factor of the success or failure of the organization” (p. 2759).

This study will seek to investigate the transformational leadership behaviors of administrators as predictors of high-performing and low-performing schools in Mississippi. The information this study will examine will be the teacher’s perceptions of administrators’ transformational leadership behaviors. The principal leadership behaviors as, identified first by Leithwood, to be examined, are as follows:

1. Identifying and articulating a vision,
2. Providing an appropriate model,
3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals,
4. Providing individualized support,
5. Providing intellectual stimulation, and
6. Holding high-performance expectations.

#### Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the relative impact of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status. Teachers from schools that have been assigned the labels of A, B, C, D, and F by the Mississippi Department of Education will be surveyed. A binary logistic regression will be used to

show if any differences exist between the perceived leadership behaviors of school principals by teachers among the accountability labels. For the purpose of this study, the following research questions will be tested: Do selected principal leadership behaviors measuring transformational leadership predict school success using A, B, C, D, and F status? The results from this research can improve professional development provided to school principals by district personnel as well as give guidance in hiring and placement of school principals. While the research suggests, principals have an indirect relationship in student achievement, finding the behaviors that best predict student learning will help future principals make better-informed decisions to improve student achievement.

#### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was tested during this study:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to identifying and articulating a vision.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to providing an appropriate model.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to fostering the acceptance of group goals.
4. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to providing individualized support.

5. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to providing intellectual stimulation.
6. There is a statistically significant difference between leadership behaviors of principals in A and B performing schools and the leadership behaviors of principals in C, D, and F schools with regard to holding high-performance expectations.

#### Delimitations

The delimitations of this research are as follows:

1. Elementary, middle, and high school teachers in public schools in Mississippi were selected. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalized beyond this population.
2. Employee respondents were assigned to the school for at least one year.
3. This study was limited to perceptions of transformational leadership of the administrators by teachers who chose to participate in the study.
4. This study relied on the participants to report their demographic data accurately. Due to the anonymity of the participants, there was no way to confirm the reported demographic data.
5. This study relied on the participants to report their school's accountability labels. Due to the confidential nature of this study, there was no way to verify the reported accountability labels.
6. The research design of this study was designed to show the strength of a relationship. Therefore, caution should be used when reviewing the data.
7. This study could not determine causality or the specific elements that are related.

## Assumptions

The assumptions by which the study was conducted include the following:

1. The researcher assumed that demographic data is reported accurately.
2. The researcher assumed that the accountability label is reported accurately.
3. The researcher assumed that only current school teachers participate in the study and that data reported is specific to his/her school.

## Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were applied:

Mississippi Accountability Standards—Accountability labels applied to each school in Mississippi, indicating a level of performance based on student growth and levels of proficiency as set by the Mississippi Department of Education. Each school has an assigned letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

MDE—Mississippi Department of Education.

Principal Leadership Questionnaire—The instrument to be used in the study published by Dr. Ken Leithwood (1996).

School Administrator—Any individual who holds a valid administrative license in the state of Mississippi and is currently serving as a principal or assistant principal in a Mississippi public school.

Teacher- Any individual who holds a valid teaching license in the state of Mississippi and is currently serving as a teacher in a Mississippi public school.

Transformational Leadership—How leaders exercise influence over their colleagues and on the nature of leader-follower relations.

## Justification

Justification for this study lies in the principal's influence in the education environment. Leadership can be described by reference to two core functions: providing direction; the other is exercising influence (Seashore, 2010). This definition helps to provide a filter to see the importance of a school leader. Research has established a statistically significant correlation between school leadership and student achievement (Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005). In addition, Heck and Hallinger (2010) state that leadership for learning implies that a causal link exists between the actions of leaders and learning outcomes. It is the goal of the researcher to add to the knowledge base regarding the relative impact of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status that includes the growth of lowest performing students and EL.

The results of this study contribute to the limited research currently available that examines the relationship between principal leadership and current school performance label. According to Firestone and Riehl (2005), research efforts during the effective schools' movement suggested, "Strong leadership contributed to student achievement, but it provided little guidance about what leaders did to impact student achievement." Additional research would help to provide comparative information in regard to effective leadership behaviors in similar settings and populations. By conducting research, principals can be more informed as to where to best utilize time and effort, and district leaders can make better decisions regarding the professional development of principals. All school leaders should seek out the best practices for improving student learning. By researching the principal leadership behaviors that best influence student learning, all school leaders can improve instructional practice and make better, more informed

decisions as to the professional growth needed. With the addition of the academic growth model used in the Mississippi accountability, this research can add to the body of evidence as it relates to both proficiency and academic growth. The results from this research can improve professional development provided to school principals by district personnel as well as give guidance in hiring and placement of school principals. While the research suggests principals have an indirect relationship in student achievement, finding the behaviors that best predict student learning will help future principals make better-informed decisions to improve student achievement.

## CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature on subjects related to transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by school principals. This review includes historical background on the role of principals, research on the relationship between principal behavior and student academic achievement, and studies regarding teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors of principals. This chapter expounds on the literature and how it relates to the principal's role, both directly and indirectly, in student achievement as well as the actions that lead to change within a school.

### History of School Leadership

The role of the principal has grown increasingly complex throughout the last 60 years as the nature of society, politics, and schools as organizations have changed (Leithwood, 1994). According to Leithwood (1992), during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, effective principals were viewed primarily as effective managers responsible for administering the daily operations of the school, as well as implementing various federal curriculum and social initiatives (Leithwood, 1992). During the 1980s, one of the first major shifts occurred, requiring principals to assume the role of instructional leaders in order to run effective schools (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986). Instructional leaders are defined as school principals who concentrate primarily on coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991). By the mid-1980s, virtually every state had instituted substantial change aimed at developing the instructional leadership of principals (Fullen, 1996). The importance of the principal's role as an instructional leader and the direct relationship this



has on changing instructional practice to improve student performance has been researched extensively (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). However, in the 1990s, there was a shift to site-based management, which gave school leaders more autonomy, as well as more management of items such as janitors, budgets, and other tasks (Murphey & Beck, 1995). Accordingly, many researchers found this focus on managerial activities by principals ultimately distracted them from student learning (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the expectation shifted again, with the emphasis on principals as transformative leaders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Transformative leaders work to share the leadership with a collaborative approach. This shift was the result of the increased accountability enacted with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Policymakers and researchers required leaders to transform their schools into effective places of learning for all students (Barber, 2000). Beginning in the mid-2000s, researchers began studying not only instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2008; Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck et al., 1990; Kleine-Kracht, 1993), but also competing models such as transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), distributive leadership (Spillane et al., 2007), and shared leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009). Distributive leadership is defined as an approach that embraces all employees as responsible for a certain area to meet the needs of the school (Mulford & Silins, 2003). Shared leadership is described as a team leader with everyone taking a leadership position at some point in the life of the group (Lambert, 2002). Instructional leadership and transformational leadership are the two predominant conceptual models studied (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). The research has sought not only to

define the constructs, but also to examine if and how leadership impacts students learning (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood, Anderson et al., 2010; Mulford & Silins, 2003, 2009; Robinson et al., 2008; Witziers et al., 2003).

This body of research seeks to define the principal's pattern of influence on student achievement. According to the research, a pattern emerging from principal behaviors involves modeling best practices from the principal, identifying goals, and establishing a vision. Today, the term "leadership for learning" has come to assume aspects of instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and shared leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; MacBeath & Cheng, 2008; Mulford & Silins, 2009).

Research shows school leaders are capable of having significant positive effects on student learning and other important outcomes (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Because it is widely understood that the effects of school leadership on students are largely indirect (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), answering the question of how the principal affects student learning means researching what the most influential factors of leadership are on student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, et al., 2010). In 1992, Leithwood and Jantzi completed three studies aimed at making a systematic attempt to explore the meaning and utility of transformational leadership in schools. Their results suggested that principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors have three common goals: a) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; b) fostering teacher development; and c) helping teachers solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood & Montgomery,

1992). Leithwood identifies six specific behaviors that embody a principal's transformational leadership behaviors. These behaviors are:

- Identifying and articulating a vision: behavior on the part of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school staff members and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future.
- Providing an appropriate model: behavior on the part of the principal that sets an example for the school staff members to follow which is consistent with the values the principal espouses.
- Fostering the acceptance of group goals: behavior on the part of the principal aimed at promoting cooperation among school staff members and assisting them to work together toward common goals.
- Providing individualized support: behavior on the part of the principal that indicates respect for school staff members and concern about their personal feelings and needs.
- Providing intellectual stimulation: behavior on the part of the principal that challenges school staff members to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed.
- Holding high-performance expectations: behavior that demonstrates the principal's expectations for excellence, quality, and high-performance on the part of the school staff.

By identifying and improving these factors, principals can decide where best to focus their efforts to improve student achievement. Evidence is also accumulating that transformational leadership is associated with the development of school conditions conducive to organizational learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998).

Transformational leadership behaviors are viewed as more effective than instructional leadership behaviors at facilitating principal and teacher learning that is needed to help schools adapt to their changing contexts (Hallinger, 1992). Leithwood and Jantzi acknowledge, however, that current specifications of instructional leadership are broadening in an effort to incorporate more transformational concepts (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

After a five-year longitudinal study of educational leadership practices across the United States, including participants from nine states, 43 school districts, and 180 individual schools, Leithwood and Louis (2012) described what they found to be leadership behaviors most associated with student learning. These researchers acknowledged the use of instructional leadership, a strategy created specifically for the education sector beginning in the 1980s that focused on specific coordination and direction of curricular and instructional decisions, but Leithwood and Louis (2012) contended that “the evidence to date suggests that few principals have made the time and demonstrated the ability to provide high-quality instructional feedback to teachers,” and the researchers dismissed instructional leadership as an effective independent strategy because of foci that are poorly defined and underpinning assumptions that “rest on shaky ground” (p. 6). Instead, Leithwood and Louis (2012) recommended following the advice of Marks and Printy (2003): that educational leaders supplement instructional leadership practices with those aligned to transformative leadership theory, which focuses on cultural or organizational change through engagement and motivation of individuals toward a common goal, to enhance student learning. This combination of instructional and transformational leadership models first suggested by Marks and Printy (2003) has

been called integrated leadership theory. Avci (2015) added that such leadership, prominent in the literature surrounding educational leadership in traditional K-12 settings, can be the “single and most important factor of the success or failure of the organization” (p. 2759).

### Change Leadership

Leadership scholars and practitioners generally agree that a developmental approach to leadership and professional development can make a significant difference in our schools and school systems (Baxter-Magolda, 2009; Hord et al., 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Moler & Pankake, 2006). Caring for the growth and learning of teachers has been found to be a key step in helping principals address and better manage the mounting adaptive challenges principals face in education today (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005). Addressing increasingly complex issues such as a global economy, high-stakes accountability, Common Core standards, students’ diverse needs, the achievement gap, and how to work effectively in an era of standards-based reform requires new approaches (Waters et al., 2003). Research shows these new approaches are generally discovered while working on the issues rather than the application of traditional experience (Wagner et al., 2006). Therefore, teachers and leaders need the capacity to learn and adapt through tremendous amounts of ambiguity and complexity, and such capacity is developed through collaboration (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2013). School improvement is a complicated and complex endeavor, and increasing teacher professional development is one important way to help shape schools as supportive, growth-enhancing contexts for all participants (Waite, 2010).

Strong leaders who are key to large-scale, sustainable education reforms lead to effective, high-performing schools. Michael Fullan (2002) states that only principals who are equipped to handle a complex, rapidly changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in student achievement. Five essential components characterize leaders in the knowledge society: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making (Fullan, 2002). Moral purpose is the ability of the principal to make a difference in the life of students. When a principal has a moral focus, then the principal is able to foster systemic change (Fullan, 2002). A change principal with moral purpose means the school improvement is not just for the school where the principal is serving, but this principal promotes the success of the entire district. Fullan (2002) states that principals must have a solid understanding of change, which will allow these leaders the capacity to get a commitment from others, who might not even buy into the principal's vision. A change leader understands the importance of people with different ideas and welcomes their feedback (Leithwood, 1996). Change leaders also understand the importance of improving relationships within the school. This leader works hard to develop the full range of emotional intelligence, particularly of self-management and empathy toward others (Goleman et al., 2002). Effective leadership also involves creating and sharing knowledge. A change leader's expectation is for the knowledge base of all participants to grow. This leader understands and expects teachers to practice, study, and refine the craft of teaching (Fullan, 2002). Finally, a change leader is a master at coherence making. This leader utilizes checks and balances throughout the entire change process. These leaders understand that student learning must remain the

absolute focus for everyone involved. This leader understands that change will be difficult within a complex system (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Fullan points out that sustainable change is very challenging to achieve. The current context of constant policy changes, multiple and often contradictory demands, and increased expectations on schools and teachers means that “we are only just beginning to understand the challenges of scaling reform up from small samples of improving schools, to entire school systems” (Miles, p. 60, 1998).

Jim Collins (2001), in his bestselling business book, *Good to Great*, describes the results of his research on 28 companies that made the jump from being merely good to truly great. Collins identifies eight characteristics of a leader who can help organizations make that move. The first characteristic is level 5 leadership (Collins, 2001). Collins suggested that “Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It is not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious-but their ambition is first and foremost for the institutions, not themselves” (Collins, 2001, p. 21). Collins points to a critical perspective for school leaders. A school leader’s perspective should be one of what is best for the school system. All school leaders must be change leaders and must put the school’s needs, above all else to see school achievement improve (Fullan, 2003). Collins’ synthesis of these businesses with sustained economic performance identified the effective leader as one who is the “catalysis commitment to a compelling vision and higher performance standards.” (p. 20). The best example of a school system’s success represents accomplishments at a systemic level of high-performance standards with student growth as a sustainable result (Fullan, 2003). Quick gains in student achievement

may be impressive, but they do not represent the kinds of deep, lasting reforms implemented by executive leaders who establish the conditions for “enduring greatness” (Fullan, 2002). Therefore, principals of both high-performing and low-performing schools are called not only by the community but also by district leaders to be change leaders who invest in the future capacity of the school’s students and teachers.

To ensure all schools continue to be places of learning for students, teachers and principals must acknowledge what Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) call the knowing-doing gap. This gap represents one of the main barriers that schools and businesses experience with turning knowledge into action (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2002). A mission statement or vision statement is nothing without the action steps of employees living it out (Leithwood, 1996). Simply knowing what makes a school go from good to great is not enough (Elmore, 2003). Growth, change, and sustainability occurs when the people who generate the knowledge also store it, explain it to others, and coach others as they try to implement the knowledge, strategies, or techniques (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000).

### Closing the Gap

Over the past decade, studies have been conducted to identify the characteristics of schools that have successfully closed the achievement gap among subgroups of students. In 2010 Leithwood synthesized evidence from 31 studies to find characteristics of high-performing school districts. These characteristics are as follows:

- District-wide focus on student achievement that focuses on closing the gap between subgroups of students as well as raising the academic expectation for all students



- Approaches to curriculum and instruction that includes establishing student performance standards, strategies to achieve the standards, and the teaching materials as well as assessments to evaluate the standards
- Use of evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability
- District-wide sense of efficacy that includes providing extensive opportunities for teachers and administrators to develop expertise, as well as creating organizational structures and settings that support as well as enhance the faculties work and learning
- Building and maintaining good communications and relationships among the community as well as faculty members, establishing learning communities for collaboration among faculty and creating a district culture that nurtures collaboration between school administration and teachers
- Investing in instructional leadership by holding principals directly responsible for the quality of instruction in schools, providing opportunities for principals to grow professionally, and using experts from outside the district to improve leadership skills
- Targeted and phased orientation to school improvement (targeting interventions on low-performing schools/students)
- District-wide job-embedded professional development for leaders and teachers
- Strategic engagement with the government's agenda for change and associated resources by aligning the district's standards to that of the state's standards. (In some districts, supplemental material was used to increase student achievement that was in addition to some state standards.)
- Infrastructure alignment (Leithwood, 2010)

The leaders in these districts began by creating a mission that was centered on students' achievement (Hightower, 2002). This singular focus on student achievement, which closes the academic gap between subgroups of students, has been the focus of instructional leadership.

### Instructional and Transformational Leadership

During the 1980s, researchers, including Ron Edmonds, Larry Lezotte, and Wilbur Brookeover, began studying aspects of school leadership that were successful in educating all students (Lezotte, 2001). This body of research began to be known as the effective school movement. One of the models to emerge out of the effective school movement of the 1980s was instructional leadership. Neither coherent models nor validated instruments were available for the purpose of studying instructional leadership prior to the 1980s (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This began to change in 1980 with research from Leithwood and colleagues, such as Hallinger and Murphy, who described instructional leadership as focusing predominantly on the role of the school principal in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional leaders were described by teachers as being full of charisma as well as very hands-on with regard to decisions about curriculum and instruction. These leaders were viewed as unafraid to work with teachers directly for the improvement of teaching and learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). In 2000, Hallinger proposed three dimensions of instructional leadership. These are defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate (Hallinger, 2000). According to Hallinger (2000), the principal does not define the school mission alone, but the principal ensures

that the school has a clear academic mission and communicates that to the staff. In addition to communicating a mission, another key leadership responsibility of the principal is the development of the academic core of the school while promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional leadership has a top-down approach in that the principal has the sole responsibility of delivering the information needed to grow teachers. Instructional principals have clear goals focused on academic achievement as well as a clear academic mission known and supported by staff, students, and parents (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

With the beginning of school restructuring in the 1990s, transformational leadership, which originated in studies of political and corporate leadership, began to be investigated as a better model to meet the needs of schools that needed to improve (Kirby et al., 1992). Like instructional leadership, transformational leadership does not assume that the principal alone provides the leadership. Leadership may be shared among teachers, staff, and even students. Leithwood (1999), as well as other researchers, identify seven factors of a transformational leadership model. These factors are individualized support, shared goals and vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations, and modeling (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Louis & Marks, 1998; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Transformational leadership is seen when leaders

- stimulate interest among colleagues and followers to view their work from new perspectives;
  - generate awareness of the mission or vision of the team and organization;
  - develop colleagues and followers to higher levels of ability and potential;
- and

- motivate colleagues and followers to look beyond their own interests toward those that will benefit the group (Bass, 2000, p. 3).

A transformational leader understands the needs of the individual staff. The transformation model embraces the idea of influencing people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top-down approach, as often seen in instructional leadership (DuFour, 2002). In a bottom-up model, leadership includes teachers as leaders- not just the principal. In this sense, transformational leadership is seen as more like shared or distributive leadership (Hallinger, 2003). A study of the effects of transformational leadership conducted by Leithwood and Jantzi (1996) shows the power of this different approach for principal leadership:

“Transformative leadership had strong direct effects on school conditions. Together, transformational leadership and school conditions explain 17% of the variation in classroom conditions, even though the direct effects of transformational leadership on classroom conditions are negative and non-significant. Transformational leadership has a weak but statistically significant effect on student identification.” (p. 467)

Other studies have shown that transformational leadership has an impact on teachers’ perceptions of school conditions, their commitment to change, and organizational learning that takes place (Bogler, 2001; Fullan, 2002). The research of Bogler (2001) and Fullan (2002) studied the distributed nature of transformational leadership as well as its targeting of capacity development of teachers across the entire school community (Hallinger, 2003).

However, it is worth noting the ways in which both instructional leadership and transformational leadership are similar. Both models suggest principals focus on

- creating a shared sense of purpose;
- developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused on the improvement of teaching and learning;
- shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the goals set for staff and students;
- organizing and providing a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and development for staff;
- being a visible presence in the school, modeling the values that are being fostered in the school (Hallinger, 2003).

Hallinger (2003) asked the question, “Is transformational leadership the answer to critiques of instructional leadership?” (p. 341). A comparison of the two models was conducted. In Table 1 below, Hallinger (2003) demonstrates the comparison of instructional and transformational leadership to show the points of similarities and differences between the leadership models. The most apparent difference is the emphasis of the individual support for staff to set goals that will support the success of the school goals (Hallinger, 2003). The comparison shows the divided responsibility between the principal and the staff.

*Table 1*

*Comparison of instructional and transformational leadership models*

Instructional leadership	Transformational leadership	Remarks on differences and similarities
Articulate and communicate clear school goals	Clear vision Shared school goals	Instructional leadership (I.L.) model emphasizes clarity and organizational nature of shared goals, set either by the principal or by and with staff and community.

<p>Coordinate curriculum</p> <p>Supervise and evaluate instruction</p> <p>Monitor student progress</p> <p>Protect instructional time</p>		<p>Transformational leadership (T.L.) model emphasizes linkage between personal goals and shared organizational goals.</p> <p>No equivalent elements for these coordination and control functions in the T.L. model.</p>
	Individualized support	<p>I.L. model assumes that this will come about through supervision and curriculum coordination. T.L. model views meeting individual needs as a foundation of their roles.</p>
High expectations	High expectations	
<p>Provide incentives for learners</p> <p>Provide incentives for teachers</p> <p>Provide professional development for teachers</p>	<p>Rewards</p>           <p>Intellectual stimulation</p>	<p>Similar focus on ensuring that rewards are aligned with mission of school.</p>           <p>I.L. model focuses on training and development aligned to school mission. T.L. model views personal and professional growth broadly. Need not be tightly linked to school goals.</p>
High visibility	<p>Modeling</p>           <p>Culture-building</p>	<p>Essentially the same purposes. Principal maintains high visibility in order to model values and priorities.</p>           <p>I.L. model also focuses on culture-building, but subsumed within the school climate dimensions.</p>

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-352.

School leaders often assume varied approaches to leadership. As both Jackson (2009) and Fullan (2002) observed, school improvement is a journey. The context for improvement must always be considered, as well as the various constraints found within the school to measure principal effectiveness (Hallinger, 2003).

### Identify and Articulate a Vision

One of the most reliable ways for principals to begin the improvement process is by articulating a vision. Edmonds' (1979) research on effective schools noted a clear academic vision and mission as a quality of high academically performing schools. In a synthesis of research on the effects of school leadership on student achievement conducted in the 1990s, Hallinger and Heck (1996) identified vision and goals as the most significant way school leaders impact learning. In a more recent study by Robinson and colleagues (2008), vision and goals were named the second most significant contribution principals make to improve student learning. Bolman and Deal (2008) noted that "vision turns an organization's core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of the future" (p.255). Vision and goals drive any organization into the future.

In addition to Hallinger and Heck's (1996) research, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) expanded on earlier studies to provide the most fully developed model of transformational leadership in schools (Jantzi & Leithwood, 2000). Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) identified seven factors within this model that lead to the transformation of schools through leadership. The first of the factors in the transformational model is identifying and articulating a vision. This factor involves intentional behavior on the part

of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his/her school and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his/her vision of the future (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). Principals exhibiting behaviors within this factor help their colleagues develop an overall sense of purpose, facilitate the collaborative development of a school-wide vision, and advocate for the developed vision in a manner that is forceful but does not prevent other members from expressing their views (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). The transformational principal gives others a sense of purpose when teachers work together toward a shared vision. As Johnson (2008) says, “A principal with vision and expertise creates a blueprint of how the school can achieve its goals. He or she finds teachers and staff to help make that vision a reality” (p. 72). The teachers are empowered to be leaders and to communicate the vision of the principal for the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). The transformational principal works to develop faculty understanding of the larger social mission of which the school is a part, including such values as justice, equality, and integrity; and actively promotes the school’s vision through communication to all of the school’s stakeholders (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).

Consistent with Jantzi and Leithwood’s finding, Tognier and Anderson’s 2003 study found that schools with the most student achievement had the clearest vision. These schools “began their reform efforts by reassessing and revisiting their visions. Over time those visions became the guiding focus of all strategic planning. What was notable was the extent to which these districts used their vision to guide instructional improvement” (Tognier & Anderson, 2003, p. 12). An understanding of the schools’ mission was clearly evident in Tognier and Anderson’s research. However, knowing the vision and beliefs is not all that is needed for school improvement (Leithwood, 1996). The evidence from



other studies supported that high-performing districts went beyond the idea that “all students can learn” by establishing policies and instructional strategies that lead to higher achievement that were consistent with their vision (Cawelti, 2001).

Ronald Wolk, editor of *Education Week* remarked, “What we need more than anything else today are principals who are asking hard questions about what it is we want from our schools, what it is we want from our students and how we get it” (Hallinger, 2010, p. 4). This statement indicates that principals must clearly articulate the learning goals and academic achievements expected from students as well as define the instructional practices to achieve these goals. As some studies have suggested, setting a vision for a school is more of a process or journey rather than a one-time event, with continuous reflection, action, and reevaluation from the principal and teachers (Lashway, 1997; Peterson, 1986).

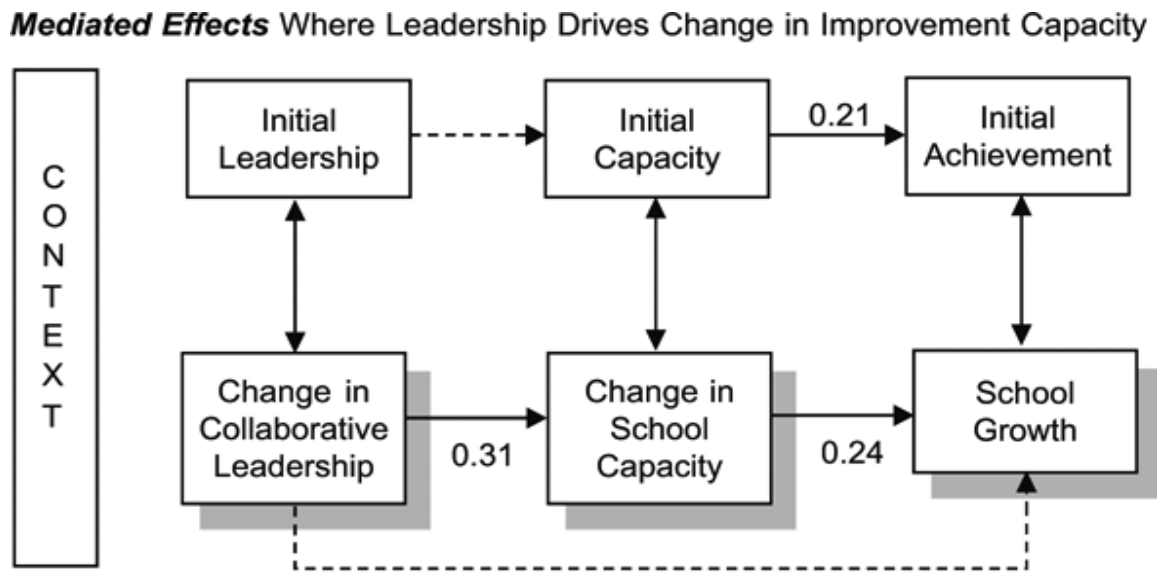
#### Leader as Instructional Resource/Model

Recent studies (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010) offer more information into the issue of a school leader’s focus. A principal’s ability to drive change has a secondary effect on student achievement. The principal’s role is one of an indirect relationship to student learning (Leithwood, 2008). Not only is a clear vision found to be important, but a principal must also have a clear understanding of the school’s capacity for academic improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Leaders must always consider the culture and context of any change that is needed. As Figure 1 reveals, the context of the school improvement is one of the major components of the change. Figure 1 shows a “mediated-effects model” of leadership and learning. This model proposes that the effects of leadership (i.e., of the principal and/or collective leadership) are not direct. Instead

they are “mediated” or achieved through school-level conditions that impact directly teaching and learning (Hallinger and Heck, 1996, 2010).

Figure 1.

*Mediated effects where leadership drives change in improvement capacity*



**Source:** Hallinger and Heck (2010, p. 103)

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership & Management*, 30(2), 95–110.

Figure 1 indicates there was no direct effect of collaborative leadership on growth in student learning in the elementary schools that were studied (the dotted line indicates no significant relationship) Also, collaborative leadership impacted growth in student learning indirectly through building the school’s capacity for academic improvement with an effect size of 0.31. Finally Figure 1 shows the school’s capacity for improvement impacted growth in student learning with effect size of 0.24 (Hallinger and Heck, 2010).

The context of any school’s growth should be one of the filters a principal uses when initializing change. As the needs of the school change, so does the role of the

principal. Heck and Hallinger's (2009) research on the growth trajectories of schools correlated and could be plotted against changes in perception of leadership and school capacity. Analysis of these patterns of school improvement found that leadership made different contributions in growth in relation to the capacity of teachers and the learning of students at different points in the improvement journey (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). As Barth (1990) stated, "It is not the teachers, or the central office people, or the university people who are really causing schools to be the way they are or changing the way they might be. It is whoever lives in the principal's office" (Barth, 1990, p. 10). The principal is responsible for recognizing the stage of improvement needed, as well as the point in time to be proactive in initiating the change (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). Bossidy and Charan (2011) note that although planning and visioning are important, execution is the key role of the leader.

One of the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (2008) six standards of what principals should know and be able to do instructs principals to put student and adult learning at the center of the principal's leadership and for principals to serve as the lead learner (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). Building the capacity of teachers for school improvement is a primary task of the principal and has a direct effect on school change and improvement (DuFour, 2002). Moreover, the change in schools must be systemic and develop the leadership capacity of teachers while continuing to measure academic improvement. Fullan (2001) says, "It has become increasingly clear that leadership at all levels of the system is the key lever for reform, especially leaders who focus on capacity building and develop other leaders who can carry on" (Fullan, 2001, p. 21).

Robinson and colleagues' (2008) study shows that the principals' support for and participation in the professional learning of staff produced the largest effect on the learning outcomes of students (Robinson et al., 2008). Robinson and colleagues' (2008) study showed a clear impact of instructional leadership, particularly when the leader is directly participating in the learning, as the leading factors related to the improved capacity of teachers. A summary of Robinson and colleagues' (2008) leadership dimension and the effect size can be found in Table 2:

*Table 2*

**Leadership Impact on Learning: Results from a Meta-analysis**

<b>Leadership Dimension</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Establishing Goals, and Expectations	Sets, communicates, and monitors learning goals, standards and expectations; involves staff and others in the process so that there are goal clarity and consensus.	ES = 0.42 (0.07)
Strategic Resourcing	Aligns resources selection and allocation to priority teaching goals. Ensures quality staffing.	ES = 0.31 (0.10)
Planning, Coordinating, and Evaluating Teaching and the Curriculum	Direct involvement in the support and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and feedback to teachers. Direct oversight of curriculum.	ES = 0.42 (0.06)
Promoting and Taking Part in Teacher Learning	Promotes and participates with teachers in formal or informal professional learning.	ES = 0.84 (0.14)
Ensuring an Orderly and Supportive Environment	Protects time for learning by reducing interruptions; establishes an orderly and supportive environment.	ES = 0.27 (0.09)

Robinson, V. M., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674.

Table 2 shows a model of five leadership dimensions that affect student outcomes, the definitions of each leadership dimension, and the average effect size with each dimension from Robinson and colleagues' study. The effect size from the studies showed how much of an impact the leadership factor had on student achievement. All of these leadership dimensions show an effect of leadership on student learning. However, promoting and taking part in teacher learning shows the largest effect size. The leader does more than just promote teacher learning; the leader participates in the learning (Robinson et al., 2008).

Principals who model as well as take part in the learning, both in formal roles as well as informal, have the largest effect on creating academic capacity for teachers, according to Robinson and colleagues' (2008) study. Principals should provide the structure for teachers to organize and manage their own learning while modeling the higher levels of expertise and knowledge expected by each adult in the building (Elmore, 2002).

### Support Individual Goals and Group Goals

Another factor of transformational leadership is the ability of the principal to promote cooperation and collaboration among teachers toward a common goal (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). These common goals are established through various methods. These methods include the principal encouraging individual teachers to develop their own professional goals, discussing these goals with teachers regularly, and the principal being a resource in helping teachers achieve their goals (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). These goals are focused, measurable targets that directly affect the learning in the classroom

(DuFour, 2002). These goals become the basis of ongoing conversation and review between the principal and teacher (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

Creating professional learning communities (PLCs) are another way transformational principals help schools achieve a common goal (Borko, 2004). Professional learning communities are defined as “teachers in a school and its administrators who continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning (Hord, 1997, p.10). Principals foster structural and cultural transformation when they shift their emphasis from simply helping individual teachers improve instruction to helping teams of teachers ensure that students achieve the intended outcomes of their schooling (DuFour, 2002). Dufour (2004) stated that instructional leaders should “focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold ourselves accountable for results” (p.6). Through PLCs, or small groups of learning teams, usually formed from department or grade-levels, teachers discuss four crucial questions to improve student learning. DuFour (2004) suggested four primary questions used to drive the discussion in PLCs. These questions are the following:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
- How will we respond when a student is proficient?

Just as teachers set goals for themselves, goals must be set for the group of teachers (Serrett, 2011). The following five important factors drive effective PLCs:

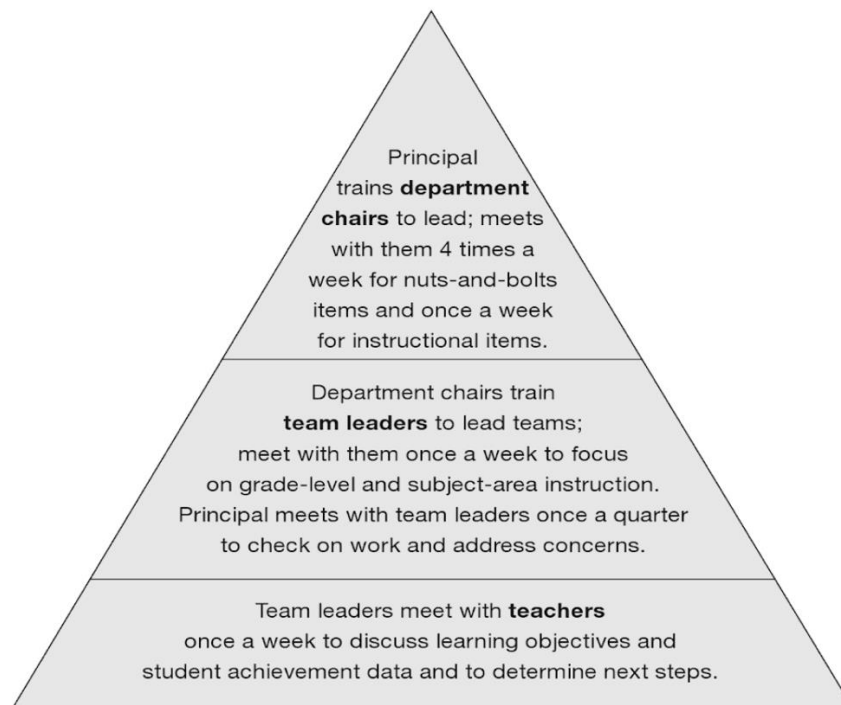
- trust.
- honesty.

- knowledge of students and their needs
- supportive, uncritical communication
- a focus on learning for both students and staff (Serrett, 2011, p. 24).

Instructional leaders are to ensure all five of these factors exist within the collaborative teacher's group (DuFour, 2002). In figure 2, Dufour's model of dispersed leadership shows the layered approach needed to allow for shared ownership and to build trust among all participants involved in professional learning. The cascading pyramid approach to leadership allowed for shared ownership and built trust among DuFour's staff (Sterrett, 2011). As Figure 2 shows, autonomy and trust are a central focus for Professional Learning Communities.

Figure 2.

*A Cascading Pyramid Model of Dispersed Leadership*



Sterrett, W (2011) *Insights into Action: Successful School Leaders Share What Works*, 27, ASCD

As Figure 2 indicates, the structures, expectations, and climate must be established by the instructional leader to ensure quality work occurs within the PLC (DuFour, 2002). The principal is responsible for communicating the vision, establishing goals, creating time within the day, and setting the purpose for the meetings (Serrett, 2011). The professional learning community should constantly reflect on best practices in the classroom as well as action research to maintain the professional growth of teachers (DuFour, 2004). The principal can help facilitate this professional growth by providing the best intellectual stimulation research has to offer (Matthews & Crow, 2003).

#### Providing Intellectual Stimulation

Along with establishing goals, principals must provide meaningful intellectual stimulation or professional development for teachers (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). As Fullan (1993) points out, organizations can only change when the people within the organization change. Principals acting as instructional leaders provide intellectual stimulation that encourages and provides a framework for that change (DuFour, 2004). One way principals as leaders can stimulate change is to encourage teachers to take risks inside the classroom (DuFour & Berkey, 1995). The freedom to experiment without fear of consequences encourages teachers to attempt research-based strategies in the classroom (Fullan, 2003). School improvement can only occur when teachers are expected to improve their instructional practices through risk-taking (Schlechty, 2003). The principal's role is to encourage risk-taking from teachers within the classroom to achieve academic growth (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991). By establishing this



environment, principals create conditions that enable staff to develop ways that allow for creative lessons for students within the school, which leads to more engagement in the classroom and greater academic gains (Fielding & Schalock, 1985).

Intellectual stimulation occurs when the leader provides ideas that result in a retooling of old ways of thinking and enables other teachers to look at problems and concerns from many viewpoints to resolve issues or roadblocks to student learning (Bass et al., 1987). The intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership encourages the processes of situation evaluation, vision formulation, and patterns of implementation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Such conditions give permission for teachers to question assumptions and to generate more creative solutions to problems (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

These risk-taking conditions can be expanded by what organizational learning theorists have to say about leadership. Senge (1990) said that a leader's work would require him/her to "bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models, and to foster more systemic patterns of thinking. Leaders are responsible for learning" (p. 9). A leader's own intellectual capacity will have a bearing on his/ her abilities to provide such intellectual stimulation, as well as other practices included as part of this leadership dimension (Leithwood et al., 1996). For example, cognitive flexibility, the mental ability to adjust thinking or attention in response to changing goals, is a desirable trait of administrative problem solving (Begley & Johnasson, 1998). Podsakoff et al. (1990) defined intellectual stimulation as "a leadership practice that challenges followers to reexamine some of their work and to rethink how it can be performed" (p. 112). Leadership initiatives have the potential to challenge teachers' behaviors, either formally

or informally, to examine all aspects of classroom instruction (Hallinger & Walker, 2013). An informal example would entail asking a teacher why he or she continues to use a routine that had become an unthinking, but not very useful, part of his/her teaching (DuFour, 2004). Conversely, a more formal and extensive example would be to engage staff in the planning and implementation of a multi-year professional development program coordinated with the school improvement plan (Leithwood et al., 1999). Leithwood's (1996) literature review of transformational school leadership practices aimed at intellectual stimulation centered around four basic strategies. One strategy was to change school norms that might constrain the thinking of staff by

- removing penalties for making mistakes during professional and school improvements,
- embracing conflict as a way of clarifying alternative courses of action,
- requiring colleagues to support opinions with good reasons,
- insisting on careful thought before action (Leithwood et al., 1996, p. 76).

A second strategy used by school leaders who encourage challenging the status quo by

- directly challenging basic assumptions, beliefs, and practices;
- encouraging evaluation refinement of practices;
- simulating colleagues to think more deeply about what they are doing for their students (Leithwood et al., 1996, p. 76).

Supporting new initiatives, a third strategy, including such practices as

- encouraging staff to try new practices without pressure,
- encouraging staff to pursue their own goals for professional learning,
- helping staff to make personal sense of change,

- providing resources for change initiatives (Leithwood et al., 1996, p. 76).

Finally, the last strategy aimed at intellectual stimulation was to bring their colleagues into contact with new ideas by

- simulating the search for and discussion of new ideas;
- seeking out new ideas by visiting other schools, attending conferences and passing those ideas on to staff;
- inviting teachers to share expertise with colleagues;
- seeking out and communicating productive activities taking place within the school;
- providing information helpful to staff in thinking of ways to implement new practices (Leithwood et al., 1996, p. 77).

Leithwood and colleague's (1996) study provided a framework for understanding the actions needed to be taken by principals to provide teachers as well as other administrators with intellectual growth.

Principals can provide intellectual stimulation in simple ways by passing on information from journals or other sources, bringing new ideas into the school, and providing professional development to teachers (Birman et al., 2000; Guskey, 2003). Other forms of intellectual stimulation include organizing and chairing professional development sessions with small groups of teacher leaders, finding out what staff needs to learn, encouraging staff to put on workshops or lead staff meetings, and discussing individual teachers' progress in achieving personal growth goals (Leithwood et al., 1998).

#### High-Performing Expectations of Principal for Teachers

From a transformational leadership perspective, encouraging high-performance expectations involves practices that "demonstrate the leader's expectations for excellence,

quality, and/or a high performance on the part of followers" (Podsakoff et al., 1990, p. 112). These expectations by school leaders will motivate teachers to see the challenging nature of the goals being pursued in their school and may sharpen teachers' perceptions of the gap between what the school aspires to do and what is presently being accomplished (Leithwood et al., 1999).

Leadership behavior that is best suited for increasing motivation depends on the personal characteristics of the people with whom one is working and the task that is to be accomplished (Bass & Stogdill, 1981). Effective leaders modeled high expectations by exercising control over their own learning and by transparent questioning of their own practices (Elmore, 2002). A review of transformational school leadership by Leithwood (1996) revealed that high-performance expectations were practiced by leaders who

- expect staff to be innovative, hard-working and professional;
- demonstrate an unflagging commitment to the welfare of students;
- often advocate norms of excellence and quality of service;
- do not accept second-rate performance from anyone;
- establish flexible boundaries for what people do, thus permitting freedom of judgment and action within the context of overall school goals and plans;
- are clear about one's own views of what is right and good (p. 69).

The results of research by Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) showed that in schools, teachers thought this transformational leadership quality of high expectations was the least evident in their principals. Those principals who were viewed as conveying stringent expectations, demanding high professionalism, and holding high expectations

for professional growth by both teachers and themselves, yielded academic growth from students (Leithwood et al., 1998).

### Synthesis

There have been several reviews of the literature on the relationship between school leadership, defined as effort and activities of school principals and student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Louis, et al., 2004; Waters et al., 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1998) synthesized 43 studies conducted between 1980 and 1995 that investigated evidence of the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). The researchers organized the 43 studies into three categories. The first category was the direct effects of leadership practices on student outcomes. The principal's actions influence school outcomes. The second category mediated effects studies where the principal's leadership was shared with other people, events, and organizational factors. The third category was reciprocal effect studies where the relationship between leadership efforts and school factors were interactive (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). The evidence from this research pointed to the indirect effects of the principal's leadership on student outcomes. Little evidence was found of direct effects and few examples of reciprocal effects (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Hallinger and Heck (1998) concluded that principals have a measurable but indirect effect on student achievement.

Waters et al. (2003) conducted a second synthesis of leadership practices and student outcomes. Seventy research studies conducted between the 1970s and early 2000s relating to principal leadership and student achievement were examined. These studies included a wide range of leadership responsibilities such as accountability, curriculum

and instruction, the motivation of faculty and school culture (Waters et al., 2003).

Walters et al. (2003) identified 21 leadership responsibilities that significantly correlated with student achievement.

*Table 3*

*Responsibilities and practices of effective school leaders*

<b>Leadership Practice (Responsibility)</b>	<b>The Extent to Which the Principal...</b>
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures Systematically and fairly recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of students, teachers Systematically and fairly recognizing the failures of the school as a whole
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo Consciously challenging the status quo Being willing to lead change initiatives with uncertain outcomes Systematically considering new and better ways of doing things Consistently attempting to operate at the edge versus the center of the school's competence
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments: Using hard work and results as the basis for rewards and recognition Using performance versus seniority as a primary criterion for rewards and recognition
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication among and with students and staff Developing effective means for teachers to communicate with one another Being easily accessible to teachers Maintaining open and effective lines of communication with staff
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community Promoting cohesion among staff Promoting a sense of well-being among staff Developing an understanding of purpose among staff Developing a shared vision of what the school could be like

Discipline	<p>Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from instruction and focus</p> <p>Protecting instructional time from interruptions</p> <p>Protecting teachers from internal and external distractions</p>
Flexibility	<p>Adapts leadership behavior to the situation and is comfortable with dissent</p> <p>Adapting leadership style to the needs of specific situations</p> <p>Being directive or nondirective as the situation warrants</p> <p>Encouraging people to express diverse and contrary opinions</p> <p>Being comfortable with making major changes in how things are done</p>
Focus	<p>Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention</p> <p>Establishing concrete goals for curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices within the school</p> <p>Establishing concrete goals for the general functioning of the school</p> <p>Establishing high, concrete goals, and expectations that all students will meet them</p>
Ideals/Beliefs	<p>Continually keeping attention on established goals</p> <p>Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling</p> <p>Possessing well-defined beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning</p> <p>Sharing beliefs about school, teaching, and learning with the staff</p>
Input	<p>Demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with beliefs</p> <p>Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies</p> <p>Providing opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies</p> <p>Providing opportunities for staff input on all important decisions</p>
Intellectual Stimulation	<p>Using leadership teams in decision making</p> <p>Ensures faculty and staff are aware of current research of theories and practices and finds ways to make them a part of continual dialogue</p> <p>Continually exposing staff to cutting-edge research and theory on effective schooling</p> <p>Keeping informed about current research and theory on effective schooling</p> <p>Fostering systematic, discussion regarding current research and theory on effective schooling</p>

Involvement in Curriculum and Instruction	<p>Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment plan</p> <p>Being directly involved in helping teachers design curricular activities</p> <p>Being directly involved in helping teachers address assessment issues</p> <p>Being directly involved in helping teachers address instructional issues</p>
Knowledge of Curriculum and Instruction	<p>Is knowledgeable about current curriculum and instruction, and assessment practices</p> <p>Possessing extensive knowledge about effective instructional, curricular, and assessment practices</p> <p>Providing conceptual guidance regarding effective classroom practices</p>
Monitoring/Evaluation	<p>Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and evaluates their impact on student learning</p> <p>Continually monitoring the effectiveness of the school's curricular, instructional, and assessment practices</p> <p>Being continually aware of the impact of the school's practices on student achievement</p>
Optimizer	<p>Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations</p> <p>Inspiring teachers to accomplish things that might be beyond their grasp</p> <p>Being the driving force behind major initiatives</p> <p>Portraying a positive attitude about the ability of staff to accomplish substantial things</p>
Order	<p>Establishes a standard set of operating procedures and routines</p> <p>Establishing routines for the smooth running of the school that staff understand and follow</p> <p>Providing and reinforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for staff</p> <p>Providing and reinforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for students</p>
Outreach	<p>Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders</p> <p>Ensuring that the school complies with all district and state mandates</p> <p>Being an advocate of the school with parents, central office, and community at large</p>
Relationships	<p>Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff</p> <p>Being informed about significant personal issues within the lives of staff members</p>



Resources	Being aware of personal needs of teachers
	Acknowledging significant events in the lives of staff members
	Maintaining personal relationships with teachers
	Provides teachers with necessary materials and professional development necessary for successful implementation
	Ensuring that teachers have the necessary materials and equipment
Situational Awareness	Ensuring that teachers have the necessary staff development opportunities to directly enhance their teaching
	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems
	Accurately predicting what could go wrong from day to day
	Being aware of informal groups and relationships among the staff
	Being aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students
	Making systematic and frequent visits to classrooms
	Having frequent contact with students
	Being highly visible to students, teachers, and parents

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Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning Aurora, CO

An effect size for each of the different leadership components was examined.

There was an average effect size of .25 of the 21 leadership practices found from the analysis of this research. The conclusion was, “there is, in fact, a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement” (Waters et al., 2003, p.3).

Leithwood, Louis, et al. (2004) conducted another analysis of literature related to principal leadership and student achievement. Through this synthesis, a conceptual model of how leadership influences school conditions to produce student outcomes was examined (Leithwood, Louis, et al., 2004). This synthesis looked at both quantitative and

qualitative studies. The conclusion was that school leadership “is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning” (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 5).

Different forms of leadership are described in the literature using different names. Some of these names are instructional leaders, democratic leaders, transformational leaders, and participative leaders. Regardless of the label, the approaches to leadership point to the “accomplishment of the same two essential objectives: helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions” (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 6). Many leadership practices are found in all of the different labels. Four sets of practices make up the basic core of successful leadership practices: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and improving the instructional program (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Embedded in the four sets of leadership practices are transactional leadership behaviors (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Metanalyses by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) of research on transformational leadership effects result in the following conclusions:

- Transformational leadership’s effect on perceptions of organizational effectiveness is significant and large.
- Transformational leadership effects on objective, independent measures of organizational effectiveness are less well documented and less uniform in nature but are positive and significant, although modest in size.
- Evidence about transformational leadership effects on independently measured student outcomes, in particular, seems quite promising though limited in amount.

- Recent evidence about transformational leadership effects on students' engagement in school, while still modest in amount, is uniformly positive (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005, p. 193).

Leithwood et al. (1999) cited 20 studies that provided evidence about the effects of transformational leadership on several different categories of outcomes. One study by Kirby et al. (1992) examined transformational leadership effects on perceptions of leader effectiveness and satisfaction with the leader. The study indicates that the effects of the leader most often related to vision, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Kirby et al., 1992). Transformational approaches to leadership have significant indirect effects on teachers' perception of student outcomes, as well as on other student outcome measures (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). This approach to leadership is strongly related to the satisfaction of teachers with the leader and positive perceptions of the leader's effectiveness (Kirby et al., 1992). Transformational leadership practices explain significant variations in teachers' perceptions of school improvement and effectiveness, and productive school cultures and climate (Leithwood et al., 1999). Likewise, "transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and those led, and thus has a transforming effect on both" (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

Leithwood (1994) expresses that the transformational approach to school leadership is especially appropriate to changes required from schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leithwood (1993) based his argument on the need for transformational leadership for educational leaders on two assumptions. The first assumption centers on the fact that leadership primarily manifests itself during times of change and the nature of change is

the critical context of the best form of leadership (Leithwood, 1993). The second assumption is based on an era of school change, reform, and restructuring that will continue into the foreseeable future (Leithwood, 1993).

### Summary

To promote student achievement, teachers and principals must work collaboratively and adjust the instruction where it is needed while celebrating a succession of small, quick victories in vital areas (Schmoker, 2004). Best practices from principals were required for student academic gains to occur (Reeves, 2007). The expectation of any educational system should be to increase students' understanding of the world around them (Daggett, 2005). Through transformational and instructional leadership, principals can continue to foster the type of professional growth needed for student academic achievement (Leithwood, 2008). This review of literature related to the study has explored the two predominant models of principal leadership behavior as it relates to student achievement.

First, the review examined the historical development of instructional and transformational leadership. Similarities in actions taken by principals of instructional and transformational models were reviewed. Theoretical support of the principal as a transformational as well as an instructional leader and models of the concepts were presented. Seven specific principal behaviors were explored to determine if these factors had a significant effect on student achievement.

### CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

This chapter detailed the methodology used to research the views that teachers from Mississippi schools have concerning transformational leadership behaviors of administrators. Teachers used Likert ratings to respond to statements regarding leadership behaviors. The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status. Teachers from schools assigned the accountability status of A, B, C, D, and F by the Mississippi Department of Education were surveyed.

#### Design

A quantitative design was used to test the six research hypotheses to see if any differences exist among leadership behaviors of school administrators from the teacher's point of view based on accountability labels. The dependent variable in this study was the school level label, as indicated by the 2018-19 Mississippi Department of Education Accountability system. The dependent variable was divided into two groups with one group of A and B school label, and the other group consists of C, D, and F school label. The independent variable was the transformational leadership behaviors, as reported by teachers on the Principal Leadership Questionnaire scale (see Appendix A). For the purpose of this study, the following research question was tested: Do selected principal leadership behaviors measuring transformational leadership predict school success as measured by A and B schools' status and C, D, and F status?

## Participants

The defined population for this study was currently certified teachers in the state of Mississippi who are employees of schools that are assigned an accountability grade. The participants were identified as teachers from either A and B schools or C, D, and F schools. The number of schools in the accountability categories varies. Currently, there are 196 A schools, 280 B schools, 169 C schools, 104 D schools, and 77 F schools based on the 2018-19 school year. Both elementary, as well as secondary school teachers, were included. All subject area teachers, elective teachers, and certified support staff were included. Participants were those who have been granted permission to participate by the principal and/or superintendent. The schools that were included in the study were located throughout the state, and they represent a variety of sizes in urban, suburban, and rural settings. A variety of school socioeconomic characteristics were represented. The minimum number of participating responses was 300.

## Instrument

An online questionnaire using Qualtrics Survey Software was used in this study to measure the independent variable of transformational leadership behaviors. Participants were asked to respond to an online survey with a five-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither disagree or agree, 4=agree, 5= strongly agree. The instrument that was used in this study was the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) developed at the Middle Level Leadership Center by Jerry Valentine and Stephen Lucas and was based on the work of Leithwood and Jantzi (1996). The researcher contacted Kenneth Leithwood and received permission to use the questionnaire. (See Appendix C) The instrument obtains participant demographic information, accountability level of the

school, and principal leadership behaviors. Demographic information included the length of time at the current school and state accountability label. The Principal Leadership Questionnaire is comprised of 24 Likert scale items, which measure six principal leadership behaviors that fall under the constructs of purpose and people from Leithwood and Jantzi (1996). Six dimensions of leadership practices make up the survey and are listed as follows:

1. Identifying and articulating a vision: Behavior on the part of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school staff members and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future. This behavior is comprised of five items and has a reported reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha of .88.
2. Providing an appropriate model: Behavior on the part of the principal that sets an example for the school staff members to follow that is consistent with the values the principal espouses. This behavior is comprised of three items and has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .86.
3. Fostering the acceptance of group goals: Behavior on the part of the principal aimed at promoting cooperation among school staff members and assisting them to work together toward common goals. This behavior is comprised of five items and has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .80.
4. Providing individualized support: Behavior on the part of the principal that indicates respect for school staff members and concern about their personal feelings and needs. This behavior is comprised of five items and has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .82.

5. Providing intellectual stimulation: Behavior on the part of the principal that challenges school staff members to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. This behavior is comprised of three items and has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .77.
6. Holding high-performance expectations: Behavior that demonstrates the principal's expectations for excellence, quality, and high performance on the part of the school staff. This behavior is comprised of three items and has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .73.

The questions associated with each dimension and the internal consistency reliabilities given as Cronbach's alpha are listed in Table 4.

*Table 4*

*PLQ Dimension Item Distribution and Reliability Coefficient*

Leadership Dimension/Factor	# of Items per Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
Identifying and articulating a vision	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	0.88
Providing an appropriate model	6, 7, 8	0.86
Fostering the acceptance of group goals	9, 10, 11, 12, 13	0.80
Providing individualized support	14, 15, 16, 17, 18	0.82
Providing intellectual stimulation	19, 20, 21	0.77
Holding high performance expectations	22, 23, 24	0.73



## Procedures

To accomplish the goal of this study, the following general procedures were followed: After gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board, an email containing a link to the survey was sent to principals to be forwarded in the manner to best reach teachers in their respective schools. This email contained an explanation of the study, permission to survey teachers, and requested consent as well as a link to the survey instrument. The Mississippi school principal's contact information was obtained from the Mississippi Department of Education. The survey was left open to accept responses for sixty days from the day the first email was sent. Two follow-up emails were sent to encourage participation in the survey in order to increase the sample size. Within the email, teachers were asked to complete the online survey. Within the email was a cover letter including the nature of the study and directions for completing the questionnaire (Appendix D), Principal Leadership Questionnaire (Appendix A), and IRB approval once obtained (Appendix B). Within the email, teachers were asked to complete the online survey. Once the survey data was collected, SPSS was used to analyze the data. For the electronic survey administered by the researcher, the teachers were given sixty days for submission. The instrument that was used to collect the data was the PLQ and two demographic questions that address years at the current school and 2018-19 school accountability level. Binary regression was computed to examine the predictability of the six principal leadership behaviors on the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (Valentine & Lucas, 2000) and school-level accountability. The statistical significance was set at .01.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is the identifying and articulating a vision behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
2. Is the providing an appropriate model behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
3. Is the fostering the acceptance of group goals behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
4. Is the providing individualized support behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
5. Is the providing intellectual stimulation behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
6. Is the holding high-performance expectations behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.

At the end of the data collection period, the researcher downloaded the respondent data into the SPSS version 25.0 to be analyzed. All electronic consent forms were secured to preserve confidentiality, and data was stored on a password-protected computer and software program to protect respondent privacy. Following the completion of the project, the resulting data set was deleted.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to provide sample and item characteristics. Measure of central tendency and variability, where appropriate, and interpreted. The level

of significance was set at .01, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each dimension of behavior. Once data was collected, each research question was addressed using appropriate techniques of binary regression.

## CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the relative impact of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status.

Teachers from schools assigned the labels of A, B, C, D, and F by the Mississippi Department of Education were surveyed. A binary logistic regression was used to show if any differences exist between school principals' perceived leadership behaviors by teachers among the accountability labels. For this study, the following research question was tested: Do select principal leadership behaviors measuring transformational leadership predict school success using A, B, C, D, and F status?

These were the six hypotheses examined during this study:

### **Hypothesis #1:**

*H<sub>1</sub>* - Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding identifying and articulating vision compared to principals of C, D, and F schools.

### **Hypothesis #2:**

*H<sub>1</sub>* - Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding providing an appropriate model compared to principals of C, D, and F schools.

### **Hypothesis #3**

*H<sub>1</sub>* - Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding fostering the acceptance of group goals compare to principals of C, D, and F schools.

### **Hypothesis #4:**

*H<sub>1</sub>* - Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding individualized support compared to principals of C, D, and F schools.

### **Hypothesis #5:**

*H<sub>1</sub>* -Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding providing intellectual stimulation compared to principals of C, D, and F schools.

#### **Hypothesis #6**

*H<sub>1</sub>* - Principals of A and B schools will have higher scores regarding holding high-performance expectations compared to principals of C, D, and F schools.

Approximately 1,100 electronic surveys were distributed to 105 school districts throughout the state of Mississippi. Of these 1,100 distributed surveys, 362 were submitted before the acceptance of responses was turned off, resulting in a 33% return rate. The survey instrument collected demographic data from the 362 respondents. The data included: years taught in the current school and accountability level of the school. Of the 362 responses, 282 were included in the analysis, as 80 responses had missing data. 218 of the responses were included in the A and B category. 64 of the responses were included in the C, D, and F category.

A Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with an Undecided option was used for the Principal Leadership Questionnaire. To run the statistical analysis answers of Strongly Agree was coded as 1, Agree was coded as 2, Undecided was coded as 3, Disagree was coded as 4, and Strongly Disagree was coded as 5.

A binary logistic regression was conducted by recoding A and B schools as one and C, D, and F schools as zero. Predictor variables included identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, and holding high-performance expectations. The assumption for linearity between the weighted

combination of predictor variables and the nature of the odds for relapse was met,  $X^2 (6) = 23.006, p = .001$ . A statistically significant model for predicting principal transformation leadership behavior was evident,  $X^2 (6) = 15.06, p = .002$ . Regression coefficients and Wald statistics are in Table 1. All regression analyses were performed at a .05 level of significance. Results of the logistic regression models were then used to identify which independent variable (survey items) would optimize the probability of distinguishing between a school's accountability status.

Neither articulating a vision, providing models, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, nor providing intellectual stimulation are statistically significant predictors of principal behaviors in A and B schools and C, D, and F schools. Therefore, hypothesis #1, hypothesis #2, hypothesis #3, hypothesis # 4, and hypothesis # 5 are not supported. Holding high-performance expectations, identifying and articulating a vision, and providing an appropriate model, however, were statically significant predictors with holding high-performance expectations having the highest predictability. Therefore, hypothesis # 6 is supported.

*Table 5*

*Logistic Regression Analysis of Transformation Leadership Behaviors*

Variables	B	Sig.	Wald	Odds Ratio
pv1totartic	.155	.140	2.174	1.168
pv2totmodel	-.257	.105	2.633	.773
pv3totfoster	.023	.781	.077	1.024
pv4totsupport	.079	.330	.948	1.082
pv5totstimul	.010	.937	.006	1.010

pv6totexpecta	-.381	.002	9.150	.683
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*Note.* Wald ( $df = 1$ ). pv1totartic = identifying and articulation a vision, pv2totmodel=appropriate model, pv3tofoster=acceptance of group goals, pv4tosupport= individualized support, pv5totstimul=intellectual stimulation, pv6toexpecta= high-performance expectations  
\* $p < .001$

*Table 6*

*Descriptive Statistics for Transformational Leadership Behaviors N=362*

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.
pv1totartic	21.28	3.29
pv2totmodel	12.78	2.11
pv3totfoster	20.81	3.64
pv4totsupport	21.26	3.30
pv5totstimul	12.54	1.96
pv6totexpecta	13.14	2.02

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Scale: 5 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Agree, 1 = Strongly Agree pv1totartic = identifying and articulation a vision, pv2totmodel=appropriate model, pv3tofoster=acceptance of group goals, pv4tosupport= individualized support, pv5totstimul=intellectual stimulation, pv6toexpecta= high-performance expectations

*Table 7*

*Model Summary*

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	279.052a	.078	.119

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 7 shows the Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> value for the full model indicates that 11.9% of the variance in the outcome variable (A or B school or C, D, F school) is explained by the set of predictor variables. In addition to the success of prediction, a non-significant

Hosmer and Lemeshow test indicated that the full model is able to significantly predict the outcome variable better than the constant model.

*Table 8*

*Hosmer and Lemeshow Test*

Step	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
1	7.590	8	.474

Model is significant

In Table 8, the nonsignificant Hosmer and Lemeshow test shows there is a match between the actual and the predicted. The Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> value for the full model indicates that .119 of the variances in the outcome variable is explained by the set of predictor variables. In addition to the success of prediction, a non-significant Hosmer and Lemeshow test indicated that the full model is able to significantly predict the outcome variable better than the constant model.



## CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is the identifying and articulating a vision behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
2. Is the providing an appropriate model behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
3. Is the fostering the acceptance of group goals behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
4. Is the providing individualized support behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
5. Is the providing intellectual stimulation behavior a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.
6. Is the holding high-performance expectations a significant predictor of principals in A and B performing schools compared to C, D, and F performing schools.

Principals, who in the past have been judged on their ability to effectually manage schools, are under pressure to be transformational leaders who ensure the academic proficiency and growth of all students. What is needed from principals in this accountably driven state are skills that will support the capacities of all of the members of

a school to meet these challenges (Leithwood et al., 1999). The principal's role is one of an indirect relationship to student learning (Leithwood, 2008). Not only is a clear vision found to be important, but a principal must also have a clear understanding of the school's capacity for academic improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

This study sought to examine the relative impact of principal transformational leadership as it relates to school accountability status. The principal leadership behaviors, which were based on transformational leadership theory, were (1) provides vision, (2) models appropriate behavior, (3) fosters a commitment to goals, (4) provides individualized support, (5) provides intellectual stimulation, and (6) holds high expectations. The school accountability status was assigned by MDE during the 2018-19 school year. This study was based on the results of a questionnaire administered to teachers from schools that have been assigned the MDE accountability labels of A, B, C, D, and F. This study demonstrated the probability of being an A or B school when the principal exhibited high expectations.

A limitation of this study could be related to bias and perceptions of the participants. The participants in this study completed a survey about perceptions of their principals' transformational leadership behaviors. The researcher emailed an information letter for teachers with a link to the survey to principals. Building principals were asked to send the letter to teachers. Although the participants were clearly informed through the letter and consent form that the survey was anonymous and confidential, some teachers may not have answered truthfully for concern that their responses could be traced back to them by their principal. As a result, some participants may not have responded to the survey truthfully, rather how they thought their principals would preferred. Therefore,

this lack of honesty may have resulted in participant bias which would affect the reliability of this study.

### Implications

As states continue to increase accountability based on student growth and proficiency, the importance of leadership behaviors of the principal around these behaviors will be a focus for future research. While assessing the direct contribution of principals to student achievement is difficult, determining what specific leadership behaviors lead to growth and proficiency will be of utmost importance.

The findings from this study show the principal's setting high expectations, that is, behavior that demonstrates the principal's expectations for excellence, quality, and high-performance on the part of the school staff, was a predictor of schools being rated as A or B schools. Those principals who were viewed as conveying stringent expectations, demanding high professionalism, and holding high expectations for professional growth by both teachers and themselves, yielded academic growth from students (Leithwood et al., 1998). School leaders should analyze their personal leadership style as it relates to student growth and proficiency in their schools and the transformational leadership behaviors describe in this study. Principals could conduct what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) call an "intentional and systemic inquiry into their own practice" (p.5). Leaders could then determine any changes or professional growth needed to better promote an environment with high expectations for student learning.

Transformational principals work to create "conditions that promote the ongoing, job-embedded professional learning vital to continuous improvement of educators" (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). One effective way principals can support teacher growth and

express high expectations is through collaborative learning opportunities, such as professional learning communities, through which teachers learn from and with each other. Creating professional learning communities (PLCs) is one of the best ways transformational principals help schools achieve a common goal (Borko, 2004). The principal's role in maintaining high functioning PLCs is critical to communicating high expectations not only for student's academic growth, but teacher growth as well. Principals should assess their role in creating, supporting, and maintaining high functioning PLCs.

School leaders would benefit from developing an understanding of the six leadership dimensions of the Principals' Leadership Questionnaire. Understanding the dimensions of the PLQ can assist principals as well as other administrators develop an appreciation of which practices will produce an educationally rich environment where both students and teachers grow.

School district leaders should also develop a working knowledge of transformational leadership practices to utilize in their own practices as they recommend professional development and work to create a culture of high expectations within the district among both school-based staff and central office staff.

#### Future Research

Effective leaders modeled high expectations by exercising control over their own learning and by transparent questioning of their own practices (Elmore, 2002). More research is needed to explore ways principals modeled high expectations to staff. For future research, this researcher recommends a study on the relationship between principals' communication of high expectations and student academic achievement based

on teacher perception. One of the most direct ways for principals to communicate is within a PLC. This study should be expanded to include the principal's role in professional learning communities.

Furthermore, more research is needed to explore the perceptions of principals regarding their own leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. It would be beneficial to compare teachers' perceptions regarding their principal's behaviors with the perception of principals about their own behavior to discover if a relationship exists between the two.

Future studies could also work to create a new instrument to measure the characteristics of a principal to help refine the research in this study. While the PLQ was developed through Leithwood's work (1996), it has not been had a major revision since before the introduction of NCLB (2002) and the culture of accountability in the United States. A new instrument with reliabilities in the 0.85 – 0.95 range could help to identify more accurate characteristics that will affect student's academic growth.

Another area of future research may be that of the principal experience and effectiveness. While this study cited that principals with high expectations were predictive of A and B schools, future research could examine the principal's role, what they do to improve, and when they reach their potential as transformational leaders. This could be done for overall experience and experience within a building.

Future research could also include a longitudinal study of teacher responses. Due to the timing of teachers' responses, there could be different results on the PLQ in the fall as opposed to the spring. Also, if these results for the PLQ and the student growth data

were taken over several years, more validity could be given to the results, given the survey instrument of the teachers had reliability.

## APPENDIX A PLQ Questionnaire

2/29/2020

Qualtrics Survey Software

### Survey Questions

How many years have you taught in your current school?

- ☐ 0-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16-20
- ☐ 21-25
- ☐ 26 or more

What is the 2019 school accountability level for your school?

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ F

My principal has both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

My principal commands respect from everyone on the faculty.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

My principal excites faculty with visions of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together as a team.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree

[https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV\\_5altiz2LPjaS73L&ContextLibraryID=UR\\_24CPV8NP8...](https://usmuw.co1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_5altiz2LPjaS73L&ContextLibraryID=UR_24CPV8NP8...) 1/6

☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal makes faculty members feel and act like leaders.**

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Undecided

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal gives the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership role.**

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Undecided

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal leads by "doing" rather than simply by "telling."**

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Undecided

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal symbolizes success and accomplishment within the profession of education.**

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Undecided

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal provides good models for faculty members to follow.**

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Undecided

☐ Agree



☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal provides for our participation in the process of developing school goals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Undecided  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal encourages faculty members to work toward the same goals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Undecided  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal uses problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Undecided  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal works toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Undecided  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal regularly encourages faculty members to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Undecided  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal provides for extended training to develop my knowledge and skills relevant to being a member of the school faculty.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal provides the necessary resources to support my implementation of the school's program.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal takes my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect my work.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal challenges me to reexamine some basic assumptions I have about my work in the school.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal stimulates me to think about what I am doing for the school's students.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal provides information that helps me think of ways to implement the school's program.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal insists on only the best performance from the school's faculty.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal shows us that there are high expectations for the school's faculty as professionals.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

**My principal does not settle for second best in the performance of our work as the school's faculty.**

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree

2/29/2020

Qualtrics Survey Software

- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

## APPENDIX B– IRB Approval Letter

Office of  
Research Integrity



118 COLLEGE DRIVE #5125 • HATTIESBURG, MS | 601.266.6576 | USM.EDU/ORI

### NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below 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 regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and 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 involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-19-210

PROJECT TITLE: Impact of Transformational Leadership Behaviors of Administrators as Predictors of High Performing

and Low Performing Schools in Mississippi

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: School of Education

RESEARCHER(S): Audra Rester, David Lee

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt

CATEGORY: Exempt

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

APPROVED STARTING: July 22, 2019

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.  
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

## APPENDIX C- Permission to Use PLQ

Petal School District Mail - Seeking Permission

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=19be6bdf88&view=pt&q...>



Audra Rester <audra.rester@petalschools.com>

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### Seeking Permission

3 messages

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Audra Rester <audra.rester@petalschools.com>

Tue, Feb 11, 2014 at 4:34 PM

To: kenneth.leithwood@utoronto.ca

Cc: "jt.johnson@usm.edu" <jt.johnson@usm.edu>

Dear Dr. Leithwood,

I am a Ph.D candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi working with my committee chair Dr. David Lee. My dissertation study will seek to investigate a comparison of self-reported transformational leadership behaviors of administrators of high performing and low performing schools in Mississippi. The information this study will examine will be perceptions individual administrators have concerning transformational leadership behaviors.

I intend to survey administrators throughout the state of Mississippi who have accountability labels ranging from A, B, C, D, and F to compare results based on these ranges.

I would like to request your permission to use the Principal Leadership Questionnaire in the study. I would like to use the entire 24-item instrument in measuring the factor of principal transformational leadership. I would like to use the instrument as a self-reporting instrument by asking principals to rate themselves using the scale. I will make sure that appropriate references will be made of your work throughout my study.

I greatly admire and appreciate your contribution to the study of principal leadership. Your work has helped define and mold my own leadership skills as a elementary principal. I thank you in advanced for your willingness to consider allowing me the use of the Principal Leadership Questionnaire in my dissertation study. If you have any questions or concerns about my study, feel free to contact me at 601-270- 7292 or Dr. J. T. Johnson at jt.johnson@usm.edu or phone 601-266-5040.

Sincerely,

Audra Rester  
211 South 22nd Ave  
Hattiesburg, MS 3940

--

Audra Rester  
Principal, Petal Upper Elem School  
400 Hillcrest Loop  
Petal, MS 39465  
Phone: (601) 584-7660  
Fax: (601) 545- 1720

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Kenneth Leithwood <kenneth.leithwood@utoronto.ca>

Wed, Feb 12, 2014 at 5:33 AM

To: Audra Rester <audra.rester@petalschools.com>

You are welcome to use my survey. Good luck with your study.

## APPENDIX D– Directions to Complete Survey

Dear Fellow Educator:

The purpose of this research is to determine teachers' perspectives about the influence their principal has on student academic outcomes. The following questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you choose to participate in this study, your responses will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any way. If, however, any identifying information is inadvertently obtained during the course of this study, it will remain completely confidential. Participation is voluntary, and you are free to decline or discontinue your participation at any point without concern of penalty, prejudice, or any other negative consequence. By completing the questionnaire, respondents will have the opportunity to consider teachers' perceptions of the influence of principal leadership on student academic achievement.

After data from submitted questionnaires are collected, they will be combined and entered into a computer program for analysis. Following data analysis, the survey website will be closed, and any data stored on the survey site will be permanently deleted. Should results from this study be published or presented, the identity of all participants and schools will be protected. There are minimal anticipated risks to the participant. Findings from this study may be beneficial to educational administrators, educators, and the community.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Audra Rester using the contact information provided below.

This project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board, which ensured that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at 601-266-5997. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

By completing the online questionnaire, the respondent gives permission for this anonymous and confidential data to be used for the purposes described above. You must be 18 years or older to participate in this study.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance with this project.

Sincerely,  
Audra Rester  
audrarester@gmail.com  
222 Bramlett Blvd.  
Oxford, MS 38655

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