LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL SUCCESS:

THE BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS IN SUCCESSFUL

AT-RISK SCHOOLS

By

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Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty
Of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY STUDIES

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December 3, 2004
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Abstract

Students in many at-risk schools are not achieving at the same academic levels as their counterparts in middle-class schools. Many live in poverty, lack background experiences that would help them be successful, have parents who have not completed high school and may not speak English as their first language. The challenge for educators is how to ensure these students are successful despite these obstacles. This is even more critical today due to the rigid standards set by both state and federal legislation with the advent of the Standard of Learning tests in Virginia and the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. Students not meeting these standards will not be eligible to graduate from high school, a prerequisite for social and economic success in our society. A review of the literature indicates that the behaviors and practices of the principal influence and contribute to the success of students and leads to the thesis of this study: Effective leadership contributes to school success. Two key questions are asked: "What are the leadership behaviors and practices of principals in highly successful school with high concentrations of at-risk students?" and "How do principals in these schools influence the

learning outcomes to close the achievement gap?" This study answers these questions by examining the behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk schools with a study of one successful at-risk school supported by a survey of the teachers in that school and two other successful at-risk schools. The findings led to some of the following conclusions: the vision of the principal is paramount for school success; the culture of the school must be as nurturing to teachers as the students; the teaching of the curriculum is foremost; the principal protects time for teaching and provides programs to address individual students' differences; the culture must embrace families as it does teachers and students; the principal is sometimes a "benign dictator" who makes decisions without the consideration of the teachers, and the primary job of the principal is instructional leader. Some of the recommendations propose that principals in at-risk schools know and articulate a vision for their schools success; create a warm and nurturing environment for all stakeholders; know the curriculum and recognize effective classroom instruction; provide programs that address individual students' needs and time on task for learning; understand when they must be the "benign dictator" instead of a collaborative leader; and use effective managerial skills in order to perform the primary job of principal: instructional leader.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all principals who work with at-risk children in schools throughout this

country. They are heroes who strive daily to make every child successful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Steve Parson, for his invaluable support for this dissertation. I appreciate his frank guidance and assistance throughout the process. His expertise, combined with humor and a pleasant demeanor, guided my study. I also want to thank Dr. Walter Mallory for his invaluable help with the quantitative section of the study. I appreciate his constant encouragement as he navigated me through my data.

My family and friends have been particularly encouraging. My husband gave up many hours of family time so that I could work on this project. My children and my mother were my cheerleaders, continuingly prodding me on. My friends were also supportive, frequently expressing their interest by asking for the results. I am especially thankful for the friendship and support of the members of my cohort. I could not have completed this project without the encouragement of all of these people. I am humbled, and I am grateful for each of them.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter the problem of producing successful students and creating successful schools, despite such factors of poverty and students not speaking English as the first language is discussed. A theory is presented to connect the behaviors and practices of the principal to school success. A review of the literature is also presented

Context

For almost a decade I worked at a school that served students who are were over 60% minority and over one-half on free or reduced-price lunch. Nearly 50% percent spoke a language other than English as their primary language. Many of these students had parents who did not complete high school. A large number of the second language learners had parents who were illiterate in their primary language and did not speak English at all. On school tests of cognitive ability, most students scored in the average range, though many had scores far below average in verbal ability. They often lacked the background experiences that would have helped them be successful learners. These statistics and observations identified these students as at-risk for learning. It is very likely that many of them will drop out of school before completing high school.

Nationally, the numbers of children who live in poverty, are a minority, or speak a language other than English continues to be a concern for educators. The U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics reported the number of 5-17 year olds nationwide who live in households below the poverty level in 1999 was 16%; those living in large cities, 24%; and those living in rural area outside a large city, 18%. The number of 5-24

year-olds who spoke a language other than English at home rose 118 % from 1979-1999 or from a total of 8.5% of the population to 17.4%. The number of minority students increased by 17 % from 1972 to 2000, with a total of 39% of all children in grades K-12 being minorities. Hispanic students accounted for a large percentage of this growth. From 1972 to 2000, their numbers grew by 11% with a total of 17% of public school enrollment. (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003) Like the children in my school, these statistics put these children at-risk for learning and completing an education. It appears to me that children in this situation are in a downward spiral. Because they are children of poverty, or second language learners, or have uneducated parents, they are statistically at risk to never be successful learners and contributing members of society. I believe the number of children in this situation will continue to increase geometrically because children of poverty tend to remain in poverty as adults and have children that also live in poverty. This leads to continued and increased economic and social problems in the future.

In Virginia today, ensuring academic success for all students is more critical than ever. With the advent of the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, all students must meet and achieve certain standards to be eligible for a high school diploma. The new federal legislation, No Child Left Behind (Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001), also set increased, stringent standards. Though probably not a serious issue for higher socio-economic students, this becomes problematic for low socio-economic, at-risk students. Their economic status, lack of verbal ability and background experiences, possibly not speaking English as their primary language, and coming from homes with uneducated parents put them at an extreme disadvantage for academic success if they do not pass these tests and meet the standards. Unless

they pass these tests, they will not be able to graduate from high school, usually a prerequisite for social and economic success in our society.

I believed it was my job as a school principal to see that these students achieved academic success despite the issues listed above, and I continue to believe it is the responsibility of all principals to ensure the academic success of all the students in their schools. Of course, this is easier said than done. Research on at-risk students points in many directions and gives no definitive answers. However, research on school success and leadership begins to clarify how principals affect learning for all students, not just those at-risk.

In this chapter, I put forth a theory on school success, examine the research on leadership and school success and link these findings to leadership and success for at-risk student learning. A review of the literature focused on the key words of leadership, principals, administrators, successful schools, effective schools, at-risk schools, poverty, and student success. The chapter ends with an outline of the succeeding chapters.

Thesis

Over two decades ago, Edmonds (1979) focused his work on the academic achievement of the urban poor. Today we describe these children as being at-risk for learning. He believed that all children were educable, including these at-risk children, and the learning atmosphere of the school was responsible for the quality of education these children received. He also believed that the behavior of the administrator had a great impact on student success. He theorized then, and it carries through to today, that to have these children achieve at the same level as average middle-class children requires strong leadership. In discussing what he calls "the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools," Edmonds said, "they have strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be

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brought together nor kept together" (p.22). Based upon this and the review of the literature, the thesis of this study is: Effective leadership contributes to school success. The problem for principals in at-risk schools is how to ensure that all students are successful. This study will focus on behaviors and practices of principals that contribute to the success of students in successful at-risk schools.

Problem Statement

Students in most at-risk schools are not achieving at the same academic levels as their counterparts in average, middle-class schools. The problem is how we close this academic achievement gap so that these students achieve at the same level as their average, middle-class counterparts. The main questions are: "What are the leadership behaviors and practices of principals in highly successful schools with high concentrations of at-risk students?" and "How do principals in these schools influence the leaning outcomes to close the achievement gap?" To answer these questions, the following will guide my thinking during the research:

1. How do the principal's ideas for the success of the school impact learning in the school?

2. What does the principal do to ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively?

3. How are decisions connected to teaching and learning made in the school?

4. How do school personnel work with families and the community?

5. What are the principal's management practices?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the behaviors and practices of a principal in a highly successful at-risk school that influence the learning environment of the school and contribute to the success of the school.   Associating and relating these behaviors and practices

with student achievement will provide a framework for other principals to use as they work to close the gap in achievement for at-risk children in their schools.

<div align="center">Conceptual Framework</div>

Recent studies focus on specifics of leadership and are not just a listing of the correlates of effective schools. These specifics include behaviors and practices of leadership in regard to five domains: Vision, Mission, and Culture; Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; Collaboration and Shared Leadership; Family and Community Involvement; and Effective Management. Looking at the behaviors and practices in the domains listed above, a theory of how effective leaders use these behaviors and practices to influence the learning community of the school to create a successful school was formed.

I believe the principal is the key component of a successful school, and without a strong principal who is able to deeply and profoundly influence all the areas listed above through behaviors and practices, a successful school is not possible or probable. Therefore, my theory is an effective principal influences and impacts every aspect of the school, as listed in the domains. The products of this influence and impact are students who meet academic standards and schools that are deemed successful.

Graphically, this theory (Figure 1) is shown with the behaviors and practices of the school principal and school success being the focal and beginning and ending points of the theory. The theory is that the behaviors and practices of the principal have influence on all aspects of the learning community, which leads to school success. First and foremost, the behaviors and practices of the principal influence the key domain, the vision of the school. This school vision is crucial and is essential in guiding the school toward success. Next, the practices and behaviors of the principal also influence other domains of the learning community: Vision, Mission, and

Behaviors and Practices of an Effective Principal

↓

Domain of Principal: Vision

↓

Domains of the Learning Community:
       Vision, Mission, Culture
       Curriculum and Classroom Instruction
       Family and Community Involvement
       Collaboration and Shared Leadership
       Effective Management

↓

Student Mastery of Skills

↓
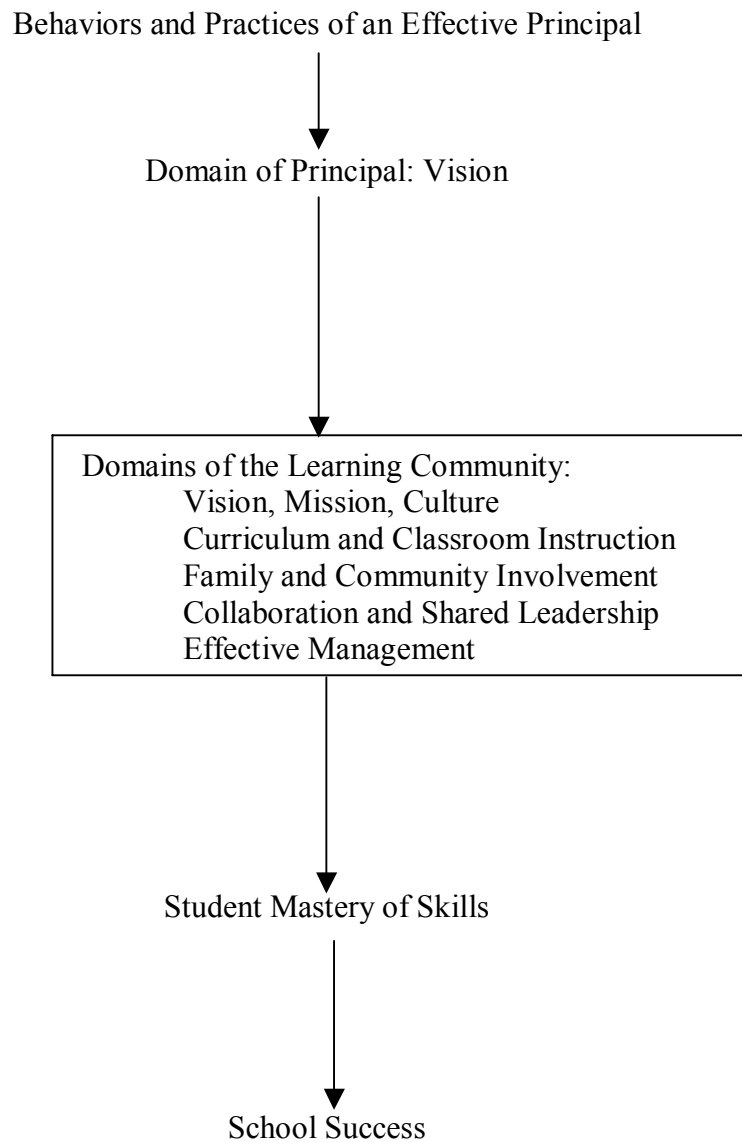
School Success

Figure 1. How the behaviors and practices of an effective principal contribute to school success

Culture; Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; Collaboration and Shared Leadership; Family and Community Involvement; and Effective Management. The behaviors and practices of the principal influence and impact both the vision of the school and the other domains of the learning community. These all work in concert to influence the student's mastery of skills and school success.

Literature Review

It is the opinion of many educators across the county today that the leadership of the school principal is the key component in school success. Barth (1990) said, "The principal is the key to a good school" (p. 64) and even went further by stating, "Show me a good school and I will show you a good principal" (p. 64). The principal, as the school leader, is often identified as the dominant force behind successful schools (Bell, 2001; Green, 1994). Edmonds (1979) said one of "the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools" is that they have strong administrative leadership (p. 22). He also said, in evaluating high achieving and low-achieving schools, that "Administrative behavior, policies, and practices in the schools appeared to have a significant impact on school effectiveness" (p. 16).

Beyond calling these effective principals instructional or transformation leaders, few researchers focused on the behaviors of these leaders or on giving concrete examples of what these leaders do to influence student learning. Extensive investigation helped weed out the behaviors and practices of leaders in successful schools, which may be different at different times in the school's history. Cawelti (1999) wrote that the leadership of a school "varies with the stage at which a particular school exists in its long-term evolution" (p. 64). Therefore trying to describe or identify these behaviors and practices is complex and convoluted. Further inquiry

led to the discovery of the uniqueness of leadership in successful schools and, in particular, at-risk schools.

Research studies of leadership and student academic achievement are complex due to the many variables that effect school success. Andrew and Soder (1987) found greater gains in student academic achievement in schools with strong principal leadership. They said, "...the school principal is critical in ensuring academic achievement, especially for black and low income students" (p. 9). The research was based on a two-year study in 33 elementary schools in the Seattle School District in 1984 and 1985. Student academic achievement was measured by gains in individual achievement on the student normal curve equivalent on the California Achievement Test. Base line scores were taken in 1982 and data was disaggregated for students who had been in the same school for two years at the end of 1984. Data was also aggregated for all students by ethnicity and free-lunch status. A questionnaire was administered to all school instructional staff to measure 18 strategic interactions between the principal and teachers in terms of the principal as a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and a visible presence. The researchers, using data from the questionnaire, divided the principals into categories of leadership: strong, average, and weak. Student academic gains were compared across the groups of principals. They found the greatest gains in academic achievement, as measured by the normal equivalent gain scores, in schools with strong leaders. See Table 1 for a comparison of academic gains by leader. In analyzing data for at-risk schools, there were even greater academic gains in schools with strong leaders than in schools with weak leaders. The researchers said …

…free-lunch students' gains in total reading ranged from 5.9 points over the two years in strong-leader schools to 1.1 points in weak-leader schools. Black students' gains in total

Reading and Math Two-Year Gain Scores

(1982-1984) by Group

Group	All Schools (n=33)	Strong Leader (n=11)	Average Leader (n=11)	Weak Leader (n=11)	F-Test Significance
Total Reading Gain 1982-1984					
All Students	2.7	4.8	1.6	1.8	.02*
Ethnic Groups					
White	2.5	4.3	1.8	1.5	.10
Black	2.4	4.8	1.5	.9	.06
Surrogate SES					
No Lunch	2.9	4.8	1.9	2.1	.09
Free Lunch	3.0	5.9	2.0	1.1	.00**
Total Math Gain 1982-1984					
All Students	1.8	4.5	-.41	1.2	.04*
Ethnic Groups					
White	1.1	3.5	-1.9	1.5	.04*
Black	1.2	4.4	1.3	-2.3	.01**
Surrogate SES					
No Lunch	1.5	3.8	-.93	1.60	.14
Free Lunch	2.2	6.0	.83	-.09	.01**

 * = Significant beyond .05 level.
** = Significant beyond .01 level.

Table 1. Reading and Math Two Year Gain Scores (Andrews and Soder, 1987, p. 10)

mathematics ranged from 4.4 points in strong-leader schools, but students in weak-leader schools lost an average of 2.3 points over the same period. (p. 11)

In studying the relationship of principals to students' academic success, it becomes obvious that principals cannot directly effect student achievement. That is to say, principals do not deliver instruction to students, as do teachers, who may have a direct effect on student achievement. However the behaviors and practices of principals have an indirect impact and influence student achievement. Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) agree that principals have an indirect affect on learning and say:

In managing the work structure of the school, principals do not affect the academic achievement of individual students in the same manner that teachers do, that is, through direct classroom instruction. Principals may, however, impact teaching and classroom practices through such school decisions as formulating school goals, setting and communicating high achievement expectations, organizing classrooms for instruction, allocating necessary resources, supervising teachers' performance, monitoring student progress, and promoting a positive, orderly environment for learning. (p. 95)

In a study on principal leadership and reading achievement, Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) found that the leadership of the principal had an indirect, not direct, impact on student achievement. The study sample included 87 schools in Tennessee from 1982 to 1986. Principal and teacher questionnaires and students' reading criterion-referenced tests provided the data. Analyzing the data with a form of path analysis, the researchers could not find any direct cause between principal leadership and reading achievement. However, they found a significant relationship ($p < .01$) between the principal's leadership and the school climate. After review of

the data, the researchers concluded that the socio-economic status of the school, parent involvement, and the gender (female) of the principal had a significant impact on the principal's instructional leadership. They concluded that females were more instructional leaders, whereas, males tended to be more managerial. This leadership significantly impacted school climate, which impacted student achievement. Therefore, the researchers contend that the leadership of the principal had an indirect impact on student achievement.

The review of the literature on leadership and school success centered on the behaviors and practices of principals in successful schools. There was a definite attempt to isolate the research done only with at-risk populations, but that was not always possible. Though there is extensive research on successful schools, the number of studies on leadership and at-risk schools is limited. It was evident from the review of the literature that leadership is important to school success. Several areas of effective leadership emerged from the review. These are in the domains of Vision, Mission, and Culture; School Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; Collaboration and Shared Leadership; Family and Community Involvement; and Effective Management.

School Vision, Mission, and Culture

It is difficult to separate the vision, mission, and culture from one another because each one supports and affects the others. The vision is the primary and major influence on both the mission and culture of the school. Vision can be defined as foresight and forethought. It is the dream of where the principal wants the school to be in the future. The mission is the charge-- how to achieve the vision. Deal and Peterson (1999) wrote that the mission is the "… focus of what people do" (p. 23). The culture in a school reflects the vision and mission of the school. In defining culture, Deal and Peterson (1999) wrote it "consists of the stable, underlying social

meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time" (p. 3). Simply stated, it is the way things are done in the school. The vision is the dream; the mission is how to achieve the dream; and the culture is how the school acts and feels in accomplishing the mission to fulfill the vision or dream.

Successful principals have a vision for the schools and articulate the vision to staff, parents, and students. Smith and Andrews (1989) say "Communication of vision is perhaps the most important way for a principal to exert effective leadership—to leave no doubt about school priorities" (p. 16). These principals know what they expect for the school and students and are able to infect others with that dream, a positive and beneficial contagion.

It is the vision of the school that leads the way to accomplishing the goals of the school (Uchiyama & Wolf, 2002). DuFour and Eaker (1998) say the vision motivates the staff to work together and gives it a sense of direction for what they want to accomplish in the future. Educational leaders today must have a vision of where their school is going and have a plan for getting there (US Department of Education, 1999).

Successful leaders share their vision and encourage others to enhance the vision in order to have a shared vision within the school. Sebring and Bryk (2000) say principals in effective schools articulate their vision for their schools and have teachers and parents elaborate and shape their vision. DuFour and Eaker (1998) call this co-creating. They say this is critical because, "A vision will have little impact until it is widely shared and accepted and until it connects with the personal visions of those within the school" (p. 65). DuFour and Eaker (1992) said that the faculty who had a shared vision benefited because the shared vision motivated and energized people; created a proactive organization; gave direction to people with the organization; established specific standards of excellence; and created a clear agenda for action.

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Vision is also a key factor in implementing change. Edwards (1998) found the vision of the principal a key factor in implementing change in a high involvement school. In this qualitative study, the researcher completed a case study of an elementary school undergoing school renewal in southwestern Virginia in 1998. Data were gathered using interviews, observations, and review of documents. She discovered that the principal saw a need for change after attending conferences, traveling around the state, and conferring with teachers. From these experiences, the principal began to develop a vision of where the school was to go and how to implement that vision. The principal relinquished long-held personal beliefs and began to develop a vision, which evolved with the efforts of the staff. This shared vision led to participatory and shared leadership in the school that was a strong factor in implementing change.

The vision of the principal influences the mission of the school. Everyone needs to understand the mission of the school in order to accomplish the vision. This importance cannot be understated. Papalewis and Fortune (2002) said:

Above all, leadership and stewardship in a school mandate the development of a clear mission. This does not mean that only the principal is aware of the mission statement. It means that as a school leader, the principal must involve everyone in the school in recognizing, enforcing, and implementing the mission statement. The statement must become a daily concrete objective. (p. 12)

Papalewis and Fortune (2002) cited examples of successful schools in which the goals that reflect the mission statement are displayed in every classroom. In these schools everyone knew the direction of the school and the posted goals in the halls and classrooms reflected their knowledge and commitment.

The vision is the foundation of the culture of a school. The culture reflects the vision of the principal and staff and is the way of life in the school and is how things are done in the school. The principal is the most potent factor in determining the culture (Barth, 1990). Successful school cultures are focused on the learning of all students (Deal & Peterson, 1999) and everyone in the school knows that learning comes first (Druian & Butler, 1987). When learning is the central purpose of schooling, and all work is focused on this purpose, a school is likely to be successful (Maehr & Parker, 1993).

In successful schools there is a culture that shows everyone focused around learning. Connell (1999) described these schools as where everyone was involved in the work of the school. In her New York City study of high performing and high poverty schools, she found that a staff focused on engagement in the school is an important aspect of school success. She said:

> The primary thing is for the principal to be engaged in his school. There is a not a high achieving school where the staff isn't serious about their work and where they're not focused. You can sense that people in a building are moving in the same direction. Everybody knows their job and why they're there…even the lunch-room aide. In low-achieving schools, everyone is an island unto themselves. (p. 17)

In summary, the vision of the principal is the key element in successful schools. Using this vision, the leader is then able to influence the mission of the school and create a culture of learning and success for all students.

Curriculum and Classroom Instruction

Successful schools are defined as schools where all students master basic skills or meet state or local standards. Druin and Butler (1987) said effective schools are those in which all students master priority objectives. With the advent of the new federal legislation on education,

the No Child Left Behind Act (Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001), successful schools are defined as those making adequate yearly progress on defined benchmarks. For the purposes of this study, in Virginia, successful schools are those accredited by achieving passing scores on the Standards of Learning tests. In these schools, both the administrator and the staff believe that all students can learn and the behavior of both confirms this belief. Promoting student learning is a priority for successful principals (Forsyth & Tallericao, 1998). These principals are deeply involved in the instructional program (Bell, 2001; Druin & Butler, 1987). They know the curriculum and they understand and promote excellent classroom instruction. They are the key to good schools and are instrumental to the quality of the educational program (Barth, 1990).

These highly successful principals are frequently called instructional leaders. Members of a policy forum on leadership from the United States Department of Education (U. S. Department of Education, 1999) identified characteristics of effective instructional leaders. This policy forum consisted of 43 participants that included successful school leaders and teachers, state policy makers, educational foundation representatives, consultants, and U. S. Department of Education officials. Their goal was to explore the major issues involved in creating effective leadership for today's schools. The participants in this forum felt classroom instruction is a critical piece of effective schools. They said:

> Leaders in these districts have a deep understanding of teaching and learning, including new teaching methods that emphasize problem solving and student construction of knowledge. Good instructional leaders have a strong commitment to success for all students, and are especially committed to improving instruction for groups of students who are not learning now. (p. 4)

Successful principals create an environment for learning. They must set high standards for teaching, allow teachers to take risks and try new methods of teaching, and understand how students learn (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Keeping the curriculum foremost is paramount for the success of the school. In studying successful at-risk schools in California, Papalewis and Fortune (2002) illustrated the value of curriculum when they quoted a teacher in their study who said, "The curriculum is visible in everything we do, how we work together, and what we use to teach, and what we do in the classroom" (p. 19). This qualitative study, done in California with 13 high-achieving and high-poverty schools with children of color, looked at the leadership in these schools in relation with student achievement.   Nine team members were trained in qualitative participatory research methods and taught how to do structured interviews, examine documents, and observe classrooms. They concluded that the teaching of the curriculum was a vital component of school success. They said teachers emphasized the curriculum in every school visited and said "The curriculum and instruction are not only goals…but also vehicles that take us where we want to go" (p. 19). Practices identified from most of the schools relate to the integrity of their schools' curriculum and instruction.

In successful schools, principals are not fixtures in the front office. They are involved in the instructional program of the school (Lomotey, 1989; Whitaker, 1997). They know what is going on instructionally because they are visible in every classroom. They make frequent classroom visitations, most visiting daily (Davenport & Anderson, 2002; Papalewis & Fortune, 2002; Whitaker, 1997).

Frequent and meaningful assessment of student learning and curriculum objectives is a dominant feature of successful schools. Principals in these schools are data driven. Effective leaders use a variety of data, analyze it in different ways, use the data to guide instruction, and

create a culture where the staff is comfortable in using data (The National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001). These principals use frequent assessments to provide input to staff on student success and needs and to drive instruction (Papalewis & Fortune, 2002). Some principals even assess students themselves (Papalewis & Fortune, 2002; Stimson, 1995). In the Papalewis and Fortune (2002) California study, the principals assessed new students when they registered to determine the academic levels of the students. They wanted to be able to quickly plan a program to meet each child's needs and set educational goals. These principals also met with the parents at that time to explain the students' academic levels and the school's plans for their children.

In the successful Brazosport Independent School District in Texas (Davenport & Anderson, 2002), assessment is an integral part of the instructional program. Student data were disaggregated and used to form proficiency groups for students. This grouping determined instruction for the students. For example, "Bubble" students needed to work in specific skill areas and required tutoring, and "Reteach" students did not grasp the material and needed intensive remediation. Teachers were given up to 70 minutes daily to analyze student performance and determine instruction. In addition, students met with the principal in a "Principal Test Talk" to discuss their progress on the assessments.

Successful teaching of the curriculum and effective instruction is seldom possible if the school staff does not have the opportunity for continuous learning. Staff development for both the staff and principal is a significant component of success. Andrews and Soder (1987) wrote, "The principal sets expectations for continual improvement of the instructional program and actively engages in staff development" (p. 9). Barth (1990) wrote that the principal needs to be a learner. Furthermore he stated, "The principal is the most important reason why teachers grow—

or are stifled on the job" (Barth, 1990, p. 64). In the Papalewis and Fortune (2002) study, the staffs of the successful schools found staff development a key to success. Because so many of the students did not speak English as a first language, the schools implemented staff training in English language development in order to help teachers have a better understanding of how to teach these students.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

Collaboration is another key characteristic of successful schools. Successful principals empower staff through collaboration and shared leadership. They encourage risk taking and problem solving (Davenport & Anderson, 2002). Bell (2001) in a report from a symposium of High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools in Sacramento, California in December 2000 discussed reasons for the high performances of the schools. A dialogue between nationally known researchers, such as Joyce Epstein from Johns Hopkins University and Patricia Davenport from the American Productivity and Quality Center, and the school participants concluded the session with lessons learned for future work. In addition to restating the value of strong principal leadership, they said, "Effective site leadership also meant shared leadership" (p. 5). They also said this shared leadership was an integral part of how schools conducted business. The staff could be trusted to make academic and instructional decisions.

Marzano (2003) advocated leadership teams for successful schools. He said, "Leadership for change is most effective when carried out by a small group of educators with the principal serving as a strong cohesive force" (p. 174). This shared leadership is also recommended for improving school achievement (Pounder & Ogawa, 1995). Kimbal and Sirotnik (2000) suggested that collaborative leadership is a solution to the problems of urban schools. They said they are looking for "…creative combinations of leadership teams that work in collaborative and

empowering ways with teachers and the community to continually improve educational practices" (p. 542).

Schlechty (1991) used the term, participatory leadership, instead of shared or collaborative leadership. He believed it takes this type of leadership to create a school vision that leads to an effective school. Friedkin and Slater (1994) encouraged collaboration between the principal and staff and called the principal the "senior colleague". Chapman (1998) found that sharing leadership and empowering teachers were key components in a study of professional treatment of teachers and student achievement. In this dual quantitative and qualitative study, he used student achievement data, teacher surveys, and group interviews for data to support his hypothesis that fourth grade students score higher on achievement tests in schools where teachers believe their administrators treat them professionally. For the fourth grade achievement scores, he used scores on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills from 1990 to 1994. Mean scores on the annual surveys conducted by the Virginia Beach Education Association from 1989 to 1994 were used to create a professional treatment index.

Interviews of thirty teachers, conducted in six sessions with five teachers, were used to obtain a better of understanding of professional and unprofessional treatment. Using regression analyses and analyses of variance, Chapman concluded there was a relationship between professional treatment of teachers and student achievement. The regression analyses showed a relationship ($\underline{p} \leq .05$) for three out of the seven years he studied the data and the analyses of variance significant showed differences ($p \leq .05$) in student achievement in schools grouped by levels of professional treatment. He said these analyses support studies that principal's leadership has a bearing on student achievement. In the focus groups, schools that ranked high in professional treatment identified leadership attributes that contribute to school climate and

empower the staff to improve teaching, such as confidence, encouragement, and support, while schools ranked high in nonprofessional treatment identified such attributes of being non-supportive, untrusting, and uncaring.

One researcher on school renewal found the principal a supporter of the process, but not an active participant. Leadership in this case was abrogated to a renewal committee with the principal reserving the right to override the committee decisions (Hess, 1998). In this qualitative case study, the researcher was the chairperson of the Planning School Renewal Committee and was an active participant in the case study. Her case study resulted in a "rich, descriptive narrative describing the school renewal process in one rural elementary and middle school in southwestern Virginia" (p. 17). The data for the case study came from observational and interview data, research journal reflections, and documentary analyses (p.17). She concluded, "that the principal's role was one of a self-proclaimed democratic leader who supported committee decisions and allowed committee members to act upon and implement decisions made during committee sessions" (p. 37). This allowed the teachers to become leaders themselves in the renewal process and allowed school renewal to work. One teacher said that if the principal had been autocratic, then the process would not have worked.

Family and Community Involvement

There is an old saying that says if we line students up by academic success; the most successful will have parents who are intensely involved in their education. Knowing this is usually true, successful administrators and schools strive to form meaningful relationships with family and community members. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) advocated family involvement and wrote, "Partnerships with families are a necessary condition of any really worthwhile progress with children" (p. 696). Professional organizations, such as the National Association for

Elementary School Principals (2001), list family and community involvement as one of the standards for administrators. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders (1996) has established the following Standard: "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success for all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources" (p.16).

Successful schools make sure parents are involved. Papalewis and Fortune (2002) in their California qualitative study of thirteen high-performing and high minority schools found that these schools had a strong relationship with their community and the families of the students they teach.   In these schools communication was sent home in two languages for non-English speaking families; parents were taught how to work with their students at home; and parents were encouraged to be in involved in the school.

In a study of high achieving schools that serve at-risk students, Cawelti (1999) frequently referred to the leadership of the principal with community involvement as one of the variables for school success. In his qualitative study of Clay Elementary School in Clay, West Virginia, he discussed the parental and business involvement in this school with free or reduced-price meal percentage at 83% of the 580 students who attended the school. Despite the limited number of businesses, the school had partnerships with 17 local businesses and agencies. In addition, they had a variety of programs to keep parents involved and informed: PTO activities to raise funds such as dances and carnivals; a Parents are Teachers Too program, to help parents support reading at home; training for parent to be tutors; and a Family Math Program to encourage parent to work with their students at home with math. Efforts by the school resulted in achievement scores higher than predicted by the income level of their families.

Effective Management

Though there are many reasons people aspire to be principals, many feel they can make a difference in the lives of students by being an effective instructional leader. However, they quickly learn that to be successful they must wear many hats and just being good instructional leaders may not make them or their schools successful. Principals must be keepers of the vision, culture builders, community builders, and collaborators in addition to instructional leaders. Successful school principals also have excellent management of resources, time, and discipline in addition to the management of instruction. Principals who cannot obtain the necessary resources for teachers, cannot hire the most competent staff, cannot schedule and protect time for teaching, and cannot create a climate where the students are well-disciplined and cognizant of school goals, cannot be successful.

Andrews and Morefield (1991) wrote that a principal obtains the resources in the school, the district, and the community to achieve the school's vision. Principals use effective management skills to acquire whatever the schools need to accomplish their goals (Barth, 1990; Bell, 2001). These include academic and social support (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Many principals of at-risk schools find they need to seek medical and social services for their students before they can have successful school experiences. Members of The United States Government Policy Forum on Effective Leadership stated, "Education leaders must be able to work with other community agencies and organizations to create structures to address the social service needs of children and families" (U. S. Department of Education, 1999, p. 7).

Successful principals understand the management relationship between a safe learning environment and academic success. One of the standards for effective leaders from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996) is the following: "A school administrator is an

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educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment" (p.14). Principals who meet this standard are effective managers of the instructional program and have strong discipline programs and a safe and secure learning environment. All of these are necessary for an effective school. Children and staff alike must feel safe and secure for learning to take place. Durian and Butler (1987) wrote that strong discipline programs ensure everyone can learn. Administrators who are able to create and manage well-disciplined schools ensure time on task for learning.

Effective principals are able to tap resources needed to make all students successful. In less successful schools, the ability to manage effectively is frequently hindered by the lack of resources available and the ability to obtain those resources. Principals in all schools, and most importantly in at-risk schools, need the autonomy to hire the best staffs, manipulate time for student learning, plan and implement academic and discipline programs to meet student needs, and access social programs and medical care for students and families. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) addressed the unique issues facing principals by stating that districts, states, and the federal government "…should promote the capacity of principals to assure quality instruction" (p. 79). These include the ability to increase staff, obtain academic resources, increase instructional time, provide staff development, and provide extended day programs for students.

<div align="center">Need for Further Investigation of Thesis</div>

This chapter began with summarizing the need for assuring academic success, in light of state and federal legislation, for all students, particularly those considered at-risk for learning. After reviewing the literature on leadership in highly successful schools, to include at-risk

schools, I discovered five areas in which the behaviors and practices of the principal influence school success. These are in the areas of vision, mission, and culture; school curriculum and classroom instruction; collaboration and shared leadership; family and community involvement; and efficient management. From this literature review a thesis evolved: Effective leadership contributes to school success. In the forthcoming section, the process to collect the data will be examined to see if there is a relationship between behaviors and practices of principals and school success. The main questions to be answered by this study are: "What are the leadership behaviors and practices of principals in highly successful schools with high concentrations of at-risk students?" and "How do principals in these schools influence the learning outcomes to close the achievement gap?" If the thesis is supported, behaviors and practices of principals that influence student academic success and successful schools will be identified.

<p style="text-align:center">Outline of Succeeding Chapters</p>

In Chapter 2, the thesis of the study is restated and key vocabulary is defined. The population and sample and methods of data collections are also identified. The procedures for analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study are discussed.

In Chapter 3, the data from the qualitative study, the school study, are identified and discussed. These data are presented by the domains of the study.

In Chapter 4, the data from the quantitative study, the survey, are presented. The data are analyzed for descriptive statistics, reliability scores, and factor analysis.

In Chapter 5, there is a discussion of the findings from the school study and the survey. Conclusions are drawn and the theory is partially confirmed and revised. The limitations of the study are discussed and the implications of the findings and recommendations are suggested. Recommendations for further study are presented.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, which is a case study supported by a survey. Key vocabulary is defined and the population and sample are identified. Both the qualitative and quantitative procedures for collecting and analyzing data are discussed in this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk elementary schools. The thesis of this study is: Effective leadership contributes to school success. After reviewing the literature, two key questions surfaced that framed the groundwork of the study: "What are the leadership behaviors and practices of principals in highly successful schools with high concentrations of at-risk children?" and "How do principals in these schools influence learning outcomes to close the achievement gap?" These questions were answered by means of a combined qualitative and quantitative study of highly successful at-risk schools. A case study thoroughly scrutinized the behaviors and practices of the principal related to the vision of the principal and the domains of Vision, Mission, and Culture; Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; Collaboration and Shared Leadership; Family and Community Involvement; and Effective Management. As part of the triangulation, a survey composed of questions from the five domains was administered to the teachers of the case study school and two other schools. Factor analytic procedures and descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the survey data. This section includes a discussion of the methodology and a synopsis of the process.

Significance of the Study

The review of the literature identified key areas that were significant in successful schools. This study is important because each of those areas were examined in relationship to the behaviors and characteristics of successful principals.   It is my goal to provide principals, in schools with similar demographics some concrete data on specific behaviors and practices that contribute appreciably to student academic success and ultimately to the overall success of schools.

Definitions

Successful Schools

 For the purposes of this study, successful schools in Virginia are those schools that meet or exceed the benchmarks on the 2003 Standards of Learning tests and are full accredited. Schools that are fully accredited meet the pass rate of 70% in the four core academic areas: language arts, math, science, and social studies (Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, 2000)

At-risk Schools

At-risk schools are schools that meet the federal guidelines for Title I schools and have over 50% of students on free and reduced-price lunch status.

School vision

Kouzes and Posner (1995) define vision "as an ideal and unique image of the future" (p. 95). In a school it is the underlying idea(s) of the principal for the success of the school.

Shared vision

A shared vision is the vision of the principal that has been expanded by the staff to create a vision for student success for the whole school. Kouzes and Posner (1995) said that not only the

leader must have a vision, but also the organization must share that vision in order to implement change. They believe everyone must understand, accept, and commit to the vision.

Mission

The mission is what the school does to accomplish the vision. Deal and Peterson (1999) say "it is the focus of what people do" (p. 23). They add that it is the intangible that motivates teachers to teach, school leaders to lead, children to learn, and parents and the community to have confidence in their school.

Culture

The culture is the way the staff behaves to accomplish the vision and mission of the school. Deal and Petersen (1999) say it is the shared beliefs and values that closely knit a community together.

Curriculum

The curriculum is the program of studies required by the state for students.

Classroom instruction

Classroom instruction is the way teachers deliver the curriculum or the methods they use to teach the students the curriculum.

Collaboration

Collaboration is how the staff, community, the principal work together to accomplish the goals of the school. Kouzes and Posner (1995) describe it as the "we not I" philosophy (p. 152). They add that leadership is even more essential in collaboration and that leaders must develop three goals to foster collaboration: "develop cooperative goals, seek integrative solutions, build trusting relationship" (p. 154).

Family and community involvement

Family and community involvement is the partnership between the family and community and the school. Epstein (2001) says, "Along with curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and staff development, a program of school, family, and community connections is now viewed as one of the components of school organization that may help to promote student learning and success in school" (p. 38). The Connecticut State Board of Education defines these partnerships as " the continuous planning, support and participation of school personnel, families and community organizations in coordinated activities and efforts at home, in the school and in the community that directly and positively affect the success of all children's learning" (Epstein, 2001, p. 317).

Management

Management is the process used by the principal to obtain resources for teaching, hire the most qualified staff, manipulate time for learning, and create a climate where students are well disciplined and safe.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study was the case study enhanced with descriptive statistics and factor analysis of a survey. I chose the case study as the method of inquiry because, as Merriam (2001) says, "Qualitative case studies can be characterized as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic" (p. 29). First, she said that focusing on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon makes it particularistic. Using this definition, this study focused on a successful at-risk school. Next she said that, "Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (p. 29). The rich description in this study came from the interviews, observations, and document reviews completed during the case study. Lastly, she said heuristic characteristic of the case study means

that the reader has an understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, I used the data to evaluate and explain the findings discovered during the study to draw conclusions.

I also chose the case study as the methodology because of its many advantages. Cohen and Manion (1991) said the advantages of case studies are:

1. The data is strong in reality, down-to-earth and attention holding, in harmony with the reader's own experiences, and thus provide a natural basis for generalization.

2. They allow generalizations either about an instance or from an instance to a class.

3. They recognize the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths.

4. They may form an archive of descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation.

5. They are "a step to action". They begin in a world of action and contribute to it.

6. They present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research. The language of the case study is not dependent on specialized interpretation; thus, it is capable of serving multiple audiences. (p. 150)

The use of the survey strengthened and enhanced the total study. The survey was administered to the teachers from the school used in the case study and two other schools that meet the criteria for the research. I analyzed the data from the survey for descriptive statistics, reliability scores, and factor analysis. The survey data confirmed, refuted, and enhanced some of the findings of the qualitative study. Both the data from the school study and the survey confirmed, refuted, enhanced the findings of the literature review.

Population and Sample

The population was made up of schools in Virginia that meet the requirements for Title I schools due to their poverty level. Poverty level is determined by the percentage of students on

free and reduced-priced lunch. I chose the sample from the state's list of schools' percentages of students on free and reduced-priced lunch.

Criteria for Selection

The schools selected for the sample were Title I school in the Commonwealth of Virginia that were fully accredited, as established by the Virginia Standards of Quality and determined by passing scores on the Standards of Learning Tests, for the last two years, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years. In addition, the schools met the following criteria:

1. Free and reduced-price lunch students at or above 50%

2. Minority students level at or above 50%

3. Number of students who speak English as a second language over 25%

4. Elementary school in grade levels from pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and do not exceed sixth grade

5. Principal in school for at least three years

Procedure for Selection of the Sample

To determine which schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia met my criteria for study, I searched the Virginia Department of Education Web Site and obtained the Free and Reduced-priced lunch statistics for Virginia schools. Data was available for the 2002/2003 School year. I copied the data file into the Excel program. Then I sorted and removed schools that had the following characteristics: free and reduced-priced lunch percentages under 50%, grade levels above grade 6, and schools that did not have at least grades pre-kindergarten or kindergarten to grades five or six. After the data was sorted, there were 300 schools with grades from pre-kindergarten or kindergarten to grades five or six and with free and reduced-priced lunch percentages above 50%.

Next, I used the individual School Report Cards found on the Virginia Department of Education Web Site to see which schools were accredited using passing scores on the SOL tests. Of these 300 schools, 127 schools had passed the SOLs for the reporting year, 2001-2002. Looking at the student ethnic and minority demographic data on each report card, I quickly eliminated 100 of the schools. These schools did not have high numbers of these students in either category. Next I had to establish which of the 27 remaining schools would meet the criteria for ESOL students above 25% and the principal tenure criteria.

To determine which of these schools met the criteria of over 25% ESOL students and the principal in the building for at least three years, I followed the following procedure:

1. I searched specific school district and specific school web sites for the data

2. I e-mailed principals of schools where I needed specific data and requested the information

3. I wrote letters to principals of schools where I needed specific data and included stamped returned envelopes for them to return the requested data

4. I phoned some schools and asked specific questions concerning principal tenure and ESOL statistics

I also looked at the SOL scores for the 2002-2003 school year on the Virginia Department of Education Web Site to determine which of these 27 schools had passing scores on the SOLs that would give them two years of being accredited. Using the data collected from the search described above, I determined that eleven schools in Virginia met the following criteria for my study:

Free and reduced-price lunch students above 50%

Minority students level at or above 50%

Number of students who speak English as a second language over 25%

Elementary school in grade levels that do not exceed sixth grade

Passing scores for the SOLs for the past two years

Principal in school for at least three year

Nine of these schools were located in the northern Virginia area, and two schools were in the Harrisonburg area.

<div align="center">Consent for Research and Confidentiality</div>

Permission for research was obtained from Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Services, Office of Research Compliance on November 3, 2003. I assured each person interviewed of confidentially, and I had them sign a consent form agreeing to the conditions for research. See Appendix A for the consent form. For purposes of confidentiality, the schools used in the study and the names of persons interviewed are identified with pseudonyms.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Having determined the population and the sample, the next step was to select the study school and proceed with data collection. The methods of data collections used in this study are interviews, observations, review of the documents, and survey.

Site Selection

The first step was to choose the school for the case study. Since nine of the schools were located in northern Virginia, I decided to select a school that was a convenient drive from my home. I decided not to select the one school in the school district where I lived because I wanted to be totally unbiased. I knew the principal and some of the teachers at this school and felt my findings would be influenced by these relationships. I talked to several people who were

knowledgeable of the schools in one of the other school districts and asked for recommendations for a study school. Knowing I would be spending several days in the school, I wanted to find one with a convenient and easily accessible location. Though each school that met my criteria in this district has a superb reputation, after much contemplation, I finally settled on a school that was less than an hour's drive from my home and easily assessable from a major highway. The school was also located in a school district that allows a researcher to study one school with only the permission of the principal. I knew that this school would provide me with easier access to the data I needed if I only had to obtain the permission of the principal for study.

To set the stage for my study, one of my professors and a friend of the principal, volunteered to call the principal, introduce me, and outline my study and request to visit the school. The principal immediately agreed to a preliminary meeting. We met early one morning in his office and I outlined my study and expectations. He appeared delighted to have me study his school and welcomed me with open arms. The principal in this school also had the authority to grant me permission to study his school. He extended an open invitation for me to visit his school, observe classrooms, and talk to his staff at any time. He agreed to inform his staff of my visits and also the purpose of the study. During the second semester of the 2003-2004 school year, I visited the school many times. I was treated warmly, and I freely visited many classrooms and talked with staff, students, and parents. The school is referred to in this study as Study School.

Interviews

Before beginning interviews at Study School, I developed an interview protocol based on information from Merriam (2001). She said the type of interview determines the type of questions used in the interview. The three types of interview questions she identified are:

highly structured, semistructured, and unstructured. It is not uncommon to use all three in most studies. Merriam (2001) advised on making an interview guide, which is a list of questions to be used in the interview. I decided to use all three types of questions and based the interview questions on the five domains derived from the literature review. Separate questions were developed for the principal and for the teachers. See Appendix B for the Interview Guide.

Using the interview guide, I conducted a pilot interview with an elementary school principal in my school district to see if the questions were appropriate and to develop and refine my interviewing skills. The pilot interview also helped me practice working with the recording machines. I learned that interviewing is very difficult, and that I had to work diligently not to interject my personal feelings and comments into the interview. The pilot interview was a vital component of the interviewing process because it prepared me for the actual interviews, helped me to remain neutral, and taught me how to appropriately use the recording machines.

For the recording devices, I choose two different models. My primary recorder was a Sony Digital Voice Recorder and my backup recorder was a Sony Micro Cassette Corder, Mic'n Micro. Both devices were used during each interview to ensure all of the dialogue was recorded. After each session, I downloaded the interview from the digital recorder and saved it on a Rewritable Compact Disc (CD). Then I transcribed the interview from the CD using the accompanying Sony software and transcribing kit. I always tried to transcribe each interview within twenty-four hours and fully complete that transcript before doing the next interview. Though I found transcribing very time-consuming, I found it is a vital part of the process. It was critical in allowing me to reflect on the responses of the interviewee and preparing me for the next interview. I do not think hiring a transcriber or allowing someone else to do the

transcriptions would have given me the same insight to the interview data as I got doing the transcriptions myself.

During my initial visit with the principal of Study School, we set up a time for an interview. This interview took place early one morning before school and took approximately 45 minutes to complete. In my opinion, the principal was candid with his responses to all the questions. At the conclusion of the interview, I asked for the names of two teachers to be key informants in naming other teachers to interview. The principal initially wanted me just to choose any staff member to interview. He said he was comfortable with any of his teachers being interviewed. However, he quickly agreed to name the key informants when I explained the procedure I wanted to use. The teachers he selected as the key informants identified a first grade teacher and a third grade teacher for interviews. This process was helpful in insuring that interviewees were unbiased and honest. After interviewing these teachers, I asked them for two more teachers to interview. They identified another first grade teacher and a fifth grade teacher. Interviews were conducted with all four of these teachers at times and places convenient for both of us. These interviews lasted from thirty minutes to one hour. One teacher was interviewed in two sessions due to her class schedule. I used both recorders to ensure all dialogue was recorded for analysis. I, also, took hand written notes throughout the interview to help call attention to significant areas and to key me in guiding the questioning.

Merriam (2001) said that verbatim transcriptions were the best data base for analysis. Therefore, verbatim transcriptions were made as soon as possible after the interview. I numbered and double spaced the lines in the transcript for easier data analysis. After each interview was transcribed, I gave a copy of the interview to the interviewee for comment and correction. I talked to each interviewee after they had time to review the document to see of they

had changes or additions. Everyone agreed with the interview as written. I also kept an Interview Checklist for organizational purposes. See Appendix C for the Interview Checklist.

Observations

I conducted observations at Study School during the spring semester of 2004 on nine different days. These included observations of the following: building, grounds, hallways, office, classrooms, regular education and special education classes, cafeteria, the clinic, staff meetings, and specialists to include ESOL, Title I classes, art, music, and PE classes. Also included were observations in the teachers' lounge and workroom, counselors' offices, clothing center, time-out room, and library. Field notes were used to record observational data and included the following: the physical setting; the participants in the setting; the activities that were taking place; and the conversation taking place. As the researcher, I was an observer only. I did ask questions when appropriate and when questioning did not interrupt instruction.   Frequently, I made notes during the observation. However, if this was not possible, I wrote up the observations in my field notes as soon as possible after the observation and transcribed them as I did the interviews. I always tried to do this within twenty four hours. After transcription, I analyzed and reflected on these field notes before doing another observation.   I developed an Observation Guide to organize the observations. See Appendix D for the Observation Guide. Also, an Observation Checklist guided me in places to observe. See Appendix E for the Observation Checklist.

When appropriate, I took pictures with a digital camera. I photographed the building and grounds and the physical setting of the school. I most often used the camera to record charts, bulletin boards, and student work on the walls so that I would have a record of them without taking notes. I took great care not to include student faces in the photographs.

Review of documents

I reviewed many school documents. Some were given to me by staff members, others I asked for, and some I just picked up in the halls or office. The documents I examined included the following: school handbook, school newsletters and parent communication, monthly calendars, individual classroom newsletters, staff communication, PTO communication, lesson plans, the schedule for classroom teaching and specialists, and the school web page.

As in the interviews and observations, I used a Document Guide to focus the review. The study domains were included on the guide, but there was also a place for comments on other areas, so as not to limit the document review. See Appendix F for the Document Review Guide. A checklist of documents guided the examination of the documents and provided a listing of documents to review. See Appendix G for the Document Review Checklist.

Survey

Following the completion of the qualitative review of the school, I developed sample survey questions for validation. The questions reflected items from the five domains developed during the literature review and information gleamed from study of the school. See Appendix H for the validation survey. Thirteen members of the class of Summer 2003 Orientation To Residency doctoral students at Virginia Tech scrutinized and assessed the sample questions for reliability. They evaluated the 110 questions for appropriate domain, importance, and understandability. I used the Virginia Tech Survey Service to collect the data.

After the validation process was completed, 76 questions remained that represented the five domains. There were 16 questions for the School Vision, Mission, Culture domain; 22 for the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain; 9 for the Collaboration and Shared Leadership domain; 16 for the Family and Community Relations domain; and 13 for the

Effective Management domain. See Appendix I for a listing of questions in each domain. These questions represent information from both the literature review and school study. See Appendix J for the source of the survey questions.

Using the 76 questions, I developed the final survey to be administered to the teachers of Study School and the other schools that met the criteria. First the questions were scrambled to ensure questions from each domain were not listed together. This was accomplished using a random number generating program found on a web site of Randomly Scrambled Lists of Numbers (Mohr, 2004). I placed the completed survey on the internet using the Virginia Tech Survey Service. See Appendix K for the Internet Survey.

I requested permission to survey schools in the different school districts using the criteria of the particular district. The principal at the study school agreed from the beginning as a part of the study process. The principals at the Harrisonburg schools also granted permission. The other school districts either refused to allow the survey, did not respond to my request for completing a survey, or granted permission after the other three schools had been completed the survey and school was out for the summer. One school district requested I submit my request during the summer of 2005. Therefore, the teachers at these schools were not surveyed. Out of eleven eligible schools, only three allowed their school to be surveyed.

I gave the teachers at Survey School a letter explaining the survey and the purpose. This letter also contained the Internet link for the survey. I, also, e-mailed the teachers individually on three different occasions with the link for the survey. The principals at the two other schools requested a different method. They wanted to send their staffs the information and link personally, and they did not want me to e-mail their teachers. For these teachers, I send the principals letters explaining the purpose of the survey and the survey link. One principal sent

this information to his staff two times and the other sent the information three times. All three principals were supportive of survey procedures.

Validity

In qualitative research, the reader must be able to trust that the report is done in an ethical manner and the results can be trusted (Merriam and Associates, 2002). Maykurt and Morehouse (1994) call this trustworthiness and said it asks two questions: "To what extent can we place confidence in the outcomes of the study? Do we believe what the researcher has reported" (p. 145)? It is though the use of validity and reliability procedures and methods that this was accomplished. Procedures were developed to ensure internal and external validity.

Internal Validity. Internal validity deals with how the research findings match reality (Merriam, 2001,). Merriam and Associates (2002) said, "In qualitative research, the understanding of reality is really the researcher's interpretation of participants' interpretations or understandings of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 25). They said that internal validity is considered a strength of qualitative research because the researchers are the primary instruments for data collection and analysis and are "closer" to reality.

In this study, the following procedures were utilized out to assure internal validity:

1. Use of member checks. Transcriptions were taken back to the interviewees with whom the interviews were conducted to see if the transcription was correct. (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 2001).

2. Use of peer examination. Two colleagues, experienced as principals, did peer examination of the findings as they emerged and made comments (Merriam, 2001).

3. Use of triangulation. Data from multiple sources was utilized (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 2001). These were from interviews, observations, review of the documents, and the survey.

4. Attention to the researcher's biases. I clarified assumptions and theoretical orientation from the outset and throughout the study (Merriam, 2001).

External Validity. Merriam (2001) says, "External validity is concerned with the extent to which the finds of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how generalizable are the results of a research study" (p. 207)? Merriam (2001) said the use of rich, thick description is used so that the reader will be able to determine how closely their situations match the one studies and can be transferred. In this study, this rich, thick description was collected during the school study. The survey, as part of the case study, also ensured the internal validity.

Reliability

Reliability in a study is the extent to which the research findings can be replicated (Merriman, 2001). In this study, the reliability was assured by use of an audit trail and triangulation. My audit trail was a research journal that contained memos and information on how the research was conducted, data collected, categories were derived, and decisions were made throughout (Maykut and Morehouse, 1995; Merriam and Associates, 2002). Triangulation was accomplished using data from interviews, observations, review of documents, and the survey.

Method of Analysis

Merriam (2001) said, "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data" (p. 178). She said it is the process of consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people say and what the researcher has seen and is both abstract and concrete and inductive and deductive. She

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added that the meanings that arise from the analysis constitute the findings of the study and are in the form of organized descriptive accounts, themes, or categories that cut across the data or in the forms of models and theories that explain the data. Categories are created from the outline of areas grouped together. Merriam (2001) said the categories come from three sources; the researcher, the participants, or sources outside the study such as the literature. In this research, the categories came from the five domains identified in the literature review and the analysis of the data.

In this study, I analyzed the qualitative data by categories and themes, and the quantitative data was analyzed for descriptive statistics, reliability scores, and factor analysis. These examinations partially proved the theory suggested at the beginning of the study and allowed a new one to be formed from the data analysis.

Qualitative Study

I made transcriptions of the interviews and field notes as soon as possible after the interviews or observations, and I also made notes from the review of documents. The first reading of these transcriptions and notes gave me a quick overview and reaction. During the second reading, I made notes in the margins. Next, I set up an Access data file to record my findings, and as a means of organizing data. Each data entry was labeled by entry number, type of data (interview, observation, or document review), identifier (who was interviewed, classroom observed, or type of document,), notes, comments, and a place to identify the domain or category: culture, curriculum instruction, collaboration, family community, or effective management.

I went through each entry and placed data in the Access file. Sometimes this was done sentence by sentence and sometimes, paragraph by paragraph. I cut and pasted, exactly as

written in the transcriptions and field notes, on to separate data entry pages. These sections of the transcriptions were recorded under the Notes section. If I had a comment to make about a particular piece of data, I wrote it under the comment section. Also, as I went through each piece of data, I had to make a judgment as to how to categorize each. This was difficult because some data fell under more than one domain. When this happened, I indicated each domain that applied.

After organizing the data, there were 305 data entry pages. Again, using the Access program, I sorted the data by domain and copied each data entry page. These pages were placed together in a notebook by domain. Data with more than one domain was placed in a separate section. Again, this data was read and reread to see if it had been placed in the proper domain. Handwritten notes were made on separate pages. For multiple domain data entry pages, I made judgments to see if they were strongly in one domain or another. I found some were and these remained in more than one domain.

When it came time to analyze my data, I worked with each domain separately. Again, I read and reread each set of data entries and further broke them down into different themes or categories under the specific domain. I found it easy to physically take each data entry page, write the theme or category at the top of the page, and then form stacks of entry forms under each theme. The data were then easily accessible for analysis and recording.

After analyzing the data for categories, themes, and patterns, I used the data analysis to think about the data and draw inferences (Merriam, 2001). Merriam (2001) calls this thinking about the data, theorizing, and 'is a step toward developing a theory that explains some aspect of educational practice and allows a researcher to draw inferences abut future activity" (p. 188). After completing the data entry and organizing the data, strong categories and themes became

evident. However, these judgments needed the further documentation of the statistical analysis of the survey before final inferences could be drawn.

Quantitative Study

Teachers the study school and the two other schools completed the survey on the Internet using the Virginia Tech Survey Service. A total of 95 surveys were returned. I downloaded this data into an Excel file and I converted the qualitative data converted into numbers. On all but three questions, answers marked Strongly Agree were converted to 5; Agree to 4; Not Sure to 3; Disagree to 2 and Strongly Disagree to 1. Due to the nature of the question, the other three questions were converted inversely. After I converted the data, I then downloaded it into Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), a statistical software package for analyzing data.

Using the qualitative data from the school study and the quantitative data from the survey, I drew conclusion about the behaviors and practices of principals in these schools. With these conclusions, I partially confirmed the original theory and model put forth in this research. With my new knowledge I revised the theory and model based upon the current study.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In chapter two, I identified the case study combined with a survey as the methodology for the research. I defined terms used in the study and named the population and sample. I described the methods of data collection used in the study: interviews, observations, documents review, and survey, and I presented and explained the procedures for data collection and data analysis. The results of the data analysis will be used to partially validate and then revise the original theory put forth in this study.

CHAPTER 3

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS-THE CASE STUDY

During the spring of 2004, I conducted a case study at one school in Northern Virginia and administered a survey to the staffs of the study school and two other schools in Virginia. The purpose of the case study and the survey was to answer the two key questions: "What are the leadership behaviors and practices of principals in highly successful schools with high concentrations of at-risk children?" and "How do principals in these schools influence learning outcomes to close the achievement gap?"

Case Study

The school chosen for the study is located in a large suburban school district in northern Virginia composed of small single-family housing. The school plant houses 654 students in grades pre-kindergarten to sixth. There are 60 certified staff members, two administrators, and 15 instructional assistants. There are 194 students in English as a Second Language (ESL); 30 in the Gifted and Talented School-Based program; and 113 receiving Special Education Resource Assistance (some of these students are counted more than once because they receive more than one service). Head Start classes are provided for pre-school students and School-Age Child Care (SACC) is available before and after school.

Observations, interviews, and reviews of documents at the study school provided data for the case study. During the study, I visited the school on nine different occasions and conducted numerous observations. I formally interviewed five staff members, the principal and four teachers. Many school documents were shared by the staff and reviewed. During this time, I also talked informally in person, by phone, or e-mail, with many students, parents, and staff members who gave me insight into the workings of the school. I derived vast amounts of data from this

school study. To answer the key questions, this data is organized and reported by each of the five domains.

Vision, Mission, and Culture

I visited Study School early one morning as the students were arriving. Gloria, the school greeter, was at the front door greeting all the children with hellos and hugs. She later told me her job was to greet the children, give hugs and kisses, and wave to parents. The principal told me that the hour's pay for her daily work was the best money he ever spent because people feel good about letting their children off. In the hallway, a student patrol welcomed the students and me with a big smile. A parent came up to me and gave me a big hug and welcomed me to the school. Down the hall, I saw the principal talking with students and calling each by name. A parent, walking down the hall, stopped to show two pre-school children a display in the hallway. In the office, three staff members greeted me with welcoming smiles. The office was rather plain, but was filled with potted plants, posters on the wall, and a cake on the table, brought in by a parent, for staff members. Children were coming in and out of the office; all were quiet and well mannered. Down the hallway, in an enclosed outdoor area in the center of the school, called the "Courtyard", students were feeding the animals in a small zoo.

The school day began with televised announcements from the principal and student reporters. In addition to the customary announcements, such as reminding birthday students to get a birthday ribbon from the office, students' successes were shared with the whole school. Two children had successfully completed the Reading Recovery Program, and each read a selection. The announcements ended with everyone reciting the school pledge (Figure 2). On successive visits, I discovered that all days begin with these positive messages.

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                    SCHOOL PLEDGE

        We the students of Study Elementary School

        pledge to be the best that we can be.

        We will respect ourselves, adults, and our peers.

        We will come to school with an open mind ready

        to accept the challenges of the day.

        We will bring in our homework and work hard to

        complete it with excellence.

        This is our pledge of honesty, trust, and obedience.

        I pledge that I will accept the

        consequences of my own actions by not

        blaming others for the decisions I make.
```

Figure 2. Study School Pledge

On my many visits to the school, I freely roamed the hallways. They were quiet and free from children walking around, for they were always in their classrooms. Inspirational posters and displays of student successes filled the walls of the halls. Since the principal gave me free range of the school, I visited many classrooms, all unannounced, and sat quietly and observed both students and the teacher. In every classroom, teachers were teaching and students were on task. On two occasions, I observed students changing classes. There was little wasted time during this period. Changing classes was not a time for socialization in this school as students quickly took seats at their desks and the teachers promptly began teaching.

I also observed the principal on many occasions. He seemed to be in the hallways constantly, talking to students and always calling them each by name. Twice, I saw another side of him, one of teacher not principal. On these occasions, he was teaching a language arts class to a group of low performing fifth grade students, a practice I learned that he performs daily. Another time, I watched him give out writing awards to a select group of students with their parents in attendance. He was warm and caring with the students as well as the parents. The parents and the students seem to know that they are important to him.

On days I was there when the school day ended, I saw that the end was as warm and caring as the beginning. The principal made the afternoon announcements, and these broadcasts were very personal. The principal sounded like a dad on the announcements, giving directions to students like each was his own child: "Rosa, meet your mother outside" and "Peter, walk home with John."

This feeling of a warm and caring culture was validated over and over again as I observed the atmosphere in classrooms and talked with staff, students, and parents. How people acted and

what they said about the school also validated the importance of a warm and caring culture at this school.

Culture. Many people at the school described the culture of the school as being loving, warm, nurturing, and happy. One first grade teacher described the school this way: "It is a warm and loving environment and I think that is extremely important" (Teacher 3 Interview, March 5, 2004). She went on to say that she tried to make the environment in her classroom happy and a place you want to be. She said,

> I remember, even as a child, experiencing some of those feeling about school as this big scary place and, I guess I vowed it will never be stressful. I really think that is has no place in childhood. The culture here is wonderful. I think it has to be. What else can it be besides the people? It is not magic. (Teacher 3 Interview, March 5, 2004)

Time and time again, I inquired about why the school was so successful and I always received the same answer—the principal, or as one teacher said, "The leadership!" (Field Notes, February 27, 2004) One teacher said, "He runs the school from the heart. It is all about kids. Everything is from the heart. He sets an example to rise to. Everybody wants to please him" (Field Notes, March 5, 2004). The parent liaison said the school was successful because of the staff, beginning with the principal. She said, "Everyone loves him, the parents love him, and the children love him" (Field Notes, April 19, 2004). Another teacher remarked on how she flourished under the principal's direction and inspiration. She said, "His inspiration…just gets you excited about doing things, and I think that is key" (Teacher 3 Interview, March 1, 2004).

I asked the principal why the school was so successful, he named three reasons:

1. I know all the kids' names. I know their names, and I know their families. Probably more than anything else in the last thirty some years that has come to me

from comments of people more than anything else: 'You know all of your children by name; you know something about their background; you know something about their parents. And if there was a bit of advice I could give any new principal, it would be, 'Before you do anything you have got to get to know the territory'. That is a critical factor.

2. I read all their report cards and sign all their report cards. I think that is a critical factor, and I assume very often that all these other people do these things, but then I am told this is not true. But, here again, you have got to know where they are academically.

3. I meet with teachers on a weekly basis by grade level, and we go through, especially in language arts, who is on what level and what we are going to do about those youngsters, the top ones and the bottom ones? How can we challenge the top one, and how can we stretch the bottom ones? I think our greatest challenge here is probably with the top kids and not the bottom kids. We are working as hard as we can with those that are struggling, but those that are on top, we need to have some kind of a challenge. (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

Repeatedly, the staff referred to the school as a family. One person said that when something (bad) happens to someone, everyone hurts. Another said the most important reason for the school's success was the family atmosphere. "Everyone is accepted," she said (Teacher 2 Interview, March 1, 2004).

Frequently staff members praised the principal. They said he will do anything. Another said, "It is a happy place where I am validated as a professional" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). One described the principal as being ethical and added, "The kids come first" (Field Notes, March 5, 2004).

One day I sat with a group of lively sixth graders as their teacher tended to some business in the hall. I asked them why their school was so successful, and without a moment's hesitation, they all said, "Our principal, because he is good…our principal's personality" (Field Notes, March 5, 2004).

Vision. I questioned several people about the vision of the school, beginning with the principal. His vision was to make all children welcome, to know the population, to lead by example, and to make school a happy place. He said:

1. My vision for the school is that all children are welcome here. All will be accepted. All will learn. It doesn't matter where you come from, what your background is. You are welcome here, and we will do the best we can for you. My vision is certainly a kids-first vision, not an academic-first vision, though I think the academics are right up there. I don't want to give the impression that academics are not important. But I think, here again, you have got to know your population so you can prescribe the kinds of academic experiences that they need to do their best.

2. I have always tried to lead by example. I guess I come from the old school where the teacher is still the example. I find that people tend to look at the example and see what is going on. I would not ask teachers to do anything that I would not do. I mean I have cleaned floors. I have taught reading groups. I have put on Band-aids. I have done bus duty. I have ridden the bus for those that did not behave. I think you have to be willing to "walk the talk", and I have tried very hard to do that and I think people recognize that and know that.

3. It is a happy place to go to school. It ought to be and it ought to be—so many of these children come from such diverse backgrounds. Lots of them from places and they have

seen things that we have never seen and don't want to see. I was raised in a middle class background, as I suspect most of the teachers were. Until I came here, I never knew anybody that was a drug dealer; I never knew anybody that was in jail; I never knew anybody that was evicted. You know, we have seen it all. Mrs. Jones, our secretary out here and I have been together almost twenty-five years now, but she said one day after she had been here awhile, 'I have learned more about life and living in the years I have been here than I ever knew before I came' and I feel the same way. You know it has been a learning experience for us, and once you have learned, you can put into practice. When I came here the school was about 50% black and 50% white, and the most black kids I had ever had in a school before was about six. And when I was principal, and the ones we had in that day were rural kids for whom English was a second language. They had come out of the hills of Kentucky and, believe me, they did not speak English you could understand. So it was an entirely different culture, and you had to get to know the culture. I remember when the first ESOL kids came, the teachers were frantic. What in the world were we going to do? These kids don't know English. How are we ever going to teach them? And now we welcome these kids with open arms, so I think without question that school is a learning process. (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

When staff members where questioned about the vision, one teacher said:

That all children can learn. That everyone is on equal ground. That everyone is worthwhile, and that is our job, and that is what we want to do. I think that-- help each child to be the best person. To learn as much as they can be. Sometimes it is not up to all the standards that are being set. But everybody is making progress. No matter what it

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is, baby steps or giant steps. You know, just keep going in the right direction, keep

going, and keep learning. (Teacher 3 Interview, March 1, 2004)

When I asked another teacher where this vision came from, she said the principal sets the

vision and "he throws it out, and he says, 'What you think?' This is truly a staff-infused vision"

(Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). Others agreed, and one said, "It comes from the

principal—hands down. It takes me an hour to come to school. I would not teach anyplace else

because of the principal and because of the atmosphere here" (Teacher 2 Interview, March 1,

2004). Another added that the vision came from the principal, and that his thrust was to keep the

nurturing environment. A first grade teacher said, "I think it is all children can learn. They all

learn at their different levels, but no matter what is impacting them, once we can break through

the barriers"(Teacher 1 Interview, February 27, 2004). She went on to add:

> …and even though you have the academic thrust, his vision is still to nurture and to have
>
> us display this nurturing thing that children are everything. They are our future. The
>
> quality of the future starts here, and it is starts with the teachers, the children, the parents,
>
> everything, everybody. I think that is why the children are most successful. Some
>
> children are working below level, but in a couple of years they begin, their academics
>
> increase. You have keep working and pushing to find any and everything that
>
> will work positively with the children. His thrust is positive, not negative. For
>
> example, behavior. Just continue to find something positive that a child knows. (Teacher
>
> 1 Interview, February 27, 2004)

One third-grade teacher verbalized the school vision in this way: "To ensure that every child has

an opportunity to grow and to enjoy education, to give them every possible kind of opportunity

to do different things, to do their potential from the lowest to the highest achieving child"

(Teacher 2 Interview, March 1, 2004).

As I talked with people throughout the building, time and time again the words "loving" and "nurturing" came up. In the interview with the principal, he ended the conversation talking about a loving environment. This viewpoint was confirmed over and over again by both students and staff. When I asked him, at the conclusion of our interview, what else I needed to know about his school, he said,

Love them. You know, and people say that is foolish, and I have decided in my age and wisdom that love supersedes everything, and as long as these kids know they are loved and they cared for, they will do their very best to please you, and I don't think there is any substitute for that. But here again, I also found through the years that I could look at you and say, 'I am so disappointed,' and you will bawl up a storm, and I can scream and holler at you, and you sit there like a rock. It is all based on relationships. If there is no relationship then what good are you, frankly, in my opinion? (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

Because the words "happy" and "love" seemed to be mentioned so frequently, I did a search of my field notes and interviews. I found these words mentioned on 18 different entries. Teachers frequently said the school was a "happy" place, they were "happy" working at the school, parents were "happy", and students were "happy". The principal and a teacher both described the school as a "happy" place for students to go to school. A first grade teacher said she always tried to make school a "happy" place and that she was 'happy' in what she was doing. A sixth grade teacher said the school was a "happy" place where she was validated as a person. Another first grade teacher said parents were so "happy" in the school.

The principal used the word "love" to talk about his students. He said you had to "love" them, and the students needed to know they were "loved" and cared for. A teacher said that no matter what was going on in children's lives, the staff "loves" them. She also said parents "loved' the school and wanted their children there. A third grade teacher said parents had a great deal of "love" for the school and for the people. One teacher spoke of the principal's "love" of the students and staff. Another staff member said everyone "loved" the principal, students, staff, and parents.

Curriculum and Classroom Instruction

One day, I visited a kindergarten classroom. The students were sitting at tables, and everyone was busy working. There was no talking. In one corner, the teacher was working with a small group of children in a reading group. I heard her quietly say, "You are doing a great job….you are never wrong in kindergarten…give yourself your own book talk" (Field Notes, February 20, 2004). There was a feeling of warmth and caring, and I just felt learning was happening. In my field notes, I noted, "Excellent kindergarten room setup--I would want my grandchild here." This feeling occurred time and time again. On every visit to the study school, I saw students on task and teachers teaching. There was not one occasion that I saw students or teachers not engaged in the learning process. In one kindergarten classroom, the children continued working while they had snack. During this time, I saw the teacher in that classroom tie a child's shoe while continuing to work with another child on a reading lesson. No time was wasted.

Time to teach and rotation. As I visited the many classrooms, I always took a quick count of how many students were in each room. Usually, the classroom populations ranged from 16 to 24 students: yet, in one classroom, I counted only eight students. I learned this is because of the

Time to Teach schedule, and what is referred to by the staff as "rotation". In the morning, the primary grades have an uninterrupted language arts block for one and one-half hours. The same happened in the afternoon for the upper grades. During this time these grade levels have no specialists or other interruptions to learning. Students are divided, homogeneously, into language arts groups and are taught at their instructional levels. The number in each language arts group is kept low because, in addition to the classroom teacher, instruction comes from other certified teachers in the building. These include the two administrators, guidance counselors, and ESOL, reading, and Title I teachers. I learned that the classroom I observed with only eight students was the lowest performing second grade group. The numbers were kept low so that one of the second grade teachers and the reading teacher could provide a more intense, personalized program for those students. All students, with the exception of kindergarten and first grade, are divided in this way, and the students rotate to a language arts group for reading. However, kindergarten and first grade participate in the uninterrupted language arts block time. The teachers on these teams felt that changing classes and teachers was not appropriate for this age group.

Above first grade, instruction in science, social studies, and math is departmentalized. Again, students are grouped homogeneously by math levels. Teachers instruct the subject they feel most comfortable teaching, and they are the most adept. Students rotate between classrooms for these subjects. One third-grade teacher talked positively about this rotation and felt it was successful because of the communication between teachers. She said,

> We have a wonderful team, and I have to say the third grade team is one of the more
> successful because we communicate with one another. We do the rotation. Of course,
> the other grades do, too, but we talk about the children. Well, how are they doing in

math? How are they doing in science? Where are their weaknesses? What can we do

better to help them? We have a strong team, and we do a lot of talking and planning with

each other. (Teacher 2 Interview, March 1, 2004)

When I questioned the use of homogenous grouping, instead of the more accepted

heterogeneous grouping, one sixth teacher explained the grouping.   She said,

> We met, the sixth-grade team, met with all the fifth-grade teachers in August and said,
>
> where were the weaknesses? How can we group these kids? Because we, homogenously
>
> group, which I know is looked down upon. For our population, it works. Because if I
>
> can take the lowest math kids, use all my special-ed strategies that the other teacher does
>
> not have, then I am targeting a particular area to help and to raise them up. (Teacher 4
>
> Interview, March 5, 2004)

Teachers often mentioned the Time to Teach schedule and rotation as being important to

school success. They also stressed meeting individual needs to make students successful. One

said,

> You really have to be everywhere and have plans for everyone to keep them going in
>
> their direction because no two children are ever functioning at the same place. I try to be
>
> everywhere at once, and trying to do that takes continually working at finding things to
>
> keep them challenged and motivated. I guess that I find that I really have to individualize
>
> in order to try to do that. Of course, do what you can. That is the thing I guess I would
>
> have to ensure their success. (Teacher 3 Interview, March 5, 2004)

State SOLs and the district Plan of Studies. Frequently, I asked teachers what curriculum

they followed. Did they follow the school district's Plan of Studies (POS) or did they just follow

the state's SOL objectives? The teacher handbook specifically stated that teachers "…know and

teach the POS for your grade level" (Document Review, March 14, 2004). Teachers, up to grade two, usually said the plan of studies with an awareness of the state's objective. Teachers in testing grades always answered the SOL objectives, even though they added they were aware of the district's curriculum. They said they knew the district incorporated the SOL objects, but most seemed to rely on the SOLs.

The principal stressed the need to teach the curriculum. He thought some people still taught the textbook instead of the curriculum. He said he gave everyone a large binder with the curriculum, the blueprints, the curriculum framework, and the testing results.

The strong emphasis on teaching the SOL objectives and having students master the SOL objectives in order to pass the SOL test was evident throughout the school. One teacher said, "The principal made raising scores important and established a culture where scores count. We give t-shirts to students who score 600 on SOL testing. Testing is a big deal for everyone, and the parents are behind it." (Field Notes, April 16, 2004)

In preparation for these tests, teachers are required to follow the SOL framework and timeline from the state. In addition, practice tests from the released test items are given three times a year in the upper grade levels. I attended an inservice that was provided for this school for upper-grade level teachers on giving the practice tests and analyzing the data using the computer. The trainers for the inservice were teaching the teachers how to use a new computer program to find out which testing items the student missed and then determine what the student was thinking when she answered the question. Teachers were expected to give the tests, analyze the data for each child after the scores are returned from the district, and then plan instruction to assure each child would be able to master the objectives. One teacher, in talking about these practice tests, said,

The children really didn't understand what they were doing. It had no importance to them what so ever. …and then to get the scores back and you felt –oh my and now to know I have to take it again and what if they don't improve. What if they go down? So I think it is a good idea for the children to have that experience. I think it is a good idea for me to see where they are having weaknesses and not understanding. It gives me (some idea), also, of where I need to be planning, where I need to move toward next. The pressure is very strong. (Teacher 2 Interview, March 1, 2004)

I asked about materials to teach the SOLs and was told the principal provides materials such as the Coach Books and Blast Off. These are materials specifically designed to teach the SOL objectives.

The emphasis on the SOLs extends beyond the regular classroom. Beginning in January, SOL Saturday School begins for students in the testing grades, grades 3 to 6. Saturday School begins the middle of January and goes until the beginning of May. There are eight Saturday classes. Though not required, students are expected to attend to help them get ready for the tests. They are responsible for their own transportation. Staff members volunteer to teach these sessions, and the PTO provides pizza and soda at the conclusion of each Saturday session. These classes are advertised on the school outdoor bulletin board, the web site, by yellow flyers sent home to parents, and by the classroom teachers. In one sixth-grade classroom, the teacher asked who was coming to Saturday School, and every hand went up.

Those students, who have been identified as needing specific help on the SOL objectives, attend after school extended day sessions. These sessions run sixteen weeks, beginning the middle of January from 4:00-5:30 every Tuesday and Thursday. The teachers who teach these classes are compensated.

Assessment. In addition to the use of the SOL practice tests as a means of assessment, the students in the building are frequently tested for reading levels using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). This test determines the grouping for language arts. One second-grade teacher told me that second-grade students are assessed quarterly with the DRA, and their language arts grouping each quarter is based on this assessment. Math grouping is determined using a math inventory. Assessment, both formal and informal, was constant and ongoing at all grade levels.

Staff development. The principal expressed concern about staff development. He said that because they are an Excel school his teachers are all on eight-hour contracts. School staffs in the Excel program are paid more salary for an extended school day. There are no early release programs during the week for planning. Because of this, there is little time for staff development. He said the teachers are too tired after school, and it is hard to get staff in before school due to traffic and long commutes. He said that technology is a real focus of his, and technology classes are offered to teachers after school. All teachers have new lap-top computers, and many are attending classes on how to use them. He also said the school district offered many staff development opportunities, such as Title I in services, which teachers can attend. The school is also involved in several special programs sponsored by the district. The principal said,

> Those are all going on concurrently. And you can do all of it. You cannot do all of it
>
> well. And I know that that the school system wants to help us, and I know they want us
>
> to be successful, but we can also get to the point that we have more than we can do well.
>
> (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

Some staff development opportunities do take place at the school during the pre-school inservice and workdays in August. One teacher mentioned the off-site meetings that she had attended and

spoke favorably of them. In addition, teachers said the principal funds educational conferences as appropriate.

Visibility of the principal. The principal articulated that he felt it was important to be visible throughout the school in order to know what was going on in the school, and that he tried to always be visible.   He said,

> I am not sure we hit everyone every week, but we do the best we can to get as many as we can. I am visible throughout the school, and I make sure I am always visible. I think most principals would like to be in classrooms more than they are. Now I have been in about four classrooms already this morning, and I sometimes think we do not think about that when we are. We are really in more classrooms than we think. Every time I go into a classroom, it is not to conduct a formal observation. You have a good feeling of the pulse of the school when you are in and out of the classrooms." (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

Use of technology. The use of technology is a vital part of instruction at the study school. Students are required, from kindergarten to sixth grade to participate in academic drill and practice sessions on the computer daily. Students are also given web sites they can access from home computers for home practice. I saw teachers use technology on a number of occasions. Once, I was visiting a fourth grade classroom during rotation. The teacher was using a computer program called LearnStar. He told me it he used to help students learn how to answer the SOL questions in science. Another time, I observed a teacher using a Smart Board to teach concepts about molecules.

The principal articulated strong feelings to me about his belief in the use of technology, and how he required both his teachers and students to use it. He stated that he believed that all

students need to be proficient in technology because technology is the way of the future. He said that it was his job to provide them with the technological tools they would someday need for employment. He said they would not get these skills in the home, only at school. He said,

> I have certainly pushed technology and using the computers … getting these computers in kids hands …and getting the computer used as an instructional tool, not just as thing that sits there. Because …(it is) my philosophy, and I feel very strongly, that this is the future, and our kids don't have them, a lot of them, at home. If we don't teach that (technology), if we don't expose them here (they will not get the skills). This (using a computer and being proficient in technology) is going to be a job someday and that is where I generally always come from. We are teaching kids to grow up with an education that is going to get them a job and help them support their family. (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

Students also spend one hour every eighth day in the computer lab practicing skills at their respective level. The computer lab assistant plans with each teacher and develops lessons, using the computer, to reinforce needed skills.

Programs. At the study school, how to teach is not necessarily left up to the individual teacher. For reading and writing, the whole school uses Master Reading and Writing by SRA. This is a prescriptive language arts program with workbooks. One teacher told me she had seen many programs come and go during the time she had been at the school. She tied school success with the countless programs they had tried. She said, "The principal is tireless. He listens. He listens to research and sees what is out there, and we try these things" (Teacher 3 Interview, March 1, 2004). Another said having everyone teaching the same one keeps teachers on task. She said, "They know what to teach, when to teach, how to teach" (Field Notes, April 16, 2004).

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One remarkable quality I found was the number of programs the school possessed to meet the needs of the students. Of course, there were the normal special education programs such as speech and learning disability. In addition, there was a class of alternative education students. Other typical school programs at the school were ESL, Head Start, Reading Recovery, Title I, and reading and math incentive programs. However, there seemed to be other programs that were created to meet the special needs of the students, such as Math Challenge. See Appendix L for a listing of other programs and an explanation for each.

The Gifted and Talented program is school-based. The gifted and talented program teacher is in the building two days a week and teaches about 100 bright students, not those necessarily identified as Gifted and Talented. The teacher said she team-teaches the highest language arts and math groups with teachers in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. She also said she flags students for the Young Scholars Program. These students are either minority or ESOL students, and who do not meet the Gifted and Talented criteria often due to verbal skills, but are very bright.

The children in this school participate in numerous field trips and in school enrichment programs. One of the teachers said this is how they connect the curriculum to real life. While I was conducting this study, students in fourth and sixth grade went to Williamsburg and Jamestown for three days. One day, the Virginia Opera presented a program to all students. I also learned that every grade level, except kindergarten, goes camping. Instead of camping, the kindergartners have a "Spend the Night" program in the gym.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

I found it difficult to find concrete examples of collaboration and leadership at the study school. Several people talked me to about this area, but I only observed it happening once. This

was in a weekly team meeting with the assistant principal and the kindergarten team. All grade level teams meet weekly with either the principal or assistant principal to discuss issues pertaining to their particular grade level. At this meeting, the team discussed grades on the kindergarten report card and how to work with parents. Though the assistant principal did most of the talking, the teachers gave input for him to take back to the district meetings.

The school is also participating in a district initiative for collaboration, Professional Learning Communities. This program is in the beginning stages at the study school with the teachers receiving training at this time. It was not a program requested by the principal or staff. The principal said the district did not ask him what he thought of Professional Learning Communities; they just told him to do it.

Academic decisions. Most academic decisions are made at the weekly grade level team meetings. The administrator for that grade level and the teachers discuss issues and solutions. Many teachers referenced these meetings and the discussions of student progress during this time. There is also a team of teacher leaders who provide input to the principal. However, they meet infrequently.

When I asked about collaboration and shared decision-making, the principal at first said that that over the years he had learned to share everything. Then he backed off that statement and said it depended on what kind of academic decision. He admitted he makes some decisions without teacher input. He said,

> The older you get the more opinionated you get. I make a lot of the academic decisions
> or the assistant principal and I do, especially with regard to language arts. I have a bias.
> Whole language almost did us in. It does not work for our children, in my opinion. If we
> are going to teach non-English speaking children using a whole language approach then

they have to literally memorize the entire English language. The county has pushed a non-phonics approach to the nth degree, and it has not been successful in schools like ours. I have pushed a phonics-based program, and I do not make any apologies for that, and I know it works for our youngsters. Now is it perfect? Absolutely not, but our youngsters do not come with a background that whole language can assure (students will learn). Whole language leaves too much latitude in language arts, in my opinion, for the teacher to do what the teacher wants to do and can result, in my opinion, in not assuring that the child gets a balanced program. Now aside from that, most of the decisions, academic decisions, are made collaboratively. Now again, I guess that may not be completely true either. (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

At this point he went on to discuss his technology philosophy and how he believed every child should be using technology because it was their future. He had very strong feelings about how language arts should be taught and the use and instruction of technology. He made decisions regarding those areas without the input of staff. He added that there were times that teachers were not involved in decision-making. He said these were the programs mandated by the school district with no input from teachers. He gave the Professional Learning Communities Inservice training as a good example of this.

School plan. Every summer for about three days, the School Planning Team, composed of about twelve teachers, meet to write the annual school plan. The principal said the team continues to grow every year because people like to be on it and volunteer to serve. They study the test data and determine the school's greatest academic needs and develop solutions and tactics to be incorporated into the school plan. One teacher called this "our vision as a family" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). This team presents the plan to the rest of the staff when

they return in August for input and approval. This same team evaluates the plan at the end of the year to see if benchmarks are met, and what to make suggestions for the next year. One teacher said it was "total collaboration". She went on to say that the principal said this is our school and "If we don't have some say, you are not going to get anything accomplished" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004).

Hiring process. There are teams of teachers who participate in the hiring process. The administrators interview the prospective staff member and then the teacher team conducts an interview. Teachers do not interview candidates who are interviewing for positions on their team. For example, a person being considered for the sixth-grade team could not be interviewed by teachers on that team. I was told this was because the principal wants a different perspective. However, the interviewing team develops their own interview questions and conducts the interview themselves.

Family and Community Involvement

One day I visited the school after lunch. When I inquired about seeing the principal, the secretary told me he was in the library having a catered lunch for fourth grade student essay winners and their parents. I arrived at the end of program. Empty plates and food were on the library tables. The students were sitting in a semi-circle in the corner of the library with their parents behind them. The principal called each child up to the front of the room and had he or she read their winning essay. After giving each a hug and a small bag of candy, he sent them back to their seats. The theme for the essays was "Why my valentine is special." They were on assorted topics, but mostly on parents' sacrifices for the essayists or on the essayist's favorite pet. One student wrote on why the principal was special. I watched some parents wipe tears from their eyes when the children read the essays. The principal ended the program by thanking

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the parents for guiding the students. He told them it is special to know how wonderful they are, and that you don't hear that enough. It was a warm and emotional program. The parents and the principal alike seemed generously touched by the essays.

One sixth grade teacher expressed the opinion that the school was a learning community and involved everyone. She described it in this way,

I see this school as the most child centered place on earth. Our vision is to allow our kids success. To allow them to achieve far above their wildest dreams, to help the families to help the kids. A lot of our families don't have a lot. It is a very economically depressed area. A lot of our parents have never finished school. They are scared of school. They are intimidated by school. Our vision is to truly make it a learning community which involves the business partners, the parents, all the extended families as well as us. A lot of us live in the community or close enough in the community so we are here for all the community activities... We are here—I have my granddaughter pupil placed here because this is the only place I would let her come. The vision is to create a successful community where everybody prospers. (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004)

The principal strongly articulated his feelings about building relationships with the community. He told me that you cannot run a diverse school with an all white staff. He said he worked to make sure the staff was as diverse as the community. About his staff he said,

Some of our strongest teachers are black teachers and that has done more in building relationships with the black community. Certainly the number of Hispanic staff we have says to the Hispanic community that we value you and, lots of them are in the community, not teacher level. I think you have got to do that. And I think that sends a message. It is not an accident that there is a white gal, a Hispanic, a black gal and a

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Moroccan gal working in this office. And they all work together. I set out to create that because it does represent the community. And God bless them. (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

One teacher said that some community members work in the building, and that is important. The students know them because they are neighbors. She said the school is the center of the community and everything focuses around the school. She added that the community works together to raise money for the school, stressing that while rich schools might raise $15, 000, this school will only raise $5,000. These funds are used to support projects such as the field trip to Williamsburg.

Celebrations. The principal believes another reason for the success with the community is the emphasis on celebrations. The school celebrates such customary events such as Christmas and Ramadan, but also other cultural ones such as Chinese New Year and the different cultural heritage months. He said these events give the students an opportunity to talk about their culture, and they are so proud. At this time the school was getting ready to celebrate Women's History Month and was having a Mother-Daughter Tea. The principal added, "I think it has certainly been worthwhile to do our best to acknowledge everybody's background"(Principal Interview, February 23, 2004).

Parent Liaison. A parent liaison is in the building about 2/3 of the week. The principal thinks the liaison is one of the reasons the Hispanic community is so supportive. He says, "I always chuckle because she tells them like it is. She tells them to do this or that with their students and read to them 15 minutes a day, and they do" (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004).

The parent liaison's office is located in the first grade pod, and is not far from the front entrance of the school. There is a small table in the room and a bulletin board. The liaison is a Hispanic herself. She was quite willing to talk with me about her job at the school. The following is a summary of her views, from my field notes, about her job and her work with the Hispanic community.

1. She says she works with Spanish families and looks out for the children.

2. She has monthly parent meetings where she leads discussions about how to help children, how to help with homework, how parents are to help at home. She also stressed telling parents the importance of using English. These meetings are the second Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30 (in the evening). She said the parents share problems, and how to help each other. She talked about the family emphasis of the Hispanic families. She said she helps families get library cards and encourages them to take the children to the library on the weekends. She emphasized the importance of family and discussed the consequences of the parents working long hours. She said it was important to keep the family. If all they did was work and did not spend time with the children, what was the result? A child ended up in gangs and in trouble and what was the money good for then? She says if she wants parents to come to meetings, she must call them because they do not read the notes she sends home. She says 30-40 parents are in a meeting.

3. She also said she sometimes provides English as a Second Language classes and computer classes free of charge once a week.

4. She works with the counselors to have orientation in Spanish.

5. She also works with the Hispanic Community to provide food from their culture for special occasions. They make the teachers' lunch for Teacher Appreciation Day, and in October, for Hispanic Heritage Month, members of the Hispanic community cook for the whole school. They provide lunch for the staff before the Christmas holiday break.

6. In June there is a Spanish festival—as she said, "like in our countries". It is from about 11:00 to 6:00 on a Saturday, and they sell food with the profits going to the school. This money buys instruments for music, helps to pay for field trips, and provides school shirts for the students.

7. She works with parents to encourage them to let their children go on the trips and attend school functions. She said she tells parents the children need to become independent. This includes the overnight in the gym for the kindergartners where the principal reads to the children.

8. She said the Hispanic parents are raising money by selling goodies the following Saturday to be able to buy a shed (for storage). The parents will construct the shed, since they have the skills, after getting enough money for the materials.

9. She says she does a lot of translations of letters and newsletters for teachers.

10. She works with both the husband and wife on home problems, including divorce issues. She implied she helps keep families together.

11. She works with parents to help solve problems with students. She stresses to parents to tell their students that they love them and give them hugs. (Field Notes, April 16, 2004)

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) There are two parent-teacher organizations at the school. One is the typical PTA that one sees in almost every school. It meets on a monthly basis with about half a dozen to a dozen parents in attendance. The other is a Hispanic group. This group meets monthly also, but with about 75 people in attendance. The principal expressed the highest praises for this latter group. He said,

> … they are constantly saying what can we do for you? What do you want? What do you need? How can we help? We have just unbelievable support from the Hispanic community. The response we have got back from them, not to make us sound good, … 'You have helped us so much. We know that you do more for our children than what happened in another school and we appreciate that.' (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004)

The staff frequently voiced the same opinion about the Hispanic group. One teacher said "If they hear there is something that we need, they are going to find the money to make it happen" (Teacher 2 Interview, March 1, 2004). She also praised the wonderful lunch this community provided for the staff during Hispanic Month.

Volunteers and partnerships. I did not observe parent volunteers in the building. When I questioned teachers about volunteers, most said they have no volunteers. One said she had a volunteer years ago that was the principal's neighbor. A first grade teacher said she has two women from a Women's Club who come once a week to work with students. She added that her mother also volunteers in her classroom. A fifth grade teacher said she has a volunteer from a local business who works weekly with one of her students and has done so with the same child for three years. On one occasion, I talked to three high school students who had been former students at this school. They said they were at the school to read to students.

There are two outside groups that support the school. One is a local women's club. It runs a thrift shop and uses profits from the shop to support the school. Every year they give about $5,000 to the school. This money goes to the library for books, pays for the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program that provides free books to students four times a year, and buys winter coats for students. Some of the women even volunteer in kindergarten during the year. There was also a very weak relationship with a local business. The principal stated that the business was not as supportive of the tutoring programs as in the past because of a change in leadership.

Parent training. The school counselor offers classes in the evening to parents on subjects ranging from parent effectiveness training to how parents can help with homework. In addition there are computer classes for parents and the parent liaison also provides classes in English as a Second Language.

Translators. Because of the school's diversity, I asked about translators for meetings. The teachers told me the ESOL teachers help with translations with parents in their classrooms, or the school district provides translators. One teacher explained it in this way, "I think as far as trying to get everyone to feel comfortable to know what is going on, that this school really reaches out to everyone. Everyone is important, and I don't think that just because you have a language barrier you just tough it out. There are ways we work really hard" (Teacher 3 Interview, March 1, 2004).

Parent communication. The teachers communicate with parents at the fall Open House Nights, conferences, newsletters, and use of the Internet. One first grade teacher told me she had 90% of her parents come to Open House. She said this was good because she was able to

explain the expectations for her grade level. Parents also have an opportunity twice yearly to conference with their child's teacher.

Teachers are expected to be honest with parents about students' progress during meetings with them and on the report card. During one of the team meetings with the assistant principal and the kindergarten teachers, the assistant stressed telling parents the standards, where their child is, and where their child needs to be by the end of the school year. He said, "Be honest about the child's performance in the classroom, and be positive about the rest" (Field Notes, February 23, 2004).

Newsletters are sent home frequently from both the classroom teacher and the office. Parts of these newsletters are in English and Spanish. One example of a newsletter from the office included the following items: a monthly school calendar of events, information on kindergarten orientation, spring picture information, an announcement that lost and found clothing will be given to the clothing center, a request for Pennies for Patients (a student project), and information on SOL Saturday Classes and three county classes for adults. Another newsletter noted the dates of the following: Fuddruckers Night with Dad, Hispanic Community Meeting, Spring Fundraiser, Mother and Daughter Tea, PTA Skate Night, and Spring Pictures.

The Internet is used to communicate with parents who have computer access. The staff is currently learning how to use the Blackboard program for communication with parents. The school web site contains numerous links for parents. The following links are included:

information on the clothing center

important phone numbers

school supply list

school calendar

information on uniforms

information on SACC and Head Start

school hours

names and e-mail addresses of staff members

web sites for students

web sites for SOL information on testing and released test questions

events at the school

PTA

counselor information

Mother-Daughter Tea

Also included on the web site is information about the administration, grade level news, special programs, technology, the TV News Team, Math Challenge, Courtyard (zoo), and the school song.

Effective Management

On my frequent visits to the school I saw classrooms with low pupil-teacher ratios, a large support staff, and the latest in technology, including at least five computers in each classroom, a lap top for each teacher and numerous other items, such Smart Boards with LCD projectors in many classrooms. Students were always well-behaved, well-mannered, and on task. I wondered how all this was possible, and I began to question the staff and the principal about how the school functioned in regards to obtaining resources, assuring time on task, discipline, and supporting the social and medical needs of the students.

Resources. When I asked teachers about how resources were provided, one told me the principal did magic with money. One said he was a "genie" (Teacher 1 Interview, February 27,

2004). When I asked the principal the same question, he said, "You ask for everything that exists in the world, and I think that is an incredibly important thing for a school administrator. You go out to stick up for your school, and that must be significant" (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004). He said he asked both the central office and Title I for funds. He also said that he found out over the years that a good portion of what you ask for, you get. Examples of extra money he received are $14,000 for reimbursement for the reading mastery materials, $5,000 from his supervisor for maps, globes and two smart boards with LCD projectors, and $1,000 for staff development, again from his supervisor. He said the school received $131,000 for the Title I program. With this money, he employs a half-time Reading Recovery teacher, a classroom teacher, and has $17,000 left over to pay for the after-school program. He said, "I don't say it smugly at all, but if you don't go for those things, grants, whatever it takes, you won't get it here" (Principal Interview, February 23, 2004).

Teachers also agree that the principal is supportive in providing whatever teaching resources they need. They give the principal a "wish" list every year of the supplies needed for the classroom. One person said they make wish lists all the time and "there are days you are amazed what shows up at your door" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). One said she sells her idea to the principal, makes it important to him, makes him see the benefits of it, and he will make sure she gets what she needs. Another teacher said she can tell the principal that a particular child is having difficulty. He will think about the problem for a while and come back to her and tell her he has heard about a program or resource that will benefit the child. Then he will make sure she has it to use with the child. The staff wasn't too sure where the money came from for the resources. Some said from contributions, the PTA, the soda machine, and one person thought some of it came out of the principal's own pocket. One teacher did say that she

spent a lot of her own money for school materials, such as for bulletin boards, snacks for the students, and paying for field trips for students.

Time on task and time to teach. The first two directives in the Staff Handbook set expectations from the principal for learning. They are: "(1) Students are to arrive in the classroom to find you present and plans for the day on the board" and "(2) You are to know and teach the POS (Plan of Studies) for your grade level" (Document Review, February 21, 2004). The principal expects teachers to be teaching at all times. This was obvious as I visited many classrooms. I never saw teachers not teaching or students off task. One teacher said the staff was "anal retentive" about organization because "teaching is the prime reason we are here" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). The teachers credit the Time to Teach schedule and rotation as prime reasons for success because there is uninterrupted time for teaching. One teacher said this helps keep the curriculum from being scattered, and the students can focus in on what they are doing. Also, because of the number of staff members teaching reading, the low pupil-teacher ratio in the language arts block contributes to time on task.

Discipline. On my first visit to the school, I noted in my field notes that the students were well behaved and well mannered when they came into the office. Successive visits continued to confirm my initial thoughts about the behavior of the students. I never saw teachers taking time from teaching to correct students. Students appeared to know what was expected of them and they did it. The principal gives teachers guidelines for discipline. These directives, included in the teacher handbook, include the following:

We expect-

.you to accept responsibility for the students in your charge when they are with you.

.you to correct inappropriate and foul language.

.you to be willing to correct any child in the school if he/she is wrong, out of order or in danger.

.you to exercise discretion before sending students <u>anywhere</u> outside of the classroom <u>in pairs.</u> (Document Review, March 14, 2004)

In addition, the principal focuses on behavior expectations daily. He requires that the students recite the school pledge everyday during morning announcements, and the school rules are posted on the wall in every classroom (see Figure 3). The principal indicated that he does not spend a lot of time on discipline issues, and that this discipline plan worked for this school.

As in most schools, teachers in individual classrooms have their own behavior plans. One first grade teacher uses stickers on the homework folder, and a third grade teacher uses a behavior grid. For the school wide discipline program the teachers use Spirit Tickets, the tear off tickets with numbers and a place to write a name. Teachers freely give out tickets to any student demonstrating good behavior. There are two assemblies or rallies as one teacher calls them, once a quarter for kindergarten through second and third through sixth grade students. The principal draws the tickets from a box during the assembly, and the students with winning tickets get medals or pins and prizes like hula hoops, dolls, craft materials, and stuffed animals. The last ticket the principal draws is the grand-prize winner, and that student receives a huge bag of prizes and goodies. The guidance counselors collect some of the prizes from local businesses. Others they buy with donations.

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STUDY SCHOOL STUDENTS

*WORK TO BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE

*COME TO SCHOOL TO WORK AND LEARN

*TREAT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

*TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR

*RESPECT SCHOOL PROPERTY AND THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS

*TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR APPEARANCE

*DEMONSTRATE GOOD MANNERS, COURTESY, AND
CONSIDERATION

*WORK AND PLAY IN A SAFE AND ORDERLY WAY

*KEEP THEIR HANDS AND FEET TO THEMSELVES

*WALK QUIETLY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HALLWAY ALWAYS
WITH A PARTNER

*DO THEIR BEST TO MAKE STUDY SCHOOL THE BEST PLACE TO
LEARN AND PLAY

*FOLLOW SCHOOL RULES ON THE BUS AND ON THE WAY TO AND
FROM SCHOOL
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Figure 3. Study School Rules

A Time Out Instructional Assistant is employed to assist with discipline. This assistant provides a quiet place for students that need to be removed for a short time from the classroom for poor behavior. This quiet place is in the same room as the school store and the supply room. There are four student desks arranged in a semi-circle in front of the assistant's desk. When I inquired about the number of students using the room and how long they stayed, he said he had 74 referrals for the year with 14 repeat offenders and three or four repeat offenders three times. A couple of students had been suspended during the year. Students stay in time out 30 minutes for kindergarten to first; 45 minutes for second and third; and 1 ½ hours for fourth through sixth. He said if he has more than four students in the room at one time he uses the cafeteria, but this rarely happens.

The Time Out Instructional Assistant is a retired police officer who, in addition to running the time out room, is in charge of school safety. He writes the school safety plan and sees that it is followed. He sponsors the school safety patrols and monitors their behavior. In addition, he manages the school store, including the ordering of supplies and instructional material. He also takes care of the copiers in the building, filling them with paper every morning before school and seeing that they are functioning properly.

Social and medical support. Working with the whole child is important to both the principal and the teachers. One teacher told me they did whatever they could for the children so that the are prepared to learn. Another said they supported the wearing of school uniforms because most children in this community can not afford fancy clothing. The school provides each child with a school Character Counts shirt at the beginning of the school year, which is part of the school uniform. The requirements for the uniform are simple so that is affordable for every

child: navy bottoms and a white top or the red school Character Counts shirt. Because of district regulations, uniforms cannot be required, but they are highly encouraged by the teachers and staff. The principal and teachers encourage the wearing of the uniforms by rewarding students quarterly during the Spirit Assembly for wearing uniforms. Once, when I was observing in the cafeteria, I saw the guidance counselor quietly inform a couple of students that this was a uniform school and the wearing of jeans was not appropriate. She later told me she could not require the students to wear uniforms but did encourage them to wear the uniform whenever they wore other apparel to school.

The school also provides free clothing to both the students and members of the community through a Clothing Center. Donations of clean infant, children, and adult clothing, as well as small toys, are accepted at the center. The center is run by a paid school employee and is open three days a week from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. When I talked to the center's manager, he talked about the importance of having the clothing center and stressed that the school was a "huge family" (Field Notes, February 16, 2004).

There are two guidance counselors at the school who work with other social needs of the children. As I talked with teachers, they frequently praised the help they received from the counselors when a child had a problem that could not be solved in the classroom. They said the counselors even went with parents to the doctor's office if necessary.

There is a medical clinic inside the office suite with two beds for students and a refrigerator for keeping medicines. A full-time school nurse provides care for students who do not feel well. She also dispenses medication to students who require it during the school day.

<div align="center">Further Study</div>

After the study of the school was completed, a survey was developed. The survey questions came from information from the literature review and data gleamed from the case study. The results of the survey are discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS-THE SURVEY

During the spring of 2004, teachers in the study school and two other schools completed

a survey of questions derived from the school study and the literature review. Data from this

survey were analyzed for descriptive statistics, reliability scores, and factor analysis using SPSS.

The data are reported by each of the domains of the study.

Return Rate

The surveys were sent to teachers at the surveyed schools via the Internet using the

Virginia Tech Survey Service. Sixty teachers of Study School were surveyed. Thirty-five, or

56%, were returned. At survey school #1, fifty-eight teachers were surveyed with 35, or 60%,

returning the survey. At survey school #2, 25 of the 41 surveyed teachers, or 61%, returned the

survey. A total of 95 surveys were returned. Two factors influenced the return rate of the

surveys. One factor was the time of year the survey was administered. Though after the

administration of the SOL tests, the surveys were given out near the close of the year when

teachers were focused on ending the school year. The other reason was my inability to

personally contact teachers in the two surveyed school. The principals in these schools allowed

me to survey, but only if the survey and my correspondences went through them.

Respondents

Data were collected on teaching experience. The average years teaching at the surveyed

schools was 8.44 years. The average total teaching experience was 14.87 years. Teachers at

survey school #2 had the most experience at the school (10.52 years) and longevity of teaching

(18.0 years); whereas, teachers at survey school #1 had the least amount of experience in that

school (6.65 years), and the study school had the least amount of total teaching experience (13.53

years). See Table 2 for teaching experience at the school and Table 3 for total teaching experience.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were collected on all survey items. These statistics are reported, by the questions for each domain. See Table 4 for the Vision, Mission and Culture domain; Table 5, the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain; Table 6, the Collaboration and Shared Leadership domain; Table 7 the Family and Community Relations domain; and Table 8, the Effective Management domain.

The means for all questions range from a high of 4.73 (*There is an all day kindergarten program*) to a low of 2.41 *(Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills)*. The standard deviation range from a high of 1.68 (*The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers*) to a low of .44 (*There is an all day kindergarten program*) as would expect of a question that should have been a yes/no question. The average of the means is 4.005 and the average standard deviation is .8272. See Appendix M for a listing of the means for all questions and Appendix N for a listing of standard deviations for all questions.

Instrument Characteristics

The question responses on the survey are Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Not Sure. These answers were converted to a Likert scale after the survey was downloaded from the survey service. A 5 was used for Strongly Agree; 4 for Agree; 2 for Disagree; 1 for Strongly Disagree; and 3 for Not Sure. The answer, Not Sure, was placed at the end of the answer list in an effort to force the respondents make a choice and not choose the neutral answer. However, for evaluation purposes it was given the middle number. Three negative questions were recoded. The questions were (17) *Students are taught in only*

Table 2

Years Teaching at This School

How many years have you been teaching at this school?

	Range of experience	Mean	Standard Deviation
Study School	1-32 years	8.76	8.235
Survey School #1	1-12 years	6.65	4.177
Survey School #2	1-34 years	10.52	8.412
All Schools		8.44	7.122

Table 3

Total Years Teaching

What is the total number of years you have been teaching, counting the years at this school?

	Range of experience	Mean	Standard Deviation
Study School	1-30 years	13.53	9.159
Survey School #1	1-33 years	14.24	10.557
Survey School #2	4-34 years	18.00	8.027
All Schools		14.87	9.499

Table 4

Frequency Table for all respondents to questions in the Vision, Mission, and Culture Domain.

Question	Response						X	SD
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success	0 (0.0)	4 (4.3)	2 (2.1)	52 (55.3)	36 (38)	94 (100.0)	4.28	.71
16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.3)	2 (2.1)	56 (58.9)	31 (32.6)	95 (100.0)	4.18	.76
22. The needs of the children come first in our school.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	46 (48.9)	47 (50.0)	94 (100.0)	4.48	.56
26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	38 (40.4)	55 (58.5)	94 (100.0)	4.57	.52
27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	0 (0.0)	5 (5.3)	2 (2.1)	39 (41.0)	47 (49.5)	94 (100.0)	4.37	.77
31. The school is a happy place for learning.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	49 (52.1)	44 (46.8)	94 (100.0)	4.45	.56

	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction	0 (0.0)	10 (10.5)	5 (5.3)	58 (61.1)	22 (23.2)	95 (100.0)	3.97	.84
35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	3 (3.2)	13 (14.0)	0 (0.0)	29 (31.2)	48 (51.6)	93 (100.0)	4.14	1.17
45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	3 (3.2)	49 (52.1)	40 (42.6)	94 (100.0)	4.35	.65
46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	4 (4.3)	58 (61.7)	31 (33.0)	94 (100.0)	4.27	.59
49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	6 (6.4)	28 (29.8)	6 (6.4)	34 (36.2)	20 (21.3)	94 (100.0)	3.36	1.29
51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	41 (43.6)	53 (56.4)	94 (100.0)	4.56	.50
56. The staff enjoys working in this school.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	2 (2.1)	49 (52.1)	40 (42.6)	94 (100.0)	4.34	.68
61. The principal knows the names of the students.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	2 (2.2)	25 (26.9)	64 (68.8)	93 (100.0)	4.62	.64
64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	4 (4.2)	41 (43.2)	47 (49.5)	95 (100.0)	4.39	.72
70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	0 (0.0)	18 (18.9)	10 (10.5)	48 (50.5)	19 (20.0)	95 (100.0)	3.72	1.00

Table 5

Frequency Table for all respondents to questions in the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction Domain.

Question	Response							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total	X	SD
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	1 (1.1)	6 (6.4)	11 (11.7)	51 (54.3)	25 (26.6)	94 (100.0)	3.99	.86
3. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	12 (12.8)	35 (37.2)	11 (11.7)	26 (27.7)	19 (10.6)	94 (100.0)	2.86	1.26
5. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.	0 (0.0)	7 (7.4)	4 (4.2)	57 (60.0)	27 (28.4)	95 (100.0)	4.09	.79
6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.3)	8 (8.4)	43 (45.3)	38 (40.0)	95 (100.0)	4.19	.84

	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	6 (6.4)	52 (55.3)	34 (36.2)	94 (100.0)	4.26	.67
10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	46 (48.4)	47 (49.5)	95 (100.0)	4.47	.54
11. Students are on task throughout the school day.	1 (1.1)	5 (5.3)	6 (6.3)	59 (62.1)	24 (25.3)	95 (100.0)	4.05	.79
17. Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.	5 (5.4)	17 (18.3)	9 (9.7)	52 (55.9)	10 (10.8)	93 (100.0)	3.48	1.08
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	36 (37.9)	58 (61.1)	95 (100.0)	4.60	.51
24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.	0 (0.0)	13 (14.0)	7 (7.5)	50 (53.8)	23 (24.7)	93 (100.0)	3.89	.94
28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	43 (45.3)	50 (53.6)	95 (100.0)	4.49	.58
38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.2)	48 (50.5)	43 (45.3)	95 (100.0)	4.40	.61
39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.2)	49 (52.7)	40 (43.0)	93 (100.0)	4.38	.61

	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
43. Test taking Strategies are taught.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	9 (9.7)	49 (52.7)	34 (36.6)	93 (100.0)	4.25	.67
47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.	40 (43.5)	19 (20.7)	1 (1.1)	9 (9.8)	23 (25.0)	92 (100.0)	2.52	1.69
48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	51 (54.8)	40 (43.0)	93 (100.0)	4.41	.54
50. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.4)	11 (11.7)	58 (61.7)	19 (20.2)	94 (100.0)	3.96	.76
63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.1)	42 (44.2)	50 (52.6)	95 (100.0)	4.47	.63
65. There is an all day kindergarten program.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (26.3)	70 (73.7)	95 (100.0)	4.74	.44
67. Most staff members participate in staff development.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	4 (4.3)	41 (43.6)	48 (51.1)	94 (100.0)	4.45	.63
72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.	0 (0.0)	10 (10.5)	15 (15.8)	45 (47.4)	25 (26.3)	95 (100.0)	3.89	.92

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total	X	SD
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
73. Homework completion is required daily.	1 (1.1)	14 (14.7)	10 (10.5)	45 (47.4)	25 (26.3)	95 (100.0)	3.83	1.02

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Table 6

Frequency Table for all respondents to questions in the Collaboration and Shared Leadership Domain.

Question	Response							
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total	X	SD
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.	1 (1.1)	8 (8.4)	8 (8.4)	53 (55.8)	25 (26.3)	95 (100.0)	3.98	.89
19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	53 (57.0)	37 (39.8)	93 (100.0)	4.37	.55
29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.	1 (1.1)	12 (12.6)	2 (2.1)	50 (52.6)	30 (31.6)	95 (100.0)	4.01	.97
36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.	1 (1.1)	15 (16.0)	5 (5.3)	49 (52.1)	24 (25.5)	94 (100.0)	3.85	1.02
40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.	0 (0.0)	10 (10.6)	5 (5.3)	52 (55.3)	27 (28.7)	94 (100.0)	4.02	.88

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	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
44. The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	1 (1.1)	13 (14.3)	5 (5.5)	50 (54.9)	22 (24.2)	91 (100.0)	3.87	.98
53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.	12 (12.8)	51 (54.3)	13 (13.8)	16 (17.0)	2 (2.1)	94 (100.0)	2.41	.99
57. Teachers are leaders in the school.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.4)	3 (3.2)	56 (59.6)	29 (30.9)	94 (100.0)	4.15	.76
71. The staff participates in the hiring process.	8 (8.5)	31 (33.0)	12 (12.8)	34 (36.2)	9 (9.6)	94 (100.0)	3.05	1.19

Table 7

Frequency Table for all respondents to questions in the Family and Community Relations Domain.

Question	Response					Total	X	SD
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree			
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	2 (2.1)	19 (20.0)	15 (15.8)	44 (46.3)	15 (15.8)	95 (100.0)	3.54	1.05
14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	3 (3.2)	50 (52.6)	39 (41.1)	95 (100.0)	4.32	.69
20. The Internet is used for communication between school and home.	5 (5.3)	23 (24.2)	13 (13.7)	48 (50.5)	6 (6.3)	95 (100.0)	3.28	1.07
21. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	2 (2.1)	15 (15.8)	9 (9.5)	62 (65.3)	7 (7.4)	95 (100.0)	3.60	.92
23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.	0 (0.0)	10 (10.6)	1 (1.1)	50 (53.2)	33 (35.1)	94 (100.0)	4.13	.88

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	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.2)	1 (1.1)	44 (46.3)	46 (48.4)	95 (100.0)	4.30	.72
30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	32 (33.7)	60 (63.2)	95 (100.0)	4.60	.55
34. After school programs are well attended by parents.	4 (4.3)	21 (22.1)	16 (17.0)	41 (43.6)	12 (12.8)	94 (100.0)	3.38	1.10
37. Community members volunteer at the school.	0 (0.0)	14 (14.7)	2 (2.1)	53 (55.8)	26 (27.4)	95 (100.0)	3.96	.94
54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	3 (3.2)	17 (18.3)	6 (6.5)	52 (55.9)	15 (16.1)	93 (100.0)	3.63	1.06
58. School communication is printed in more than one language.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	47 (50.0)	47 (50.0)	94 (100.0)	4.50	.50
59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.	1 (1.1)	6 (6.4)	12 (12.2)	50 (53.2)	25 (26.6)	94 (100.0)	3.98	.87
62. The school is the center of the community.	1 (1.1)	23 (24.5)	14 (14.9)	37 (39.4)	19 (20.2)	94 (100.0)	3.53	1.10

	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	0 (0.0)	11 (11.6)	17 (18.3)	33 (35.5)	32 (34.4)	93 (100.0)	3.92	1.00
74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.2)	4 (4.3)	57 (61.3)	30 (32.3)	93 (100.0)	4.24	.63
75. School staff members hold classes for parents.	7 (7.4)	34 (35.8)	25 (25.3)	22 (23.2)	8 (8.4)	95 (100.0)	2.89	1.11

Table 8

Frequency Table for all respondents to questions in the Effective Management Domain.

Question	Response						X	SD
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
8. The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.3)	9 (9.5)	47 (49.5)	33 (34.7)	95 (100.0)	4.13	.83
9. The principal supports the discipline plan.	1 (1.1)	11 (11.6)	2 (2.1)	48 (50.5)	33 (34.7)	95 (100.0)	4.06	.97
13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.	0 (0.0)	7 (7.4)	7 (7.4)	59 (62.8)	21 (22.3)	94 (100.0)	4.00	.78
15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	2 (2.1)	45 (47.9)	44 (46.8)	94 (100.0)	4.38	.69

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	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total	X	SD
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)		
32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior.	0 (0.0)	17 (17.9)	3 (3.2)	66 (69.5)	9 (9.5)	95 (100.0)	3.71	.87
41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.2)	47 (50.5)	42 (45.2)	93 (100.0)	4.40	.61
42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.3)	2 (2.1)	40 (42.6)	48 (51.1)	94 (100.0)	4.40	.74
52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	0 (0.0)	8 (8.5)	7 (7.4)	54 (57.4)	25 (26.6)	94 (100.0)	4.02	.83
55. The district office determines class size.	8 (8.5)	38 (40.4)	27 (28.7)	18 (19.1)	3 (3.2)	94 (100.0)	2.68	.99
60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.	0 (0.0)	6 (6.3)	20 (21.1)	42 (44.2)	27 (28.4)	95 (100.0)	3.95	.87
68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.	1 (1.1)	23 (24.2)	8 (8.4)	48 (50.5)	15 (15.8)	95 (100.0)	3.56	1.06
69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	2 (2.1)	15 (16.0)	1 (1.1)	59 (62.8)	17 (18.1)	94 (100.0)	3.79	.99

	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
76. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.	1 (1.1)	10 (10.5)	3 (3.2)	56 (58.9)	25 (26.3)	95 (100.0)	3.99	.91

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heterogeneous groups, (53) *The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers*, and (55) *The district office determines class size.*

Reliability

Reliability scores were calculated to determine the quality and consistency of the survey instrument. Trochim (2001) says, "…you can't calculate the true reliability; you can only estimate it," and "Cronbach's Alpha tends to be a high estimate of reliability" (p. 304). Therefore, I chose Cronbach's Alpha to estimate the reliability of this survey instrument. Pedhazur and Shelling ((1991) do not set a standard for determining at what point reliability scores are acceptable. For some studies, an Alpha score of .50 may be acceptable and in other studies, this score may not be acceptable. They said, "Obviously, other things being equal, the higher the reliability, the better" and "…it is for the user to determine what amount of error he or she is willing to tolerate, given the specific circumstances of the study" (p. 109-110). For this instrument, a total reliability score of .9582 was calculated. The sub scores for the questions in each domain were .8804 for Vision, Mission and Culture; .7910 for Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; .8476 for Collaboration and Shared Leadership; .8612 for Family and Community Relations; and .7982 for Effective Management. These alpha scores are generally considered reliable to test for analysis and construct validly. See Table 9 for the Alpha sub-scores for each domain, the number of items for each domain, and the total score.

Factor Analysis

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis was completed as part of the data to determine if the theory presented was viable or a new theory needed to be developed. Four components were extracted using principal component analysis and varimax rotation. The four extracted

Table 9

Alpha Scores by Domain

Domain	Number of Questions	Alpha Score
Vision, Mission, and Culture	26	.8805
Curriculum and Classroom Instruction	22	.7910
Collaboration and Shared Leadership	9	.8476
Family and Community Relations	16	.8612
Effective Management	13	.7982
Total Instrument	76	.9518

components accounted for 42.88 % of the variance. See Appendix O for the Table of Total Variance Explained. Sixty-six, or 86.8%, of the 76 questions on the survey had factor loading .40 or higher. Of the 76 total questions, 24 questions, or 31.5%, in all five domains were extracted in the first component; 24 questions, or 31.5%, in all five domains in the second components; 19 questions, or 25%, in four domains in the third component; and 12 questions, or 15.7%, in four domains in component four.

All but one of the sixteen questions in the Vision, Mission, and Culture domain appeared in each of the four components. Seven of these questions, or 43.7 %, appeared in component one; six, or 37.5%, in component two; seven, or 43.7%, in component three, and three, or 18.7%, in component four. One question, *The staff enjoys working in this school,* appeared in the first three components. Six other questions appeared in two components. This domain was not dominant in any component, but was the second most prevailing domain in the first three components.

Eighteen of the 22 questions in the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain appeared in at least one of the four components. Eleven of these questions, or 50%, appeared in the third component and were the most dominant domain in this component. Only two and three questions appeared in the other domains. Only one question, *The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction,* appeared in more than one component. It appeared in component two and four.

All nine of the questions in the Collaboration and Shared Leadership domain appeared in the first three components. Eight of these questions, or 88.8%, appeared in component three. Only one question appeared in components one and two. One question, *The staff gives the*

principal input on the purchase of resources, appeared in more than one component, appearing in component two and three.

In the Family and Community Relations domain, 14 of the 16 questions appeared in three out of four components. These questions were most dominant in the first component, with ten, or 62.5%, of the questions appearing. Only two and three questions appeared in the other domains. One question, *Outside organizations support the school monetarily,* appeared, in two components, number one and number four.

Ten of the 13 questions in the Effective Management domain appeared in at least one of the four domains. There were only two to four questions in each domain with two questions appearing in more than one component. The question, *The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students* appeared in the second and fourth component and the other question, *The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school,* appeared in component one and four.

In the four components, the Vision, Mission, and Culture domain was not dominant in any area, but strongly present in all components. The Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain was clearly dominant in the second component; Collaboration and Shared Leadership had a weak dominance in the third component, sharing that component with the Vision, Mission, and Culture domain; and Family and Community Relations was clearly dominant in the first domain. The Effective Management domain had a very weak dominance in the fourth component, with the lowest number of questions appearing in this domain.

 See Table 10 for the breakdown of the questions by component. See Table 11 for the questions had factor loadings greater than .40 for each of the four components in the Vision, Mission, and Culture Domain; Table 12 for the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction Domain;

Table 10

Factor Components by Domain (Loadings .40 or greater)

Domains	Total Number of Questions	Questions appearing in components (%)	Components			
			1 Number of Questions (%)	2 Number of Questions (%)	3 Number of Questions (%)	4 Number of Questions (%)
Vision, Mission and Culture	16	15 (93.7)	7 (43.7)	6 (37.5)	7 (43.7)	3 (18.7)
Curriculum and Classroom Instruction	22	18 (81.8)	3 (13.6)	11 (50.0)	2 (9.0)	3 (13.6)
Collaboration and Shared Leadership	9	9 (100.0)	1 (11.1)	1 (11.1)	8 (88.8)	0 (0.0)
Family and Community Relations	16	14 (87.5)	10 (62.5)	3 (18.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (12.5)
Effective Management	13	10 (76.9)	3 ((23.0)	3 (23.0)	2 (15.3)	4 ((30.7)
Total	76	66 (86.8)	24 (31.5)	24 (31.5)	19 (25.0)	12 ((15.7)

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Table 13 for the Collaboration and Shared Leadership Domain; Table 14 for the Family and Community Relations Domain; and Table 15 for the Effective Management Domain.

Survey Comments

Survey respondents were given an opportunity to comment on the following: "Please provide any thoughts or ideas that you have that would help me better understand your school and its successes".   Forty-three teachers wrote comments. These comments were analyzed for content, and twenty-eight themes emerged. See Table 16 for the themes and number of comments made for each. See Appendix P for the survey comments.

Table 11

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix
Reported by Vision, Mission, and Culture Domain

	Components			
Questions	1	2	3	4
4.The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success	**.46**	.17	**.40**	.19
16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.	.06	.31	.36	**.52**
26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.	-.09	**.48**	.12	.14
27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	**.58**	.19	**.43**	.07
31. The school is a happy place for learning.	.32	**.49**	**.41**	.22
33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	.18	.21	**.59**	.15
35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	**.77**	-.05	.22	-.01
45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	.12	**.56**	.22	**.40**
46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.	-.03	**.48**	.19	**.40**
49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	**.67**	.13	.24	.06
51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	.09	**.62**	.07	.16
56. The staff enjoys working in this school.	**.41**	**.40**	**.48**	-.05
61. The principal knows the names of the students.	**.62**	.10	.25	-.20
64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.	**.52**	.27	**.41**	.09
70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	.38	.12	**.62**	.24

Table 12

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix
Reported by Curriculum and Classroom Instruction Domain

	Components			
Questions	1	2	3	4
1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	-.07	.37	**.47**	.03
6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.	**.49**	.20	.06	.09
7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	.15	**.56**	.21	-.01
10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	-.09	**.64**	.17	.12
11. Students are on task throughout the school day.	-.23	.27	.11	**.59**
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.	.00	**.52**	.03	.11
24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.	**.57**	-.04	.16	.28
28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.	.17	**.56**	.28	-.01
38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	.30	.36	**.53**	.18
39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	.22	**.59**	.13	.14
43. Test taking strategies are taught.	.19	**.60**	-.03	.15
47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.	**.74**	-.01	-.05	.07
48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.	.23	**.77**	-.04	.10
63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.	.11	**.47**	.18	-.21
65. There is an all day kindergarten program.	.20	**.44**	.15	-.06

67. Most staff members participate in staff development.	.03	**.66**	.17	.01
72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.	.15	**.44**	.05	**.42**
73. Homework completion is required daily.	.21	.31	.01	**.54**

Table 13

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix
Reported by Collaboration and Shared Leadership Domain

Questions	Components			
	1	2	3	4
2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.	.00	.29	**.57**	.21
19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	-.02	**.46**	**.47**	.04
29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.	.14	.14	**.82**	.13
36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.	.34	.02	**.79**	.14
40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.	.21	.24	**.78**	.14
44. The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	.21	.17	**.72**	.19
53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.	.09	-.26	**.41**	.01
57. Teachers are leaders in the school.	.31	.23	**.54**	.01
71. The staff participates in the hiring process.	**.57**	-.02	.15	.20

Table 14

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix
Reported by Family and Community Relations Domain

Questions	Components			
	1	2	3	4
12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	**.40**	-.06	-.01	**.41**
14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	**.60**	.32	-.07	.16
23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.	.29	.04	.12	**.53**
25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	**.57**	.17	.08	-.04
30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	.10	**.45**	.00	.29
34. After school programs are well attended by parents.	**.42**	-.03	.12	.36
37. Community members volunteer at the school.	**.52**	-.10	.29	.33
54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	**.56**	-.20	.15	.34
58. School communication is printed in more than one language.	.39	**.50**	.11	.03
59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.	**.42**	.17	.04	.21
62. The school is the center of the community.	**.74**	.10	.08	.05
66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	**.67**	.19	.10	.03
74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	.12	**.53**	.01	.07
75. School staff members hold classes for parents.	**.52**	.16	.25	.35

Table 15

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix
Reported by Effective Domain

Questions	Components			
	1	2	3	4
9. The principal supports the discipline plan.	.17	.10	**.64**	.38
13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.	-.15	**.46**	.32	.18
15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	.14	.21	**.42**	.39
32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior.	.15	.21	.23	**.58**
41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students.	.16	**.47**	.14	**.49**
42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	.17	**.43**	.26	.13
52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	**.47**	.23	.20	.04
60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.	**.55**	.30	-.01	**.41**
68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.	.22	.23	.38	**.55**
69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	**.58**	.13	.08	.14

Table 16

Survey Comments on School Success

Theme	Number	Theme	Number
Special Programs	13	Sense of family	2
Professional Staff	12	Work as a team	2
Supportive administrator	11	Resources	2
Positive atmosphere for teaching and learning	11	Guidance program	2
Individualized instruction	7	Family and community support	2
Staff is treated as professionals	5	Diversity of students and staff	2
Strong Administration and leadership	5	Discipline	2
Hardworking staff	5	Safe environment	2
Respect	5	Bilingual employee	1
Collaboration	3	Everyone is responsible for children	1
High expectations	3	Uniforms	1
Child centered school	3	All day Kindergarten	1
Vision of principal	3	Effective communication	1
Flexible work schedule	2	Innovative scheduling	1

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS,

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to identify the behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk schools. Data were collected and analyzed from a study of one successful at-risk school and a survey of teachers from that school and from two other successful at-risk schools. The findings are discussed using the domains derived from the literature review. Conclusions are presented based on the findings and limitations of the study are discussed. Implications and recommendations are presented.

Discussion of Findings

Vision, Mission, and Culture

Data collected during the school study identified the importance of the traits in this domain to school success. The vision of the principal and of teachers was a compelling feature in all the data. Teachers in the study school said the principal provided the vision and they embraced it. One teacher described it as "a staff infused vision" (Teacher 4 Interview, March 5, 2004). The teachers unabashedly identified the principal and his leadership as the key to the success of the school and added that his vision was crucial to this success.

The culture in the study school was happy, warm, and nurturing with a pervasive feeling of "family". Teachers freely expressed their happiness with working in the school, and the students eagerly identified the principal as the reason they had a good school and good teachers. The teachers said they were treated as professionals, and were quick to identify the principal as the basis of the success. Everyone, students, staff, families, and community members, were treated with respect. Teachers expressed a great respect for the principal, and said he was an

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ethical leader. He was equally as respectful of them. The principal was dominant in this culture, appearing frequently in the hallways and classrooms, and calling all students by name. He expressed a strong belief in his staff and students and regularly celebrated their successes. Teachers said he trusted them with the instruction of students in the classroom. Everyone worked for the academic success of all students and everyone said the needs of children were paramount. Teachers and other staff members described the school and its culture as a happy place for learning.

Fifteen out of the 16 questions on the survey in this domain showed positive support of the school study findings. They range from a high of 100.0% for question (51), *Most people work for the success of all students,* to a low of 70.5% for question (70), *Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.* One question on the survey did not completely back up the school study. It is question (47), *The principal visits classrooms frequently*, with only 57.5% responding only Agree or Strongly Agree. This can be contrasted to the 82.8% responding positively that the principal is seen frequently in the building (question 35).   Principals in all three schools are visible throughout the building, but not necessary in the classrooms.

 On the factor analysis, 15 of the 16 questions on the survey in this domain are identified as important in at least one component. Questions from this domain appear in all four components. Question (56), *The staff enjoys working in this school*, appeared in the first three components.   Six questions appeared in two components:

Question (4) *The school staff embraces the vision of the principal*.

Question (27) *Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.*

Question (31) *The school is a happy place for learning.*

Question (45) *The culture of the school is conducive to learning.*

Question (46) *My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.*

Question (64) *Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.*

Questions in this domain were not dominant in any of the four components, but were the second most dominant domain for each component.

On the comment section of the survey, teachers made 31 references in the Vision, Mission, and Culture domain. There were 11 references to the school having a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning; 5 for staff being treated as professionals; 5 for strong administrations and school leadership; 5 for respect; 3 for vision of the principals; and 2 about sense of family.

These findings partially confirmed and enhanced the findings of the literature review. Sebring and Bryk (2000) stressed the importance of the vision of the principal for school success. Barth (1990) said the principal was the most potent factor in determining the culture. Deal and Peterson (1999) said that successful school cultures were focused on the learning of all students, and Druian and Butler (1987) said everyone in the school knows learning comes first. Connell (1999) said it is primary that the principal be engaged in the school, and that the culture shows everyone focused around learning. These research findings are all confirmed by the data. However, the data in this study also pointed to the importance of a school culture that is as supportive of the staff as of the student, and there exits a feeling of "family". There was also a sense of respect from everyone to everyone with teachers saying they were treated and respected as professionals. This included the respect of teachers for the principal and his ethical conduct.

The survey only partially supported the school study findings. It did not support Davenport and Anderson (2002), Papalewis and Fortune (2002), and Whitaker (1997) when they said principals make frequent classroom visitation, most visiting daily. Only 57.5% of the

respondents on the survey agree with the findings in the literature review. It appears from the survey data that not all of the three principals in the survey schools visited classrooms daily. However, 82.8% of the respondents agreed that the principal was seen frequently throughout the building (question 35). There was support for the findings when 70.5% of the respondents agreed that they were free to be risk-takers, as noted by Sebring and Bryk (2000) as a necessity for a good environment for learning.

Curriculum and Classroom Instruction

Data collected in the school study recognized the importance of Curriculum and Classroom Instruction. Students in the study school were on task and teachers were teaching the curriculum at all times. Research based programs and teaching techniques were prevalent. There was emphasis on direct instruction of the curriculum at all grade levels and a meticulous emphasis on the SOL objectives during instruction. Students were taught in homogenous groups by subject area and there was a prevailing belief that the needs of the students must be individually addressed and met. A schedule for teaching guaranteed there were no interruptions during language arts instruction and provided block scheduling for math, science, and social studies in the upper grades.

The pupil-teacher ratio for instruction in language arts was kept low by the addition of instructors other than the classroom teacher. These other instructors included the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselors, and other certified staff members. They taught a language arts class daily, thereby lowering pupil-teacher ratio in this subject area. After-school tutoring and Saturday School were provided for students for SOL test practice. There were also SOL practice testing and test taking strategies taught throughout the school year in the classroom. Students also had the opportunity to participate in an extended year schedule by

going to summer school. Assessment was ongoing and guided instruction. It provided data that was used to determine grouping. The use of technology was a dominant feature of instruction with students required by the principal to practice academic skills daily using computer programs. Students frequently participated in field trips, and many outside programs were brought into the school to augment the curriculum. Special programs addressed students' needs, including Head Start for pre-school students and all day kindergarten. The principal was highly visible in the school because he said he needed to be out in the building to understand what was going on. Teaching a language arts class daily gave him credibility with the teachers that he understood instruction and the content of the curriculum. Staff development at the school level was infrequent due to the daily schedule. The teachers in the study school were on an extended day contract and did not have an early release day for planning and staff development. However, staff development needs were provided by the school district, and by the teachers attending professional conferences.

Twenty of the 22 question in this domain on the survey positively supported the findings of the school study with positive responses above 70% for questions. These positive responses for these questions range from a high of 100.0% for question (65), *There is an all day kindergarten program*, to a low of 74.7% for questions (72), *The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction,* and (73), *Homework completion is required daily.* Question (17), *Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups*, had reversed scaling, negating the question. It showed that 66.7% of the respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed to the question. Therefore, there was some agreement with the study school that students were taught in homogeneous groups. Since this survey was given to three different schools, two schools may have homogenous grouping and the other may not.

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Two of the survey questions do not corroborate the data from the study school. Only 38.3% of the respondents answered Agree or Strongly Agree to question (3), *Students participate in an extended year schedule*. Only 34.8% responded positively to instruction on Saturday in question (47), *Students attend school on Saturday to reinforce academic skills*. Again, it may be that one school does not have an extended year, and one school does not have Saturday School, while two others may.

On the factor analysis, 18 of the 22 Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain questions on the survey are identified as important in at least one component. Question (72), *The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction*, is identified as important in two components. Questions from this domain, though appearing in all four components, are dominant in the second component, responsible for 11 of the 24 questions identified for all the domains.

Teachers made 36 comments on the survey regarding the Curriculum and Classroom Instruction domain. There were 13 references regarding special programs; 12 for professional staff; 7 for individualized instruction; 3 for high expectations; and 1 for innovative scheduling.

Findings of the school study and the survey substantiated the findings in the literature review. Forsyth and Tallericao (1998) said that student learning is a priority for successful principals and those principals need know the curriculum and understand good classroom instruction. Papalewis and Fortune (2002) stressed the value of the curriculum and instruction. Lomotey (1998), Whitaker (1997), Davenport and Anderson (2002), and Papalewis and Fortune ((2002) focused on the importance of the visibility of the principal in the building. Papalewis and Fortune (2002) and Davenport and Anderson (2002) said assessment is an integral part of the instructional program. Andrews and Soder (1987), Barth (1990), and Papalewis and Fortune

(2002) believed that staff development was a significant component of school success. In addition, data from the school study and the survey embraced the importance of the use of researched based programs and teaching methods in addition to direct instruction teaching practices. The data also supported special programs to meet the individual needs of students, such as all day kindergarten and use of computer software, and frequent field trips to enhance the curriculum.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

Data collected in the school study identified only a few examples of Collaboration and Shared Leadership. In the study school, teachers worked with the principal in weekly grade level meetings to discuss the academic program and make decisions regarding student progress. There was a teacher-principal committee that met infrequently to provide the principal with teacher input regarding academic decisions. Teachers met during the summer with the principal to evaluate the testing data and the progress of the school and to write the school plan for the coming year. They presented this plan to the staff during pre-school inservice days for confirmation. Some teachers participated in interviewing for new teachers, and they made recommendations to the principal for his final decision. Teachers gave the principal input concerning the purchases of teaching supplies and resources that they needed for delivering instruction. Major academic and teaching decisions were made by the principal without the consideration of the teachers. Although the principal said it was important to be collaborative, he also stated that he needed to make the final decisions regarding teaching and learning based on his long and broad experience as an administrator.

Only three questions on the survey supported the study school findings. The questions supporting the findings showed the following percentages for respondents marking Agree or

Strongly Agree on the survey: 82.1% for question (2), *The principal and staff together develop the school plan*, and 96.8% for question (19),*The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources*. The scaling for question (53), *The principal makes some academic decision without the input of teachers*, was reversed. Therefore, with reversing the number values, only 19.1% agreed the principal made academic decisions "with" the input of teachers. This supported the school study.

Five questions from the survey did not show support for the findings of the school study. These questions showed an agreement of 90.5% for question (57), *Teachers are leaders in the* school to a low of 77.6% for question (36), *Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision making.* On question (71), *The staff participates in the hiring process*, only 45.8% responded positively.

On the factor analysis, all nine Collaboration and Shared Leadership domain questions on the survey were identified as important in at least one component. One question (19), *The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources*, was identified as important in two components. At least one of the nine questions appeared in the first three components and 8 of the 9 questions appeared in component three. The questions in this domain were dominant in component three, responsible for 9 of the 19 questions identified there. No questions appeared in the fourth component.

Teachers made only three comments on the survey in this domain. These references identified collaboration as one of the reasons for school success. This comment was not fully supported by study school findings, but was supported by the survey data.

Data from the school study did not firmly confirm the findings of the literature review. The data from the school study did not show collaboration, teacher leadership, and shared

leadership as strong elements. Respondents to the survey did show greater support for the importance of these elements for school success as identified by Bell (2001), Marzano (2003), Schlechty (1991), and Friedkin and Slater (1994).

Family and Community Relations

Data collected in the school study acknowledged the importance of Family and Community Relations for school success. In the study school, the principal, teachers, and other staff members respected and valued the family and the community. Together they created a warm and inviting culture for both family and community members. The principal made a concerted and conscientious effort to hire staff that reflected the diversity of the community because he said this benefits the children and made the parents feel welcome in the building. The diversity of the community was respected and was frequently celebrated by the principal and the students. A parent liaison, who worked with the Hispanic community, was a vital link between the school and home and was a key element in creating the welcoming environment. The administrators and teachers stated that it was essential to inform parents about expectations for students, and they were honest in their assessment of the students with the parents. They worked to create open lines of communication, frequently meeting with parents and providing translators as needed, sending home newsletters in both English and Spanish, and giving suggestions on how parents could help their children at home. Teachers attempted to use the Internet for communication, but were hindered by the lack of computers and Internet connections in the homes. There were two parent support groups. One was the PTA, which raised money for school projects. The other was a Hispanic group, somewhat like a second PTA, which also raised money for school projects and supported the school by helping with cultural celebrations. There were few parent volunteers working in the building; however, teachers said parents felt

welcome and comfortable in the school and attended school functions frequently. Parents were very supportive of the school, its principal and teachers, and the programs to help their students. They were diligent in bringing and picking up their children for Saturday School and the after school program. One community group provided the school with money for the library, a reading programs, winter coats for the students, and some classroom volunteers. A local business infrequently provided financial assistance and volunteers to work with students. Some training, such as parenting classes, were provided for parents by the guidance counselors, and the parent liaison provided English classes.

Some of the study school findings were supported by the survey. Ten of the 16 questions show positive support with respondents answering positively 70.0% or better. These questions with positive responses range from a high of 100.0% for question (58), *School communication is sent home in more than one language,* to a low of 72.7% for question (54), *Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.*

Six survey questions did not show complete support for the school study. Though the study school was supported monetarily by outside organizations, only 62.1% of respondents responded positively to question (12), *Outside organizations support the school monetarily*. Other questions, regarding parents in the study, were also not as supportive. The responses to these five questions range from a high of 59.6% for question (62), *There is a parent liaison to assist parents,* to a low of 31.6% for question *(75), School staff members hold classes for parents*.

On the factor analysis, 14 of the 16 questions on the survey were identified as important in at least one component. One question, (12*), Outside organization support the school monetarily*, was identified in two components. Questions from this domain were present in

three of the four components and ten of the questions are dominant in the first component, out of 24 total questions present in that component. No questions appeared in the third component.

Only two references regarding this domain were cited on the comments section of the survey. One reference identified family and community support as one of the reason for school success. The other noted the importance of bilingual employees in the school setting.

The findings of the school study and the survey upheld the findings in the literature review. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999), Papalewis and Fortune (2002) and Cawelti (1999) showed a connection between school success and strong family and community involvement. Papalewis and Fortune (2002) noted the importance of sending communication home in more than one language for non-English speaking families and teaching parents how to work with their children. The school study showed this positive family involvement is further enhanced by the use of a parent liaison to work with community members from other cultures.

Effective Management

Data collected in the school study identified areas of Effective Management that supported school success. In the study school, the principal efficiently managed the school budget in order to hire staff and to provide the resources needed for teaching the curriculum. He was able to acquire the budgetary funds from different sources: the school district, grants, and community partners. He had the authority to hire qualified staff members without the interference of the central office. The principal was also able to delegate issues of discipline and the social and medical needs of the students to other staff members so that his main job and objective was the quality of teaching and learning in the building. This approach to school management was necessary so that his job as instructional leader was his primary focus. Keeping pupil-teacher ratio low was a major goal of the principal. Teachers had uninterrupted

teaching time due to the Time to Teach and rotation schedules. School discipline was managed through a school wide discipline program that was effective because everyone was responsible for the discipline in the school, and the students knew and understood the expectations. The social and medical needs of students were provided through the guidance counselors, the school nurse, and the school's Clothing Center.

Most of the study school findings were supported by the survey. Responses to eleven of the thirteen questions showed a positive agreement of 70.0% or greater. These ranged from a high of 94.7% for question (15), *The principals provides teachers with enough supplies, books and materials to deliver instruction,* to a low of 70.9% for question (69), *A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.* Question (55), *The district office determines class size,* had reverse scaling. Therefore, only 22.3% of the respondents agreed class size was determined at the district level. One of the survey responses showed only partial support of the school study. Teachers responded positive only 66.3% of the time to question (68), *The discipline plan for student behavior is effective*:

On the factor analysis, 10 of the 13 questions on the survey were identified as important in at least one component. One question, number (41), *The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students*, and question (60), *The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school*, appeared in two components. Questions in the Effective Management domain appeared in all four components and were strongest in the fourth component with four out of the 12 questions in all domains identified

Teacher comments from the survey supported some of the data from the study school. There were two references each regarding the guidance program, discipline, and a safe environment. There was one reference each regarding uniforms and innovative scheduling.

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The school study and survey both upheld the findings in the literature review. Andrews and Morefield (1991), Barth (1990), and Bell (2001) stressed the important of the principal being able to obtain the resources needed for instruction. A strong discipline program and a safe and secure learning environment were supported by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996). The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) supported the ability of the principal to increase staff, obtain academic resources and increase instructional time. The school study enhanced the literature review with the ability of the principal to delegate non-instructional duties to staff members so that the principal can be a legitimate instructional leader. This was possible because of the principal's prudent use of the budget and resources.

Conclusions

Some findings in this study confirm, some disagree with, and some went beyond the research findings presented in the literature review. My conclusions, based on the findings, only partially confirm the theory set forth at the beginning of the study. Possible revisions to theory concerning the behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk schools are presented at the end of the discussion of the conclusions. Findings from the school study and the survey led to the following conclusions, which are representative of the correlates of effective schools research, that apply to the behaviors and practices of the principal in these successful schools:

1. The vision of the principal is paramount and primary.

2. Teachers embrace and enhance the vision of the principal.

3. The success of all students is the mission of the school.

4. The principal creates a school climate that is as nurturing to teachers as it is to students.

5. The principal celebrates successes frequently and openly.

6. The principal ensures direct instruction and research based instructional methods are implemented by every teacher in every classroom.

7. The principal protects time for teaching from interruptions.

8. The principal supports instructional programs and resources that address the individual needs of students.

9. The principal supports an all day kindergarten program and a pre-school program.

10. The principal supports constant and ongoing assessment to guide instruction.

11. The principal ensures that the focus of instruction is the implementation of the adopted curriculum and the teaching of the SOL objectives.

12. The principal promotes collaboration and shared leadership with teachers.

13. The principal seeks input from teachers regarding the purchase of resources.

14. In some incidents, the principal makes major academic decisions.

15. The principal values and promotes family and community involvement.

16. The principal creates an environment for families that shows they are respected and appreciated.

17. The principal insures that the needs of a diverse community are met.

18. The principal provides translators for parents and sends communication home in more than one language.

19. The principal works with outside organizations to provide support for the school programs.

20. The principal seeks funds from many different sources and efficiently manages the school budget to provide resources and staff.

21. The principal implements an effective discipline plan.

22. The principal is an instructional leader.

In the original theory, the vision of the principal was the dominant feature of the theory, with the other domains sharing equal positions. In the revised theory, the vision of the principal is still the dominant feature. However, the vision of the principal impacts the domain of Vision, Mission, and Culture and the domains of Family and Community Involvement and Curriculum and Classroom Instruction equally. I believe the Family and Community Involvement domain is essentially an extension of the Vision, Mission, and Culture domain. These data suggest that neither domain dominates the other or is more important. They must both work together for school success. These three domains influence and impact the other two domains: Collaboration and Shared Leadership and Effective Management. It is difficult to separate the importance of these two domains. Each is so necessary and vital that I believe a school can not be successful without the formidable impact of each. Working together, the traits in all domains lead to student success, and ultimately to school success. See Figure 4 for a visual presentation of this revised theory.

Limitations of the Study

Care should be taken in the interpretations of the findings. Only one school was thoroughly studied and the survey was only completed in three schools. It may be prudent to generalize the findings to the three schools studied. However, many of the findings support and enhance the findings in the literature review and contribute to knowledge on school success.

Implications and Recommendations

Using the findings from both the study school and the survey, the following implications and recommendations are presented:
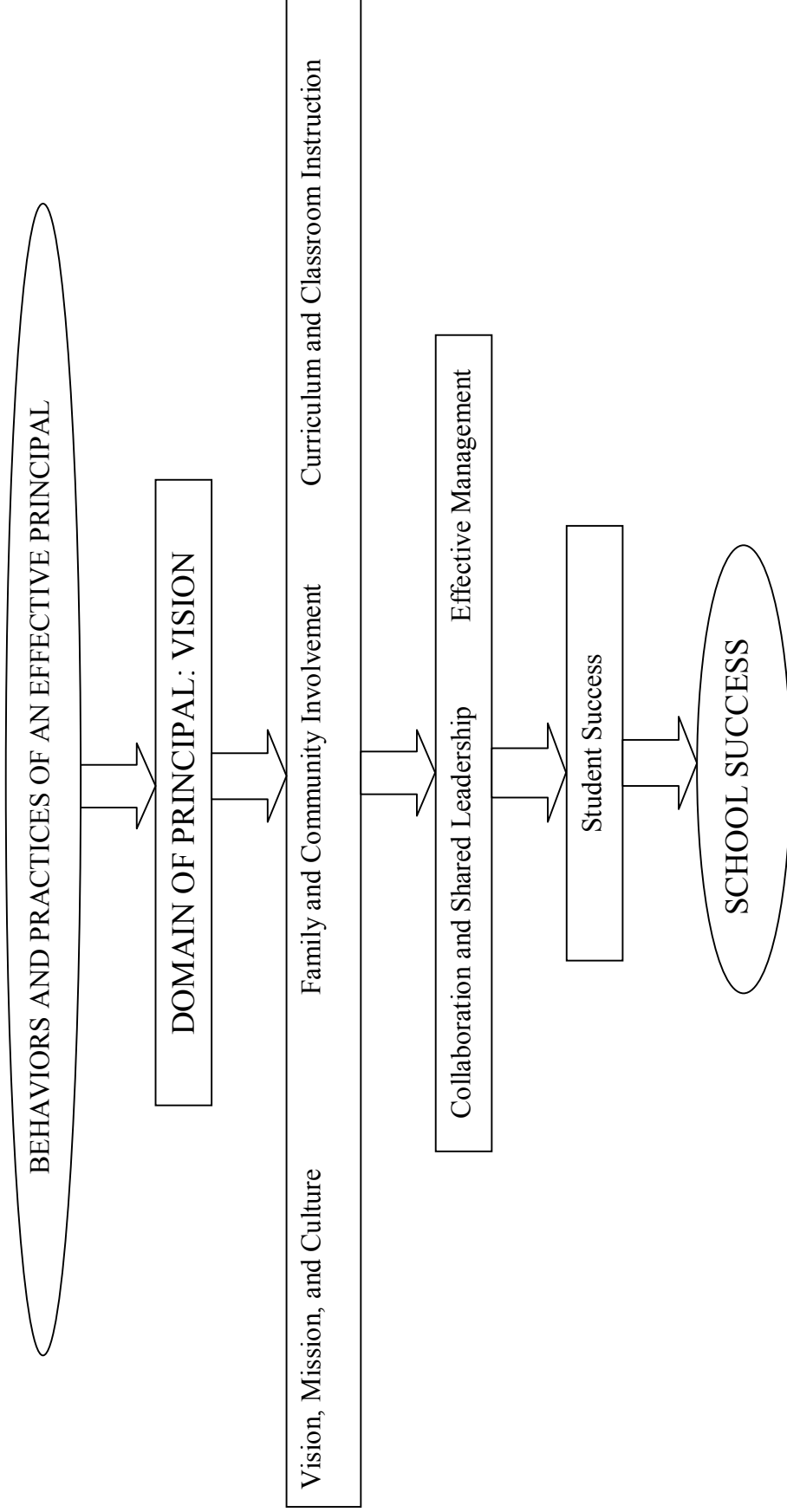
Figure 4. How the behaviors and practices of an effective principal contribute to school success (revised)

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1. *Implication:* The culture of the school must be as warm and as nurturing to teachers as it is to the students.

   Recommendation: It is essential that the principal create a warm and nurturing environment for all stakeholders. Because the very nature of working with at-risk populations tend to be stressful, it is important that principals nurture the teachers, and that they feel valued and professional.

2. *Implication*: The goal of the principal and all teachers is the success of all students.

   Recommendation: The principal must convey, by every action, that the first priority of the school is the success of the student, and he must make sure that this is the goal of every teacher.

3. *Implication:* The curriculum and classroom instruction must be the major focus of the school.

   Recommendation: It is crucial that the principal know the curriculum and understand and recognize effective classroom instruction as a means for ensuring student success. The principal needs to know the content of the curriculum and effective instructional techniques in order to convey these expectations to the teachers.

4. *Implication:* Programs and resources must address the individual needs of students.

   Recommendations: The principal must have knowledge, either through experience and/or research, to choose and implement programs and provide resources that meet students' individual needs. Teachers should be given the ability to use the best program or resource to meet a child's individual need.

5. *Implication:* Research based teaching methods and programs are essential for success.

Recommendation: It is critical that a principal be knowledgeable of research based teaching methods and programs and, using personal experience and knowledge, implement the best methods and programs for the students. Principals in at-risk schools do not have time to experiment with methods and programs that are not researched based.

6. *Implication:* Time on task for teaching must be protected.

   Recommendation: Principals in at-risk schools must guarantee that teachers have uninterrupted time for teaching the curriculum objectives. Uninterrupted teaching time allows for continuity. Students and teachers alike do not feel learning is random and disorganized.

7. *Implication:* Ongoing assessment monitors the progress of the students and guides effective instruction.

   Recommendation: Principals must implement a plan for the ongoing assessment of curriculum objectives in order to monitor student progress and guide instruction. It is imperative that the principal, as well as the teachers, know where the child is, academically, and what they must do to make sure that that child masters all required objectives for learning.

8. *Implication:* All day kindergarten and pre-school programs are vital for student success.

   Recommendation: It is imperative that principals use every avenue possible to provide all day kindergarten and pre-school programs for their students. At-risk students come to school with little or no academic knowledge. These programs are vital in helping them obtain the skills necessary for them to compete effectively with other students and be successful in school.

9. *Implication:* Collaboration and shared leadership give teachers ownership of student success.

   Recommendation: Principals need to develop a collaborative environment with staff and provide opportunities for shared leadership. Teachers who feel they work in concert with the principal and are leaders in the school have ownership of what happens in the school and increases the probability of a successful school.

10. *Implication:* Principals make some academic decisions without teacher input.

    Recommendation: In some incidents, the principal in an at-risk school must assume the role of "benign dictator". This is when the principal, working from an understanding coming from experience and/or research, decides without teacher input to implement certain programs and teaching techniques in order to advance student success. This is possible only when the principal develops a sense of trust with teachers. He trusts them to deliver instruction and they trust him to find the best programs and techniques necessary for the success of their students.

11. *Implication:* The culture of the school values the family and community.

    Recommendation: Principals in at-risk schools must work to make families and community members feel valued and welcomed in the school. The culture of the school must be as supportive them as it is to the students and the staff. These constituents must be partners with the school, working for the success of the students.

12. *Implication:* The needs of families who do not speak English must be met.

    Recommendation: It is critical that the principal develops avenues that address the needs of non-English speaking families. Translators must be provided for meetings, and communication from the school to the families must be more than one language. The

principal should work diligently to hire staff that mirrors the ethnic makeup of the students, and there should be a parent liaison working with these constituents to help address their needs.

13. *Implication:* Effective management of the budget, resources, staff, time on task, discipline, and addressing social and medical needs of students are necessary for school success.

Recommendation: The principal must utilize managerial skills to ensure the school runs effectively and efficiently. The principal needs to know how to access funds for budgetary needs from a variety of sources in order to hire the best staff and provide resources for teaching. The principal needs to be able to schedule time for learning that is free of interruptions and implement a discipline program that is effective and allows teachers to teach and all students to learn. In addition, the principal must know how to access medical and social needs for the students because primary needs have to be met before learning occurs.

14. *Implication:* The primary job of the principal is instructional leader.

Recommendation: It is critical that the principal of an at-risk school be able to manage time so that the primary task of the principal is that of instructional leader. This means the principal can not micromanage the school, but be the overseer. Other staff members must to be trusted and allowed to perform jobs and duties that are not instructional in nature.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Studies</div>

This study provided a rich, detailed description of the behaviors and practices of one principal in one successful at-risk school combined with the confirmatory data from a survey of

<div align="center">130</div>

that school and two other schools. Though the data provided some details and answers regarding the behaviors and practices of the principal, it raised other questions for further research. Questions for further study are recommended as follows:

1. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies on collaboration and shared leadership in at-risk schools to determine the extent of collaboration and shared leadership and the extent of the role of the principal as a "benign dictator".

2. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies with unsuccessful at-risk schools to determine which behaviors and practices of the principal differ from the present study.

3. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies with similar schools to see if the present results are substantiated.

4. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies on both low and high socioeconomic schools to determine if a high socioeconomic school requires the same nurturing environment for teachers as does the low socioeconomic school.

5. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies to compare the behavior and practices of principals in low and high socioeconomic schools to determine similarities and differences.

6. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies to compare test data on students taught in homogeneous groups to test data on students taught in heterogeneous groups in at-risk schools.

7. *Recommendation:* Conduct further studies to see how a school develops a positive culture with parents of at-risk students.

8. *Recommendation:* Continue to data to further define and validate the instrument.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

**Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

Title of Project <u>*Leadership and School Success: the Behaviors and Practices of the Principal in a Success At-Risk School*</u>

Investigator <u>Susan T. Powell</u>

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of this study is to identify the behaviors and practices of a principal in a high functioning at-risk school as a requirement for a doctoral dissertation. All staff members in the school will be included in the study. Information gained from the study will be made available to help other schools achieve at comparable levels and showcase the success of the school studied.

II. Procedures

The following activities will take place to complete the study: interviews with the principal and at least two staff members; observations of the activities at school; a review of documents; and a survey of all staff members. The interviews are expected to be no more than two hours long in one or two sessions. Copies of the interview transcriptions will be shared with the interviewees. The observations will be unobtrusive to the learning process; but may include photographing. The review of documents will be unobtrusive to the learning process. A survey will be given to all staff members to determine their position on aspects of the learning process and principal leadership in the school. Surveys will be confidential with no identifying codes or marks for staff members.

III. Risks

There are expected to be minimal risks to the participants in this study. Staff members who do not want to participate may opt-out of the process.

IV. Benefits

The benefits of this study will be the showcasing of a successful at-risk school to the professional community. Thought there is no guarantee of benefits associated with this study, it is hoped this study will help other at-risk schools as they try to emulate practices to increase success for their students.

Results of the study will be shared with the school at the conclusion of the study.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Care will be taken to preserve the confidentiality of the participants. No social security numbers or names will be used on the survey. Instead, a number code will be developed to preserve confidentiality.

Interviews will be taped recorded in order to have accurate transcriptions. These tapes will be stored at the home of the investigator and destroyed at the end of the study. Transcriptions of the interviews will be shared with the interviewees to determine accuracy.

VI. Compensation

There is no compensation associated with participation with this project.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

School staff members are free to withdraw from a study at any time without penalty.

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

Complete the survey or, if being interviewed, complete the interview

X. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____Date_____

Subject signature

_____ Date _____
Witness (Optional except for certain classes of subjects)

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

Susan T. Powell   703-670-6537/supowel1@vt.edu or ysprincipal@aol.com
Investigator(s)   Telephone/e-mail

Dr. Steve Parson   703-461-0655/parson@vt.edu
Faculty Advisor   Telephone/e-mail

Dr. David Alexander   540- xxx-xxx/mdavid@vt.edu
Departmental Reviewer/Department Head   Telephone/e-mail

David M. Moore   540-231-4991/moored@vt.edu
Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional   Telephone/e-mail
Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance – CVM Phase II (0442)
Research Division

This Informed Consent is valid from _____ to _____.

[NOTE: Subjects <u>must</u> be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.]

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am interested in why your school is successful and particularly looking at what the principal does to ensure success. In my study I want to answer two questions: "What are principals doing in the highly successful at-risk schools to close the achievement gap?" and "How do these principals influence the learning outcomes in these schools?" I will be asking a series of questions to help me understand reasons for the success of this school.

I will be tape-recording our interview in order to have an accurate transcription. You will be given a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy.

Structured Questions:

For the principal only:

1. How long have you been principal of this school?

2. What are the demographics of your school?

>   Free and reduced-price lunch students
>
>   Minority students
>
>   Categories
>
>   ESOL students

3. Please name the three most important things you do to ensure your students are successful.

For teachers only:

1. What do you teach?

2. How long have you been teaching at this school?

3. Please name the three most important things that happen in this school to ensure the students are successful.

Semistructured Questions:

For Principal only:

1. What is your vision for the school and how does it influence your school culture?

    Prompts to use if necessary:

    What is the shared vision?

    What is the mission?

    Do you have a mission statement and where is it displayed?

    Describe your school culture.

2. What do you do to ensure teachers are teaching the curriculum and students are learning?

    Prompts to use if necessary:

    SOLs

    Use of curriculum

    Assessment

    Staff development

3. Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school.

    Prompts to use if necessary:

    Decision making processes

    Who makes the decisions?

4. In what ways do you create family and community involvement?

    Prompts to use if necessary:

    Parent nights

Parent training

Volunteers

PTO

Advisory Council

Partnerships with community

5. In what way do you see yourself as an effective manager?

Prompts to use if necessary:

Obtaining resources for teaching

Protecting time for teaching

Student behavior

Working with the district to change hours, programs to meet needs of students

Obtaining social and medical help for students

For teachers only:

1. Describe the vision of the school.

Prompts to use if necessary:

The mission

Culture

Sharing in the vision

2. How do you know you are teaching the curriculum and your students are learning?

Prompts to use if necessary:

SOLs

Staff development

Assessment

3. Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school.

    Prompts to use if necessary:

        How are decisions made?

        Who makes the decisions?

4. In what ways do you create family and community involvement?

    Prompts to use if necessary:

        Parent nights

        Parent training

        Volunteers

        PTO

        Advisory Council

        Partnerships with community

5. How is the principal an effective manager?

    Prompts if necessary:

        Obtaining resources for teaching

        Assuring time on task

        Behavior management

        Obtaining social and medial resources for students

Unstructured Questions:

1. What else do you need for me to know about ways you make students successful in your school?

2. Is there anything else I need to know about your school?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

School_____

Name of Person interviewed	Position	Date of interview	Follow up interview date(s)	Transcript Review by interviewee	Comments

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION GUIDE

School _____   Date of Observation_____

Place observed_____

Domains	Observations
Vision, Mission, Culture	
Curriculum and classroom instruction	
Collaboration and shared leadership	
Family and community involvement	
Effective management	
Other observations (continued on second page)	

Observation Guide-Page 2

Additional Observations and Comments

School_____   Date_____

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

School_____

Place	Date(s)	Comments
School Grounds		
Building		
Hallways		
Office		
Classroom(s)		
Regular Education Classroom(s)		
Special Education Classroom(s)		
Cafeteria		
Staff Meeting		
Parent Meeting		
Student Government Meeting		
Art Class		
Music Class		
Physical Education		
Teacher Lounge		
Teacher Workrooms		
Library		
Other		
Other		

APPENDIX F

REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS GUIDE

School _____   Date of Review _____

Document Reviewed_____

Domains	Observations
Vision, Mission, Culture	
Curriculum and classroom instruction	
Collaboration and shared leadership	
Family and community involvement	
Effective management	
Other observations (continued on second page)	

APPENDIX G

DOCUMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST

Name of School_____

Document	Date(s) Reviewed	Comments
School Handbook		
Committee Minutes		
PTO Minutes		
Advisory Council Minutes		
School Newsletters		
Staff Communication		
Teacher Plan books		
Student Government Minutes		
Others		

APPENDIX H

VALIDATION SURVEY

STATEMENTS ASSESSING THE BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS

Directions: Circle the number of the appropriate response.

Domains

1. Vision, mission, culture
2. Curriculum and classroom instruction (to include assessment and staff development)
3. Collaboration and shared leadership
4. Family and community relations
5. Effective management (To include resources, hiring, discipline, time for learning, and medical and social issues)

Association Ratings:

    1 = very weak   2 = weak   3 = strong   4 = very strong

Clarity Ratings:

    1 = very unclear, delete   2 = somewhat clear, revise   3 = clear, leave as written

(For any items you rate as 1 or 2 for clarity or association, please write your suggestions for improvement directly on this page.)

Questionnaire statements	Domain	Association	Clarity
1. Direct instruction teaching methods are used.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
2. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
3. The principal knows what is going on in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
4. Potential staff is interviewed for the position by other staff members.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
5. The principal provides enough resources to deliver instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
6. The principal uses many sources for funds to buy resources.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
7. The needs of the children come first.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
8. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
9. I know my principal's vision for the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
10. Keeping the curriculum foremost is important in the classroom.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
11. The principal understands how students learn.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
12. The principal keeps teacher-pupil low in key instructional areas by teaching a class at sometime during the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
13. Time on task for learning is evident throughout the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
14. The principal is able to hire the best candidate for the job.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
15. The vision of the school is the key for school change in my school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Item			
16. The school is the center of the community.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
17. The principal provides the technology needed to teach students effectively.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
19. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
20. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
21. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
22. Teachers collaborate with each other concerning the instructional needs of students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
23. The web is used for communication between school and home.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
24. There is an after school program for students to reinforce skills.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
25. Most people believe the principal is an ethical leader.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
26. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
27. The principal manipulates staff time to provide for the lowest teacher-pupil ratio in language arts and math.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
28. Class size is determined by the school, not the district office.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
29. It is my job to ensure my students are successful.	1 2 3 4 5		

30. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
31. The principal manipulates funds to ensure the school the school has the best resources to teach the students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
32. The principal makes specific academic decisions that he(she) deems are important for instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
33. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
34. The school counselor addresses the social and medical needs of the children.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
35. Teachers are leaders in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
36. The staff participates in the hiring process.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
37. Parents are seen frequently in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
38. After school programs are well attended by parents.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
39. The school is a happy place for learning.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
40. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
41. Most staff members in the school know what they need to do to ensure the success of all students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
42. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Item			
43. Frequent extra-curricular programs enhance the curriculum.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
44. Businesses form partnerships with the school.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
45. The principal participates in staff development.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
46. The principal spends more time in the classrooms than in the office.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
47. Medical services are available at the school.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
48. The principal knows the names of the students.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
49. Students are assessed frequently.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
50. There is an all day kindergarten program.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
51. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
52. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
53. Assessment is perceived as a vital part of the instructional process.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
54. All staff members are responsible for the behavior of students in the building.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
55. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
56. The principal shares test scores with teachers.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
57. The principal recognizes the successes of children publicly.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
58. Students are on task throughout the school day.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5

59. The principal is the instructional leader of the school.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
60. The principal respects teachers' viewpoints.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
61. The principal supports the discipline plan.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
62. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
63. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
64. Students in the school are well-behaved.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
65. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
66. The staff makes decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
67. There is a discipline for student behavior that is effective.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
68. Teachers have enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
69. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
70. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
71. Technology is perceived as an important resource for teaching.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
72. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
73. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5

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#	Statement			
74.	The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
75.	School communication is printed in ore than one language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
76.	The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
77.	Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
78.	The principal visits classrooms frequently.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
79.	Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
80.	Homework completion is required daily.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
81.	My school has a plan to ensure all students are successful.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
82.	Teachers are free to be risk-takers.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
83.	Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision making.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
84.	Community members volunteer at the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
85.	The school is a safe place for students and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
86.	This is a child centered school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
87.	Saturday school is used to reinforce skills.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
88.	Community members work with the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
89.	Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Item			
90. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
91. School staff members hold classes for parents.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
92. Translators are provided fro parents who do not speak English.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
93. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
94. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
95. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
96. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
97. The staff enjoys working in the school.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
98. Leadership in the school is shared among the principal and staff.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
99. Most people believe all children can learn.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
100. Teachers participate in hiring staff.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
101. The curriculum is the primary focus of classroom instruction.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
102. Teachers interview potential staff members.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
103. Most staff members participate in staff development.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
104. Assessment results usually guide instruction of students.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5
105. Test taking strategies are taught.	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5

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	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
106. The school plan is developed by the principal and staff together.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
107. Teachers know how to obtain help for students' social and medial needs.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
108. The school is the social center of the community.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
109. Teachers are free to try new teaching methods.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

VALIDATED QUESTIONS FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Rules
- ✓ Under "Rating the individual question to determine its importance", scores of 80% and higher combing Strongly agree this is a good question and agree this is a good question will be used.
- ✓ When multiple domains were selected the domain with 60% or above will be used.
- ✓ Under clarity of question, a professional judgment will be made by the researcher to use the question as written or revise. The question will be revised if over 33% of the respondents marked "somewhat clear, revise."

School Vision, Mission, Culture-	16
Curriculum and Classroom Instruction	22
Collaboration and Shared Leadership	9
Family and Community Relations	16
Effective Management	13
Total	76

SCHOOL VISION, MISSION, CULTURE

Vision and mission
- ✓ **The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.**
- ✓ **Most people in this school believe all children can learn.**
- ✓ **My school develops and implements a plan to ensure all students are successful. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.**
- ✓ **Most people in the school work for the success of all students.**

Culture
- ✓ **The culture of the school is conducive to learning.**
- ✓ **The needs of the children come first in our school.**
- ✓ **There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.**
- ✓ **Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.**
- ✓ **The school is a happy place for learning.**
- ✓ **Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.**
- ✓ **The staff enjoys working in this school.**
- ✓ **The principal knows the names of the students.**

Moved from curriculum and classroom instruction
- ✓ **Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.**
- ✓ **The principal visits classrooms frequently. (Chosen because of literature review.)**
- ✓ **The principal is seen frequently throughout the building**

CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Curriculum
- ✓ **The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.**
- ✓ **Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.**
- ✓ **Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.**
- ✓ **Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **There is an all day kindergarten program. (moved from effective management)**
- ✓ **There is a pre-school program for four year olds. (moved from effective management)**

Classroom instruction
- ✓ **Test taking strategies are taught.**
- ✓ **Homework completion is required daily.**
- ✓ **Teaching methods and programs are based on research.**
- ✓ **Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.**
- ✓ **The principal understands good classroom instruction**
- ✓ **Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.**
- ✓ **An after school program for students reinforces academic skills. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **Students participate in an extended year schedule.**
- ✓ **Students attend school on Saturday to reinforce academic skills. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **Students are on task throughout the school day.**
- ✓ **Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.**

Assessment
- ✓ **Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.**
- ✓ **Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.**
- ✓ Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.

Staff development
- ✓ **Most staff members participate in staff development.**
- ✓ **Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.**

Visibility
Questions moved to culture

COLLABORATION AND SHARED LEADERSHIP

Collaboration
- ✓ **Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.**
- ✓ **The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.**
- ✓ **The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.**

Shared Leadership
- ✓ **The staff makes decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal**
- ✓ **Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.**
- ✓ **Teachers are leaders in the school.**
- ✓ **The principal and staff together develop the school plan.**
- ✓ **The staff participates in the hiring process. (moved from Effective management.)**
- ✓ **The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers. (REVISED)**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Family
- ✓ **Family members are encouraged to come to school.**
- ✓ **Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English**.
- ✓ **Parents are seen frequently in the school.**
- ✓ **Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.**
- ✓ **School staff members hold classes for parents.**
- ✓ **The Internet is used for communication between school and home.**
- ✓ **After school programs are well attended by parents.**
- ✓ **Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.**
- ✓ **Family members feel comfortable in the school.**
- ✓ **School communication is printed in more than one language.**
- ✓ **There is a parent liaison to assist parents.**

Community
- ✓ **The school forms partnerships with businesses.**
- ✓ **Community members volunteer at the school.**
- ✓ **The school is the center of the community.**
- ✓ **Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.**
- ✓ **Outside organizations support the school monetarily.**

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Resources
- ✓ **The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students.**
- ✓ **The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school. (REVISED)**

Hiring

- ✓ **The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions. (REVISED)**

Discipline
- ✓ **Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **The discipline plan for student behavior is effective. (REVISED)**
- ✓ **The principal supports the discipline plan.**

Time for Learning
- ✓ **Instructional time is protected from interruptions.**
- ✓ **The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.**
- ✓ **There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.**
- ✓ **The district office determines class size. (REVISED)**

Medical/Social
- ✓ **Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.**
- ✓ **A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.**

APPENDIX J

SOURCE OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Survey Questions	From Literature Review	From School Study
1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	X	
2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.		X
3. Students participate in an extended year schedule.		X
4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success	X	X
5. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.		X
6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.		X
7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	X	X
8. The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions.	X	X
9. The principal supports the discipline plan.	X	X
10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	X	X
11. Students are on task throughout the school day.		X
12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.		X
13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.	X	X
14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.		X
15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	X	X
16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.		X
17. Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.		X
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.		X
19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.		X
20. The Internet is used for communication between school and home.		X
21. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.		X
22. The needs of the children come first in our school.	X	X
23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.		X
24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.		X
25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.		X
26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.		X
27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.		X
28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.	X	X
29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.	X	X
30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	X	X
31. The school is a happy place for learning.		X
32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline	X	X

plan for behavior.		
33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	X	X
34. After school programs are well attended by parents.		X
35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	X	X
36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.	X	
37. Community members volunteer at the school.		X
38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	X	X
39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.		X
40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.	X	X
41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students.	X	X
42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.		X
43. Test taking strategies are taught.		X
44. The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	X	X
45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	X	X
46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.		X
47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.		X
48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.	X	X
49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	X	X
50. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	X	X
51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	X	X
52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.		X
53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.		X
54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.		X
55. The district office determines class size.	X	X
56. The staff enjoys working in this school.		X
57. Teachers are leaders in the school.	X	
58. School communication is printed in more than one language.	X	X
59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.	X	X
60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.		X
61. The principal knows the names of the students.		X
62. The school is the center of the community.		X
63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.		X
64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.		X
65. There is an all day kindergarten program.		X
66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.		X
67. Most staff members participate in staff development.	X	X
68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.	X	X
69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.		X
70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	X	

71. The staff participates in the hiring process.		X
72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.	X	X
73. Homework completion is required daily.		X
74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.		X
75. School staff members hold classes for parents.	X	X
76. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.		X

INTERNET SURVEY

Successful School Survey

Dear Successful School Staff member,

I am a doctorial candidate at Virginia Tech studying successful at-risk schools in Virginia. You work at one of only eleven schools in the state that I have identified as being successful by my criteria. I need your help with my study. I have designed a computerized survey instrument to assist me in finding the factors that contribute to your school's success. I estimate it will take about fifteen minutes for you to complete this survey and can be done without interfering with your instructional time. I have obtained the approval of your school district and/or principal to administer this survey.

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to your school only. If you have questions, please feel free to call me at 703-670-6537 or e-mail me at ysprincipal@aol.com or supowel1@vt.edu. Your responses are confidential. Your name has been asked for on the survey only as a control mechanism and it will not show up in my study or be released to anyone else. Data will be collected by the school unit, not by individual respondent.

Thank you for your input. I am hopeful the data collected will help other schools with high percentages of at-risk students be as successful as you.

Susan T. Powell
14691 Kogan Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22193

Please write your name here. Your name will be erased and will not appear on the survey after the survey is returned. Names are only used to track surveys returned.

The name of my school is

 How many years have you been teaching at this school?

What is the total number of years you have been teaching, counting the years at this school?

1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

3. Students participate in an extended year schedule.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

5. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

8. The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

9. The principal supports the discipline plan.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

11. Students are on task throughout the school day.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

17. Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

20. The Internet is used for communication between school and home.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

21. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

22. The needs of the children come first in our school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

31. The school is a happy place for learning.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

34. After school programs are well attended by parents.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

37. Community members volunteer at the school.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach the students.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

43. Test taking strategies are taught.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

44. The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

50. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

55. The district office determines class size.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

56. The staff enjoys working in this school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

57. Teachers are leaders in the school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

58. School communication is printed in more than one language.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

61. The principal knows the names of the students.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

62. The school is the center of the community.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

65. There is an all day kindergarten program.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

67. Most staff members participate in staff development.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

71. The staff participates in the hiring process.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

73. Homework completion is required daily.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

75. School staff members hold classes for parents.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

76. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.
 Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   Not Sure

I am trying to identify key characteristics of successful/high risk schools. Please provide any thought or ideas that you have that would help me better understand your school and its successes.

APPENDIX M

MEANS FOR ALL QUESTIONS

	Mean
65. There is an all day kindergarten program.	4.73
61 The principal knows the names of the students.	4.62
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.	4.6
30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	4.6
26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.	4.57
51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	4.56
58. School communication is printed in more than one language.	4.5
28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.	4.49
22. The needs of the children come first in our school.	4.47
10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	4.47
63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.	4.47
31. The school is happy place for learning.	4.44
67. Most staff members participate in staff development.	4.44
48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.	4.40
42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	4.40
38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	4.4
41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach students.	4.39
25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	4.38
64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.	4.38
15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	4.38
39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	4.37
27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	4.36
19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	4.36
45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	4.35
56. The staff enjoys working in this school.	4.34
14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	4.31
4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.	4.27
46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.	4.26
7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	4.25
43. Test taking strategies are taught.	4.24
74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	4.23
6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.	4.18
16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.	4.17
57. Teachers are leaders in the school.	4.14
35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	4.13
23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.	4.12
8. The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions.	4.12
5. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.	4.09
9. The principal supports the discipline plan.	4.06
11. Students are on task throughout the school day.	4.05
40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.	4.02
52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	4.02

29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and the staff.	4.01
13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.	4
76. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.	3.98
1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	3.98
2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.	3.97
59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.	3.97
33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	3.96
37. Community members volunteer at the school.	3.95
50. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	3.95
60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.	3.94
66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	3.92
72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.	3.89
24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.	3.89
44. The staff plans the programs for the school in collaboration with the principal.	3.86
36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.	3.85
73. Homework completion is required daily.	3.83
69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	3.78
70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	3.71
32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior.	3.70
54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	3.63
21. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	3.6
68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.	3.55
12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	3.53
62. The school is the center of the community.	3.53
17. Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.	3.48
34. After school programs are well attended by parents.	3.38
49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	3.36
20. The Internet is used for communication between school and home.	3.28
71. The staff participates in the hiring process.	3.05
75. School staff members hold classes for parents.	2.89
3. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	2.86
55. The district office determines class sized.	2.68
47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.	2.52
53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.	2.41
Average	4.00

	Standard Deviation
65. There is an all day kindergarten program.	0.44
51. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	0.49
58. School communication is printed in more than one language.	0.50
18. Teachers focus on the SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.	0.51
26. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.	0.51
48. Direct instruction teaching methods are utilized.	0.53
10. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	0.54
19. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	0.54
30. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	0.55
31. The school is happy place for learning.	0.56
22. The needs of the children come first in our school.	0.56
28. Assessment is a vital part of the instructional process.	0.58
46. My school develops a plan to ensure all students are successful.	0.58
39. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	0.60
38. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	0.60
41. The principal manages funds to ensure the school has the best resources to teach students.	0.61
74. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	0.63
67. Most staff members participate in staff development.	0.63
63. There is a pre-school program for four year olds.	0.63
61 The principal knows the names of the students.	0.64
45. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	0.65
43. Test taking strategies are taught.	0.67
7. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	0.67
56. The staff enjoys working in this school.	0.68
14. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	0.68
15. The principal provides teachers with enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	0.68
4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.	0.70
64. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.	0.71
25. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	0.71
42. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	0.73
16. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.	0.75
50. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	0.76
57. Teachers are leaders in the school.	0.76
27. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	0.77
13. Teachers know what resources to use for students' social and medical needs.	0.77
5. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.	0.78
11. Students are on task throughout the school day.	0.79
8. The principal, not the district office, makes hiring decisions.	0.82
52. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	0.82

6. An after school program for students reinforces academic skills.	0.84
33. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	0.84
1. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	0.86
59. The school forms partnerships with businesses.	0.86
60. The principal uses a variety of funding sources to sustain programs at the school.	0.86
32. Students in this school understand and follow the discipline plan for behavior.	0.87
40. The staff makes decisions with the principal concerning teaching and learning.	0.87
23. Parents are seen frequently in the school.	0.88
2. The principal and staff together develop the school plan.	0.88
76. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.	0.90
21. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	0.91
72. The adopted curriculum is the focus of all classroom instruction.	0.91
24. Frequent extra-curriculum programs enrich the curriculum.	0.93
37. Community members volunteer at the school.	0.94
9. The principal supports the discipline plan.	0.96
29. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and the staff.	0.97
44. The staff plans the programs for the school in collaboration with the principal.	0.97
55. The district office determines class sized.	0.98
53. The principal makes some academic decisions without the input of teachers.	0.98
69. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	0.99
70. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	0.99
66. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	1.00
36. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.	1.01
73. Homework completion is required daily.	1.01
12. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	1.04
68. The discipline plan for student behavior is effective.	1.05
54. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	1.06
20. The Internet is used for communication between school and home.	1.06
17. Students are taught only in heterogeneous groups.	1.07
34. After school programs are well attended by parents.	1.09
62. The school is the center of the community.	1.10
75. School staff members hold classes for parents.	1.10
35. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	1.16
71. The staff participates in the hiring process.	1.19
3. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	1.25
49. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	1.28
47. Students attend school on Saturdays to reinforce academic skills.	1.68
Average	0.82

APPENDIX O

TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	19.983	26.294	26.294	9.995	13.152	13.152
2	5.786	7.613	33.907	9.056	11.915	25.067
3	3.864	5.085	38.991	8.298	10.918	35.986
4	2.959	3.894	42.885	5.244	6.900	42.885
5	2.399	3.156	46.041			
6	2.199	2.893	48.934			
7	2.101	2.764	51.698			
8	1.843	2.425	54.124			
9	1.780	2.342	56.465			
10	1.753	2.307	58.773			
11	1.612	2.121	60.894			
12	1.579	2.078	62.971			
13	1.468	1.932	64.903			
14	1.432	1.884	66.787			
15	1.401	1.843	68.630			
16	1.311	1.725	70.356			
17	1.267	1.667	72.022			
18	1.158	1.523	73.546			
19	1.073	1.411	74.957			
20	1.064	1.400	76.357			
21	.994	1.308	77.665			
22	.928	1.221	78.887			
23	.917	1.206	80.093			
24	.900	1.184	81.276			
25	.854	1.124	82.401			
26	.849	1.118	83.518			
27	.811	1.068	84.586			
28	.729	.959	85.545			
29	.643	.847	86.391			
30	.629	.827	87.218			
31	.622	.818	88.036			
32	.577	.760	88.796			
33	.550	.723	89.519			
34	.529	.695	90.215			
35	.503	.662	90.877			
36	.477	.628	91.505			
37	.442	.581	92.086			
38	.406	.534	92.620			
39	.397	.522	93.142			
40	.363	.478	93.620			
41	.347	.456	94.076			

42	.337	.444	94.520
43	.329	.433	94.953
44	.304	.400	95.353
45	.282	.371	95.724
46	.244	.321	96.045
47	.237	.312	96.357
48	.223	.294	96.651
49	.214	.282	96.933
50	.202	.265	97.199
51	.189	.249	97.447
52	.178	.234	97.682
53	.165	.217	97.899
54	.160	.210	98.109
55	.154	.202	98.311
56	.127	.167	98.479
57	.122	.161	98.639
58	.119	.156	98.796
59	.113	.148	98.944
60	.106	.139	99.083
61	9.059E-02	.119	99.203
62	8.500E-02	.112	99.314
63	8.151E-02	.107	99.422
64	7.034E-02	9.256E-02	99.514
65	6.340E-02	8.342E-02	99.598
66	5.383E-02	7.083E-02	99.668
67	5.235E-02	6.888E-02	99.737
68	4.432E-02	5.831E-02	99.796
69	3.224E-02	4.242E-02	99.838
70	2.915E-02	3.835E-02	99.876
71	2.616E-02	3.442E-02	99.911
72	2.175E-02	2.862E-02	99.939
73	1.690E-02	2.223E-02	99.962
74	1.338E-02	1.760E-02	99.979
75	8.624E-03	1.135E-02	99.991
76	7.126E-03	9.377E-03	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

APPENDIX P

SURVEY COMMENTS

1. The overall attitude of staff and administration in this school is very professional, positive, caring and knowledgeable. I am enjoying my work here, and enjoy the diversity of our students, even though this diversity involves huge challenges.

2. A strong Administrator with an open door policy.
    A Staff that is supportive and caring to one another.
    A caring and compassionate guidance counselor.
    A Staff that puts in many extra hours to create successful learning for their students.

3. dedicated and experienced teachers
    strong leadership
    Character program

4. The staff, teachers, and administrators at this school seem to share a passion for teaching and take pride in student learning. The atmosphere is positive for teaching and learning. I believe my opinion means something to my peers and my administrators. I believe the children feel safe, cared for, and important and, in turn, I believe the faculty feels the same way about themselves: safe, cared for and important.

5. very supportive administration
    dedicated and hard working personnel
    positive feedback from the administration
    treated as a professional
    asked for input but know final decisions are the administrators, since they make the big bucks :), just kidding
    very caring staff

6. Leadership, leadership, leadership. Our principal has a clear vision for our school. He allows for input but is still "in charge" so there is no chain of command confusion. Kids come first. We create within the limits required by state and federal organizations and are fully supported in this by our administration. Our administration is also very supportive of teachers. There is an overall expectation that everyone in the building will give and receive respect.

7. We have had administration changes in the last couple of years, so it is hard to say what the reasons are for success in terms of now and then. Traditionally, we have always celebrated diversity in our student population and in teacher personalities. There has always been a sense of pride in being the city's older, different, socially and economically diverse school. Strong professionalism with cooperation, honesty, child-centeredness, and the avoidance of non-productive conflict has been present all along. Teachers can have access to the building at any time, and there are often teachers working in the school during non-school hours and days (a version of flextime?). Needed materials are available. In the past, there has been effective communication, and clearly demonstrated

respect for teachers, students and parents from administration. A current administrative strength is innovative scheduling that allows uninterrupted teaching time in smaller groups. We have always had an outstanding school counselor who does as much as possible for home based needs so teachers can concentrate on teaching. It helps to be a not too large school (about 400 kids) in a small system (4 elementary schools so far). This means we get to know families and most teachers get to know many of the kids during their time here. This has always been a very child-centered place. Always.

8. The Principal and staff genuinely care about the students. I asked two students the question above and they said, "They have good teachers." And, "They have good rules."

9. The staff and administration continues to go out of their way to ensure the success of our students. A strong sense of family is present at Study School Elem. There are very few schools if any at all, that attempts to accommodate students, their families, and the community at large. It is with great pleasure that I can say that I am a Study School Elem. staff member.

10. The successfulness for our school is contributed to the closeness of the staff. We are one big family and everyone is there to help the other person if needed. We work as a team and we are communicate with one another. Our principals are awesome and that is a big help.

11. hard working staff, principal with a vision

12. In the kindergarten program teachers work hard to provide targeted instruction to the students to ensure that they achieve the expected objectives. The Early Childhood Assessment Program provided by the county is closely adhered to. Every effort is made to have the children reading and writing by the end of the school year.

13. I think the all day Kindergarten Program has made a big difference along with an outstanding Principal whom everybody adores. He so leaves everyone alone because he believes in what we do!

14. When teachers believe in the students and have an interest in their success, students achieve. Expectations begets expectations.

15. High expectations from all staff
Students are taught responsibility for themselves and others
Respect by all, for all

16. Individualized Instruction based upon frequent assessment and modification of instruction

17. We have an exceptionally strong staff, including many highly experienced teachers. We believe in what we are doing. There is a strong feeling of mutual respect between staff members and students. Our grade level teams often work well together and share our materials and resources.

18. Teachers are dedicated to making children succeed on the SOL tests. A lot of time and effort has been put into creating material to ensure success.

19. teachers committed to working with individual needs of children

20. Our leader has worked to include many different diverse programs all directed to fill the needs of different students. I feel that while we have many programs that offer additional

help to the students, no one program can or will ever be able to touch all students. The large number of programs we offer, therefore ensures that students have a way to feel they are doing more than just going to school. The principal's bottom line is helping each student get a good start to the future. That is why we have so many different programs. I think back to my experience as a student in Elem. school. Our school had no additional programs to help me as I grew up. I feel that Study School has opportunities for most students to achieve, but at times I still see students that will not or can not take part in some of our programs. We have a good school, what you see today you would not have seen last year or the year before. We have changed as our population has changed because of the needs of that population. It is our ability to have a vision and as a school take that vision and implement it, that makes us succeed. It is our shotgun approach on the programs that helps make us successful. Some students take advantage of one program and others take advantage of other programs. In the end many children are given that little extra that helps them become successful. It is the work we do, that makes it work.

21. While the principal expects teachers to support above and beyond projects such as SOL Saturdays and evening family nights, he also is very lenient on allowing staff to leave early or come in late for things like doctors appointments, staff's children's programs, etc. without taking leave. He asks us to return in the Fall a day early but then allows us to take to not report on one teacher workday if we feel we can afford not to come in. He is also flexible with arrival/departure time and leaves everyone on their honor to work their full contract time. These things send the staff a strong message of support acknowledging our hours we give without compensation by not "nickel and diming" us for things like leave, contract hours, etc.

22. Our school success is based on a strong tax base which provides money for teachers, assistants and materials. In addition, our teachers are outstanding, well trained and sensitive to individual student needs as well as whole group needs. Our teachers work well together and support each other. Parents are included in many ways throughout the school. Many parents are involved only minimally due to work schedules, but opportunities are abundant. Evening programs and activities are offered at least monthly, often more frequently. We have local university students who provide community service work in our schools with students regularly. Our guidance program is outstanding and focus' on emotional and social programs which support students' self-esteem and teaches social skills. Our special education program is also strong. We have numerous specialist reading teachers and teachers of students learning English as a second language. We have self-contained classes to teach students learning English as their second language (non-speakers and low level English speakers). As the students become more able to learn through English instruction they are transitioned into regular classrooms. These students maintain relationships with English speakers through their resource classes and social times (art, music, PE, recess, lunch, etc).
Our curriculum and teaching methods, for reading in particular, are driven by the prescriptive boundaries of the Reading First Grant and the VA SOLs. In the short run this will drive our scores up. How could it not? In the long run it will be interesting to see the emotional impact on students and their ability to think critically and imaginatively. The social impact will be felt as well.

Thank you for your interest in our school. We are very proud of our successes and strive to provide a quality education to all of our students.

23. Our principal is key to the success of our school. He sets the ru
Our principal is key to the success of our school. He is always there as one of the first to arrive at the building and one of the last to leave, even when there is after school programs. He LOVES and truly looks out for the best for each kid and expects the same from all his staff. Not only does our principal look out for the children's best interest, but I also believe that he would definitely be there for me if I needed help. The staff at Cameron also works very hard and I would believe that we work harder than many schools. Most of us go above and beyond our educational responsibilities and help our students with the gift of extra time and even buy our kids and their families clothes, beds, food to name a few. Study School is believed to be by the staff one of the best caring school!!! And at the base of this success is without a doubt; our principal.

24. Every grade level in our school designs its schedule and groups around the current needs of the students. Because each group of students is different, groupings and schedules change from year to year to best meet the needs of each group.

25. Dedicated, well-educated, and caring staff along with good materials help us be so successful.

26. We focus on the children and their individual needs. In third grade our focus is the SOL test that they will be having and covering all those they have learned from K-3. But as a school we take the children from where they are and teach. We work hard on having the children believe they can do it. There is a lot of positive out put to the children.

27. It is a positive working environment for the staff, the students and the parents.

28. Our principal is supportive and encouraging toward his teachers. He does not micro-manage the classroom. He trusts his teachers to do the job that he has hired them to do.
Concerning question #3. We are not a year round school and do not want to be one. Most of our children are encouraged to go to summer school, and ways are found to fund the summer school for the children.
Concerning the question about outside organizations providing additional funding ????
We have churches, like Grace Presbyterian Church (where our principal attends and is very active)and civic associations that helped fund our students to go to the Young Astronaut Program at the Kennedy Space Center when we sent 6 students there for a week's training for three years in a row. The Springfield Women's club provides new winter coats, hats, and gloves for any child who needs one.They also read all year long with our first graders. Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas presents are always provided for needy families.

29. There is no one thing...there are some areas that are in need of reform. This is a school in the midst of overwhelming immigration factors as well.

30. My position is not a "teacher" one. Therefore where you see "not sure" as a response it is because I am not in that role to be able to give an appropriate answer. I am a service provider housed in the school, I am bilingual, which is a huge need in our school given our demographics of a large Hispanic immigrant population. My schedule is not tied to a classroom one which allows me the freedom needed to be able to build bridges of

communication between the schools and the parents of those children (via home visits, telephone calls, interpreting at parent/teacher conferences, child study/IEP meetings, etc.). I can also work one-on-one with identified at risk students in the school providing tutoring, mentoring, and other services as needed. I believe it is imperative for schools that have a high at risk population to look at how "non-traditional" professional people, like myself, can enhance the success of their programs which have a direct impact on those students and families.

31. A successful school serving high risk children is practicle, flexible, and addresses student need in and outside of school

32. The success of our school is partly a result of the collaboration between classroom teachers and the resource teachers. We work together to ensure that all children have their individual needs met. Everyone feels responsibility for all students. The attitude that "that kid is Title I's responsibility, not mine" is not accepted. We work hard and we work together. The administration supports us by giving us opportunities for meaningful and ongoing professional development. Our principal trusts us to do the job and while he is aware of the daily work going on in the school, he trusts us and leaves us to do our job. The rapidity with which our student population has changed has resulted in a higher proportion of kids with many needs. Meeting all of these needs is a challenge and makes our jobs harder. To suggest that the idea of "no child left behind" is a new one at our school is insulting.

33. Many of the teachers at are school are strong and talented teachers. We have good resources within our school (extra guidance program and a position where a bilingual person works with students and families when needed). We have a very competent special ed. staff that works closely with the teachers.

34. There is a sense of respect among staff. I am the preschool SPED teacher, so my answers on some items reflect my ignorance about what goes on in the regular classes.

35. -use of instructional assistants in each grade level
-parent support in the classroom

36. I feel that the success at our school is the result of the teachers more than the administration. We have many teachers who spend extra time preparing material to teach and review the state SOL's. Working together, sharing ideas, and developing various means to teach and review material is very evident within our grade levels and also across grade levels.

37. Teaching a lower grade, I am not always sure what I see as far as effective discipline carries through to the upper grades. Also, there are always times when things do not go smoothly-administrators/teachers, etc. However, I do feel overall that our staff/administration work beautifully together.

38. I am an itinerant occupational therapist for Fairfax County Schools. Study School is one of three schools I travel to. I don't feel I have enough knowledge about the inner workings of Study School to answer these questions.

39. Nurturing, goal-oriented, united

40. Our school is successful because the majority of the teachers really care about the students. Teachers at Survey School 1 spend many extra hours before and after school

providing enrichment activities for students such as, good start, drama club, choir, SCA, SOL tutoring, etc.

41. We have hard working teachers who give of their time and talents above and beyond what is the norm!

42. Study School has provided opportunities for all students to achieve. In addition, the literature that I have read about giving students responsibility is one way to get at-risk students to achieve success. Study School has done this by providing animals which have to be cared for on a daily basis. I also feel another contributing factor is uniforms. By students wearing uniforms, it eliminates the "I am better than you, because, I am better dressed than you" attitude. All students are equal. And of course, the students are provided opportunities to go on field trips the likes of which are usually reserved for seniors in high school. A combination of a strong, diverse, cohesive faculty with good leadership, and providing experiences normally out of the realm of most of these students helps support the framework for the school to succeed.

43. Saturday school to support SOL's is most helpful!! My principal is an exceptionally strong leader. He has a genuine love for people especially, children. We have a talented staff that is totally committed to maximizing every child's potential. As our school song states, "At Study School, we are a very special family!"

EPILOGUE

During the spring of 2004, I visited my study school on nine different occasions, and I often stayed most of the day. I signed in at the office and received my security badge and then had free roam of the building. I went anywhere I wanted to go and talked to anyone that was free to talk and not teaching students at the time. After these visits, I often visited with my chair, Dr. Parson, and would tell him about what I was seeing. He cautioned me about remaining unbiased, and I really tried hard to do that. When I reread my interviews and notes, I often reflected that this is too good to be true and maybe I am not getting the whole picture. So I returned to the school time and time again. I even talked to teachers in the evening on the phone or by e-mail. I have concluded that the culture in this building was as I saw it. It was not a show put on for me.

Now, I am not saying the school is perfect, but I think it gets to as close to perfect as any school I know of that serves at-risk students. I do have some personal biases and beliefs based upon my experiences as a principal in another school district. I was a little uncomfortable with parents wandering the building. I know this contributes to the warm climate, but what does it do for security? Principals walk a very narrow line when it comes to having parents and community members feel comfortable in the building and keeping security tight. Since I was not looking at security, I did not raise question about it. Maybe if I had, I would have found out it was not as I thought I observed.

I also have reservations about people working and not getting paid, as those teachers who taught the Saturday School. I know they were not coerced by the principal to work. Not one person complained to me about working above and beyond the contracted hours. In fact, they

spoke of working these hours with joy. I think these teachers taught on Saturday because these children and this school are their passions, which was far more important than pay. I know that as a principal, I always thought of working with these children was a mission in addition to a passion. My bias is that I am concerned about the principals and the teachers working in these types of schools. They give such long hours to make these children successful that I worry about their own families. I know I did with my staff. I just wished our society would pay educators for the work they do and not expect them to fulfill a passion or a mission.