CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

As student achievement scores continue to become the instrument of choice for identifying effective academic institutions, today's public schools are adopting a standards-based educational system that obligates all students to achieve performance standards in specified curricular areas. States have expanded the use of test results to evaluate teacher and school effectiveness. The state of Virginia is just one of many states to implement a program requiring all students to attain a certain level of proficiency on state-mandated standards. The stakes are high, and educators are feeling the pressure to perform.

The Perception of Public Schools

Schools continue to be the object of faultfinding as assessment indicators help critics paint a bleak picture of the condition of American education. Could the public be expecting too much from our schools? Even though politicians and society have long been interested in education, the system continues to be viewed as a constant disappointment. The public often feels the need to return to the "good old days" of education, but Schlechty (1997) reminded us that the good old days might not have been so good. He demonstrated the criticism that schools are inadequate has been apparent since the late 1860s. Books such as Mortimer B. Smith's *And Madly Teach* (1949), Albert Lynd's *Quackery in the Public Schools* (1953), and Arthur E. Bestor's *Educational Wastelands* (1953) illustrate vividly the public's past indictments of public education.

Mulkeen et al. (1986) revealed that American society has dramatically changed, as has the quality of education. "Academic standards have slipped and test scores have declined" (p. 69). He disclosed that quality became the foremost concern of the 1980s. The goals of education were confused and schools were called on to provide services and transmit values that were formerly expected of community, home, and church. Recent educational reform actions have intensified the push for accountability.

Education Reform Movements

Ravitch (1985), an educational historian, suggested efforts to improve the quality of education for all children have been "crisis driven" (p. 25). She theorized that whatever crisis may exist in public education would soon fade as the public's attention turned to other social or economic concerns. For decades, schools have received criticism from a variety of sources.

Critics have called for a restructuring of the educational system and curriculum reform (Boyer, 1983; Education Commission of the States, 1991), and educators have responded. Calls for more time on task, stronger academic courses, extended school days and years, better teacher preparation programs, more homework, and higher standards have been made (Klein, 1989). Educators have responded to these calls with writing-to-read labs, whole language programs, integrated instruction, enrichment programs, accelerated reading, competency tests, literacy passport tests, and, now, performance standards.

Prominent reports and political forces—the Holmes Group, the Carnegie Commission, and the National Governors' Association—have focused the public's attention on educational matters (Duttweiler & Hord, 1987). Legislators throughout our nation are rediscovering the importance of education. The 1983 report, *A Nation At Risk*, reminded state governors, legislators, school board members, and local officials that they have "the primary responsibility for financing and governing the schools" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 32). The Commission recommended reporting to the general public individual school progress relative to meeting state standards. At present, many states are pushing for rigorous curricula and higher standards for student achievement in public education. This movement for educational improvement has led many states, including Virginia, to a state curriculum and strengthened accountability.

Virginia's educational reform and accountability movement, the Standards of Learning (SOLs), is attracting a great deal of attention. Published reports in the May 3, 1998, edition of *The Washington Post*; the July 27, 1998, edition of *The Roanoke Times*; and the July 29, 1998, publication of *The Virginia-Pilot* enhanced Virginia's justification for the focus on literacy issues and the preparation of the state's youth for the 21st century. Beginning in the 2006-07 school year, 70 percent of a school's student population must pass state tests to maintain accreditation. Will the Standards of Learning be the *final* reform, empowering both teachers and students in Virginia's public schools, leading to excellence?

<u>Virginia's Reform Agenda</u>

Governors George Allen and Jim Gilmore, the Board of Education, and legislators in the state of Virginia have endorsed state academic standards. There are four major elements in Virginia's reform movement:

1. Raising academic standards.

2. Measuring student achievement and progress in the new higher standards.

3. Ensuring the accountability of schools for student achievement.

4. Communicating with parents, taxpayers, and the community at large. (Education Committee, Virginia Department of Education)

Involved in this process is the need to establish what is acceptable performance on the Standards of Learning assessments. Considerable discussion has evolved around blueprints, "cut-off scores," and curriculum integration. Smith, Fuhrman, and O'Day (1994) disclosed that over the past "two and a quarter centuries, the United States has never had explicit education content or performance goals" (p. 13). The state of Virginia and other states are working to change history.

Nearly one third of all students in the nation's public schools fail to graduate, or they receive a diploma even though they are functionally illiterate (Schlechty, 1990); thus, it should be no surprise that educational excellence is lacking in Virginia. In a May 3, 1998 *Washington Post* report by Mark Christie, a member of the Virginia Board of Education, the following rationale was given for Virginia's standards.

- One in four graduates of Virginia public high schools must take remedial work before attempting college classes.

- Nearly one in three sixth-graders in Virginia public schools fails the Literacy Passport Test, which measures the most rudimentary levels of language and math skills. In schools where students are largely minority, the failure rate is even worse. In Richmond, for example, more than half of the sixth-graders fail this basic test year after year.

- Virginia's business community for years has expressed dissatisfaction with employees who have Virginia high school diplomas but lack necessary reading, writing, and math skills.

- High school graduates will have more need than ever before for superior language, math, and science skills in a global economy in which the competition for high paying jobs will be fierce. (Christie, 1998)

In a *New York Times* article published in January 1999 by the National Center for Policy Analysis, Archibold reported that nearly every school in Virginia flunked its new battery of standardized tests in English, math, science, and social studies. Statewide, 98 percent of the

1,800 schools failed to measure up in at least one of the four core subject areas that, in the future, will determine whether they maintain or lose their state accreditation (Archibold, 1999).

<u>The Burden of Teacher Accountability</u>

Most teachers operate from the premise that they only contribute to student learning; therefore, they should not be held accountable for an absolute level of student learning. However, to acquire the "public's trust," more and more educators are being placed in the position of teaching to state-mandated levels. With the pressure of standards accountability, the problem becomes even more frustrating, as Eaton (1999) revealed, because veteran teachers today are yielding to pressure from parents to "dumb down" the curriculum and "inflate" grades. She maintained that teachers who struggle to maintain high standards and hold students accountable are pressured into backing down. Students are frequently allowed to move to another grade or class, often with an easier teacher. Lately, more and more administrators and parents have been requesting that teachers rethink their grades. "Good teachers are inflating grades and lowering expectations in an effort to please well-intentioned parents, stressed-out administrators, and laid-back students" (p. 34).

Daily, teachers participate in staff development activities that focus on the Standards of Learning. They work diligently with peers to complete pacing guides that ensure all tested skills are taught prior to the SOL test administration. Many teachers are required by administrators to label each lesson in plan books with a corresponding SOL objective number. One may assume this focus on teachers, with additional paper and pencil documentation, minimizes the visibility of the contributions of organizational structure, leadership practices, and family on student and school achievement.

Combs (1991) forecasted even more would be asked of the public schools. Changing patterns in family structure, the decline of religion and the church in modern-day society, and a more diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural population are adding significant pressures to institutions of learning. The world educators were preparing children for a hundred and fifty years ago was far more uncomplicated than our world today (Combs, 1991; Schlechty, 1997).

Schools and teachers appear to shoulder the major responsibility of preparing students to become productive, contributing members of society. Because performance and achievement in the standards' movement is anchored in the classroom, there is a sense of urgency for both

teachers and students to perform. Teachers appear to be not only the target of this latest reform wave, but the primary key to proficiency (Carnegie Task Force, 1986).

<u>Standards and the Local Dilemma</u>

Wayland (1964) emphasized the existence of a national system of agencies concerned with education that influence local decisions. Teacher and principal training institutions, professional associations, accreditation associations, federal and state agencies, and colleges and technical schools have the tendency to reduce local control of education. At present, local teachers in Virginia are spending many hours not in directed instruction, but in aligning adopted textbooks with the state's mandated Standards of Learning. The development of state standards is considered by some to be a threat to local control of education.

State-level strategies have had varying success rates. Corbett and Wilson (1990) identified unintended consequences of high-stakes testing: Diversion from the structure and practices of the school reduced teacher motivation, morale, and collegial interaction, which are counterproductive to improving student learning. On the other hand, aggressive state leadership that unites a comprehensive focus with local district and school development will affect student learning (Odden & Marsh, 1988).

Statement of the Problem

Most people agree there is a crisis in American education; however, very few agree on an understanding of the nature of the crisis or viable solutions to it. Writers of such educational reports as the *National Educational Goals Panel* (1989: 1994), *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), and *Putting People First: How We Can Change America* (1992) continue to cite such problems as non-demanding curriculums, low standards, the decline of quality teaching, and schools not meeting the needs of a changing world. One must wonder if excellence, meaning improved student achievement, can be mandated.

School divisions in the state of Virginia are developing educational policies that address the state's Standards of Learning. Administrators and teachers are searching for innovative ways to adapt the curriculum to guarantee student success on the state's learning standards. The demand for both student and teacher accountability has created an intense anxiety among all persons involved in the educational process. As educators are grappling to achieve a proficient

status on the state's tests, parents and taxpayers are wondering why schools are performing so poorly. Being an active participant in this process inspires me to want to investigate variables that influence student and teacher achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments. Two schools will be studied to determine what makes one school more successful than another in meeting the state's mandated standards.

Schools are complex institutions whose major purpose is that of producing intelligent, responsible citizens for society. For years, educators and policymakers have endeavored to determine why some schools are successful in promoting student achievement and others are not. This is the present case in Virginia with the new SOL assessments. Some schools are doing well while others are doing poorly. What makes the difference? This is the focus of this study.

Research Questions

The primary research question is as follows:

What variables distinguish high-gain schools from low-gain schools in Virginia?

The following questions will guide the research:

1. What variables within a school affect SOL test results?
   a) What do principals do to affect SOL test results?
   b) What do teachers do to affect SOL test results?
   c) How does the culture of the school affect SOL test results?
   d) How do the characteristics of principals and teachers relate to the performance of students on the SOL tests?

2. What variables outside the school affect SOL test results?
   a) How do parents affect a school's SOL test results?

Theoretical Framework

This exploratory analysis will focus on two elementary schools to discover what makes one school more successful than the other school in achieving a higher percentage rate passing the SOLs by content areas. It is important to understand that schools are surrounded by environments that impact their instructional programs in various ways (Figure 1). There are two types of variables in the framework of this study—antecedent and end result.

The antecedent variables included in this study are the organization of the schools, the leadership practices of the principals, the culture of the schools, instruction, and parent support. The observer will not measure certain constructs. These constructs include student learning, student motivation, the personality of the student, intelligence of the student, and the values held by the student.

The second type of variable is the end result variable. These outcome variables are third and fifth grade students' SOL test results in English and math for the spring of 1998 and spring of 1999.

Significance of the Study

Effective schools have been identified as having an enduring relationship among instructional staff members. Principal, teacher, and parent beliefs, behaviors, and cultural covenants at Site A and Site B will be the focus of this study in an attempt to discover what may contribute to exemplary student performance on the third grade and fifth grade SOL English and math assessments. The exploration of a school's organization, leadership practices, culture, teaching behaviors of instructional personnel, and parent support may lead to identifiable characteristics that significantly promote student achievement on the state's mandated standards.

Definitions

Culture of the school, according to Schein (1985), is "a pattern of basic assumptions— invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 9). Item 3 on the interview questionnaire provided by interviewed principals and teachers will, for the purpose of this study, identify the school's culture (see Appendices D and E).

Instruction for this study is defined as the process of teaching, informing, and imparting knowledge. It will be directly related to the preparation of students for the Standards of Learning assessments. Items 3 and 4 will be used to identify the school's instructional program.

Antecendent Variables   **End Result Variables**

Organization of the school

Leadership practices of
the principal

Culture of the school

Instruction

Parent support

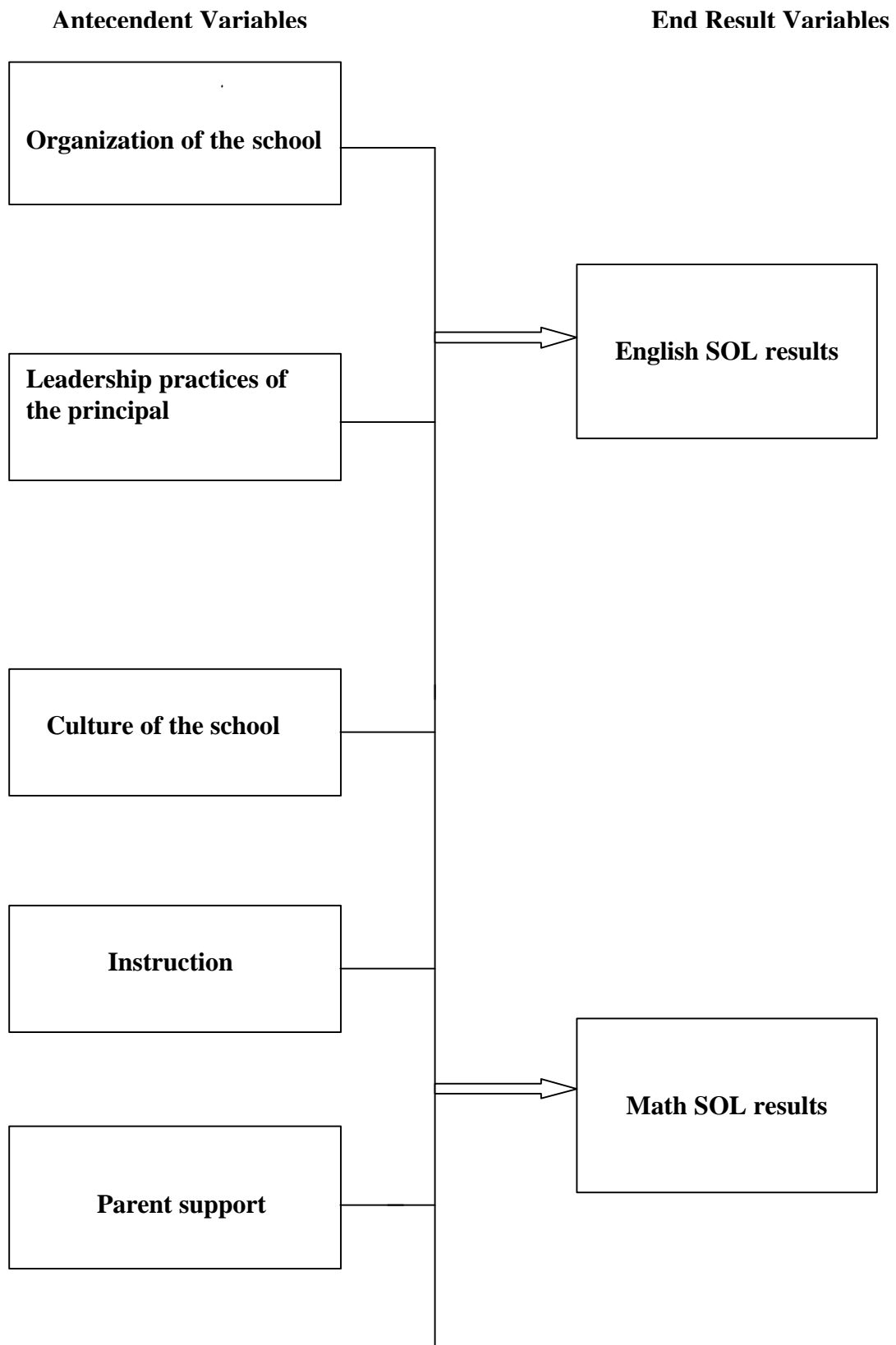English SOL results

Math SOL results

Figure 1. Study model of school variables affecting SOL test results in English and mathematics.

School effectiveness is defined in this study as exemplary performance on Virginia's Standards of Learning assessments in the skill areas of English and math. These standards, adopted in June 1995, set forth minimum expectations for student learning and achievement for every child from kindergarten through grade 12 in the four major academic areas of English (which includes reading and writing), math, science, and history and social science, (history, geography, civics, and economics). They also incorporate computer technology standards intended to result in computer literacy for all students before they enter high school. Standards of Learning test results reflect the percentage rate of students passing each SOL test for individual schools. Results are given for math and English, spring 1998 and spring 1999, respectively. Also, the percentage rate of change for grades 3 and 5 from spring 1998 to spring 1999 in math and English results will be used to identify high-gain and low-gain schools (see Tables 3 and 4). A high-gain school in this study is one that has made significant gains in the percentage rate passing third and fifth grade English and math skills based on spring 1999 SOL test results when compared to spring 1998 test results. A low-gain school is one that has made little or no gains in the percentage rate passing the English and math skills based on the 1999 SOL test scores when compared to the 1998 SOL tests results.

Leadership practices of the principal for the purpose of this study are defined as the process of working with and through others to accomplish individual school goals effectively and efficiently. Effective leaders create a culture that promotes both student and teacher achievement. In this study leadership in the school will be identified by interview item 2 contained in Appendices D, E, and F. Exemplary leaders establish clear policies and goals. They are good listeners, encourage risk-taking, inspire others to do their best, communicate a strong vision, are politically skillful and sensitive, respond well to organizational conflict, lead with an emphasis on culture, are highly imaginative and creative, and are student-centered (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Organization is defined as a group of people governed by well-established rules and standards of behavior whose environment is shaped by goals, leadership practices, relationships, concern for students, a vision, and a commitment to quality. Item 1 on the interview questionnaires will be used to distinguish organizational characteristics of exemplary schools (see Appendices D and E). Exemplary school characteristics include an instructional focus, well established rules and policies, power that is evenly distributed, constant change as an accepted

part of the organization, and goals and practices that are conducive to student achievement. The strength of the school is shared responsibility and highly developed collegial bonds.

Parent support for this study will be defined as an individual's active participation in the educational process of their child. These persons have legal guardianship or are persons who are the primary caretakers of children enrolled in and attending the public schools. Items 4 and 5 on the interview questionnaires define parental support (see Appendices D, E, and F). Exemplary schools have parents who create a home environment that supports and encourages learning, are actively involved in activities at school and within the community, and communicate readily with the school.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, the theoretical framework of the study is described and research questions are addressed. Chapter II explores the literature. Chapter III discusses data collection and the method of analysis. Chapter IV presents themes that emerge from the study. Chapter V is a summary of the research findings and implications for future research are acknowledged.

The public's continued disappointment with public education and the call for both teacher and student accountability is demanding a response from educators. This study will focus on two schools and what makes one more successful in promoting student achievement on the Standards of Learning assessments. Highlighted in the study will be each school's organizational structure, leadership practices, teachers' instructional behavior, culture, and parental support that influence student performance on the new state standards.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Prior to the examination of individual school qualities, it is important to have an appreciation of the characteristics associated with exemplary schools. Organizational structure of the school, leadership practices of the principal, the culture of the school, the instructional behaviors of teachers, and the individual school's parent support for education will be explored in the literature to determine strategies for improving individual school effectiveness in meeting the Standards of Learning requirements and achieving higher student performance scores.

Organizational Structure

Goodlad (1984) described schools as "total entities." This led researchers to begin focusing on the organization of the school (p. 17). A great deal has been written about the importance of organizational structure to the success of a school system and student performance. An early study of individual demographic characteristics and attitudes within social welfare agencies suggested structural properties were more highly associated with rate of program change than attitude toward change (Hage & Aiken, 1970). This implied that the structure of an organization might be more crucial for successful implementation of change than the particular combination of personality types in an organization.

Research on academic organizations demonstrates that the administrator directly controls or manipulates organizational structure (Baldridge & Deal, 1975). The structure of an organization promotes individual achievement and performance. It is important to have an understanding of factors that may contribute to an organization's success. Bolman and Deal (1984) stated:

> Organizations do not change when we want them to, yet they change rapidly when
> we wish they would not. Even though a substantial slice of organizational
> resources go to employees in the form of salary, benefits and privileges, employees
> are more discontent and apathetic than committed and satisfied. (p. 1)

They reported that it is only within the last twenty-five years that social scientists have studied organizations, "how they work or why they often fail to work" (p. 2). Bolman and Deal theorized that managers could increase their effectiveness by utilizing four "frames" which can help them to order the world and make better decisions. They caution not to be locked in a single path, as it

will likely produce "error and self-imprisonment" (p. 4). Bolman and Deal implied managers who understand their own frame and can rely on more than one frame or perspective would better understand and manage their organizations.

<u>Organizing for Effective Leadership</u>

To gain a sense of reality concerning the respective organizations of selected schools, the four domains which Bolman and Deal (1984) referred to as "frames" necessary for effective leadership will be reviewed.

The structural frame is a frame that emphasizes the importance of formal roles and relationships. Structures are commonly depicted in organization charts. Organizations assign responsibilities to members and establish rules, policies, and management hierarchies to coordinate varying activities. Problems arise when the structure does not fit the situation.

The human resource frame is a frame that establishes its territory because people inhabit organizations. Individuals have needs, feelings, and prejudices. They have skills and limitations. They have a capacity to learn and even a greater capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs. The key to effectiveness is to tailor the organization to people. Problems occur when human needs are smothered.

The political frame is a frame that views organizations as sites with scarce resources where power and influence continuously affect the allocation of resources among individuals or groups. Bargaining, coercion, and compromise are all part of everyday life in the organization. Coalitions form around specific issues. Problems arise because power is unevenly distributed or is so broadly dispersed that it is difficult to get anything done. Solutions are the result of political skill and insight.

The symbolic frame is a frame that abandons the assumptions of rationality that appears in the other frames and treats the organization as treated or carnival. Organizations are viewed as being held together by shared values and culture rather than by goals or policies. They are powered by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths rather than by rules, policies and managerial authority. Organization is drama, and problems occur when actors play their parts poorly. (p. 5-6)

In a pilot project conducted by the National Center for Educational Leadership (NCEL) Bolman and Deal's (1993) four human organizational frames were illustrated by using everyday experiences that relate to leadership behaviors. The project was organized to train principals to think more flexibly. Three hundred Singapore principals; 50 volunteer principals from Broward County, Florida; and principals from Beaverton, Oregon, participated in this reframing workshop. The idea of frames was introduced, and their relationships to leadership practices were used in the workshop setting. Hallinger et al. (1993) illustrated the four human organizational frames administratively. Principals with effective structural leadership traits think clearly, pay attention to details, are well organized, and provide clear and consistent goals and directions. Effective principals possess good human resource traits. These persons demonstrate support and concern for others. They are consistently responsive to others, they listen well, and they are open to new ideas. Principals with effective human resource skills are highly participative managers. Political dimensions of effective principals include the ability to mobilize people and resources. These persons are highly persuasive and influential. Politically adept principals respond well to organizational conflict and are politically sensitive and skillful. Symbolic dimensions of effective principals describe persons that inspire others to excel. These persons communicate a strong vision. They generate loyalty and lead with an emphasis on culture. Principals possessing symbolic strength are highly imaginative and creative and charismatic. One can readily see the relationship between the frames and the characteristics of effective leaders. Multiframe thinking releases administrators' stress and enhances their effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 1993). In this study, these leadership characteristics will be associated with principals of exemplary schools.

Organizational Change

Baldridge and Deal (1983) considered some basic assumptions about organizational change. First, they asserted that organizational change is natural and fundamental. They emphasized that organizations change constantly and that change is a stable feature of organizational behavior. Second, these authors assumed that most of the important changes are unplanned and governed by a flow of events, people, and chance. They affirmed that changes come as a result of large-scale social emphases, new laws, the economy, and factors beyond the control of administrators, faculty, and students. Third, they made the assumption that there was no need for a special "change theory" because change and transformation are constant in

organizational life and change does not always occur in predictable ways (Baldridge & Deal, 1983). The implementation of state standards supports this theory of organizational change because the standards were imposed on state educators.

<center>Structure of Change in Educational Organizations</center>

In understanding educational organizations it is essential that we focus on what may bring about change in a public school system. Meyer and Rowan (1983) discussed three factors that promote change:

1. <u>The pressure for change has shifted from inside to outside educational organizations.</u> In the 1960s and 1970s many changes in education were initiated by professionals inside the schools, colleges, or universities. Behind these changes were the hopes that better education could cure many social ills. Administrators thought they had a vision of necessary improvements, and they, along with teachers, could be "change agents." Since that time, pressures for change have moved to outside constituencies. The pressures are to "reform" educational organizations—particularly to make them more accountable and efficient.

2. <u>The incentives for change have shifted from voluntary improvements to mandatory requirements.</u> Earlier innovations were either voluntary actions at the local level or projects encouraged by state and federal incentives. Over time, voluntary incentives gave way to requirements. Court-ordered desegregation, state mandated competency testing for teachers and students, preschool programs for developmentally delayed, and federal and state regulations governing special education are just some of the outside influences on the educational system, actions at the local level or projects encouraged by state or federal incentives. Title III and IV of the Higher Education Act made monies available to post-secondary institutions wanting new ventures.

3. <u>Changes have occurred in response to growth.</u> New programs, expanding clientele, and optimism or terminating programs, shrinking markets, pessimism and frustration may be the "common denominator" in many educational organizations. (p. 6)

Researchers have revealed there are several leadership factors that encourage staff innovations. The principal must have an accurate perception of the values and skills of staff members. Second, staff members need to be aware of the priority that the principal places on the

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improvement of classroom teaching (Chesler et al., 1975). Chesler and associates' research demonstrated a principal's sensitivity is related positively to a staff's tendency to change. They concluded principals with innovative staffs were in tune with their teachers' feelings and values about education and better informed about their informal relationships. Conversely, principals with less innovative staffs relate more formally to their teachers and fail to consider their values and emotional associations.

Principals must act in ways that demonstrate support for staff innovations. Chesler and associates proposed the principal should publicly support new classroom practices to have innovative teachers. Principals with innovative staffs are professionally oriented, encourage improved classroom processes, encourage teacher growth, and are continually evaluating student learning. Principals that do not demonstrate their support publicly for staff innovations are "administratively" oriented (Chesler et al., 1975, p. 325).   These principals according to Chesler et al. desire a smooth running school and are extremely responsive to administrative superiors. Professional leaders constantly evaluate the effect their behavior is having on the staff.

Fullen (1993) determined there were eight lessons learned from past decades of change that uncover some basic insights about the process for educational change. For the purpose of this study, three of these lessons will be briefly discussed. First, people cannot be made to change. They cannot be forced to develop certain skills or to think differently. Second, change is not a blueprint. One does not know what is important until it transpires from the process. Third, problems are the route to deeper change and satisfaction. The least successful schools engage in "shallow coping"—doing nothing, procrastinating, doing it the usual way, easing off, or increasing pressure. Successful schools search deeper for solutions to problems. They make interventions in staffing, training, and redesigning programs (Fullen, 1993).

Educational organizations are normally faced with reforms that are politically driven, pendulum-like in popularity, and short-lived (Sirotnik, 1999). Sirotnik alleged if education is to be improved it would be through renewal, a process of individual and organizational change. By nurturing the "spiritual, affective, and intellectual connections" in the lives of educators, professionals would have a moral obligation as "stewards of their schools" (p. 608). Sirotnik thought a more positive approach to educational improvement would be through responsibility rather than accountability, because accountability considered only the past.

Fullan (1991) stated one can effectively mandate things that do not require thinking or skill to implement and that can be monitored by close supervision. He admitted changes that require skill and certain beliefs on the part of the implementer would not be realized. To accomplish educational goals, one cannot mandate what matters—skills, creative thinking, and committed action (McLaughlin, 1990).

In a study to develop a comprehensive database to explore school governance and organization of American high schools, Chubb (1987) asserted that effective schools cannot flourish unless superintendents, school boards, and other outside authorities delegate meaningful control over school policy, personnel, and practices to the schools themselves. He, along with colleague Moe, stated that school performance is unlikely to significantly improve by any measure that fails to recognize schools as institutions—complex organizations, composed of interdependent parts, governed by well-established rules and norms of behavior. Chubb emphasized that learning does not depend on any particular instructional practice, on tests or homework, but on the "school's organization as a whole, on their goals, leadership, followership, and climate" (p. 4).

Sergiovanni (1987) revealed that an effective school had come to mean a school whose students achieve well in basic skills as measured by standardized tests. Studies by Edmonds (1979) and Brookover and Lezotte (1979) indicated effectiveness in schools was determined by student performance on standardized tests of reading and math skills. Most educators believe that reading, language arts, and math are essential subjects for students and for their future educational progression and performance.

Chubb and Moe (1990) acknowledged that academically successful schools had distinctive organizational characteristics. These researchers asserted that school organization alone is capable of shifting student achievement gains by more than one full year during the four years of high school. Heck et al. (1990) found that three latent leadership variables (school governance, instructional organization, and school climate) affect student achievement.

The Plight of Leadership

The public school system is a complex organization. Chubb and Moe (1990) identified four basic dimensions fundamental to the performance of public schools: personnel, goals, leadership, and practices. These dimensions play a special role in promoting organizations;

however, principals often discover they have limited control in who works in their schools because personnel decisions are constrained by formal rules designed and imposed by higher levels of government. Tenure regulations, certification requirements, and other civil-service-like protections enacted by public officials were designed to insulate teachers from political influence (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Principals of schools are often prevented from staffing the organization and arranging incentives according to their best judgment. Even though principals may value expertise, enthusiasm, collegiality, parental involvement, and sensitivity toward students and their concerns, they may be prevented from securing teachers who possess these same qualifications or from eliminating those who do not. For the most part, principals are stuck with teachers, teachers are stuck with principals, and teachers are stuck with one another (Chubb & Moe, 1990). This leaves the school organization vulnerable to conflict and discontent.

Leadership is implicit in what we know about personnel and goals. Chubb and Moe (1990) suggested that public school principals are systematically denied much of what it takes to *lead*. Most everyone knows the easiest way to get into trouble is to initiate bold, aggressive moves.

<div align="center">Allegiance of Organizational Members</div>

Organizational cultures are created by leaders (Schein, 1985). Schein stated "culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin, and neither can be understood by itself" (p. 2). He indicated leadership and culture management are essential to understanding and making organizations effective. When leadership skills have meaning and are efficiently placed into practice, leadership becomes a cultural expression, an inspiration (Sergiovanni, 1981). Sergiovanni stated this cultural expression consists of a set of norms, beliefs, and principles to which members of an organization give allegiance. Schein (1985) defined culture as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a
> given group as it learns to cope with its problems—that has worked well enough
> to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct
> way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 9)

Organizations have internal and external issues to deal with, and Schein stated that people learn how to deal with them using perceptual, cognitive, and emotional responses. These

responses form the basic culture that does more than just solve problems. It's a culture that, once acquired, reduces anxiety.

Schein admitted there are many meanings of the word culture. He described culture as a "learned product" of group experience. He wrote that culture was learned and taught, and that the key element of culture was brought about by the structure of the organization. He theorized organizational structure stabilized relationships and served to develop roles and positions that permitted members of the organization to develop "stable expectations" of each other (p. 122).

Challenge for Leadership

Today, administrators are faced with the national and state agencies, courts, education associations, parents, school board members, and special interest groups "knowing" what's best for the public school and vying for control. In 1983 Boyer wrote of a crisis in leadership that was seriously undermining the effectiveness of the nation's schools.   Mulkeen (1981) stated the challenge for school administrators is not only to manage a school with clarity, vision, and purpose, but also to do this with an understanding of the shared values behind the vision to allow room for autonomy and creative expression. He recognized the challenge is to create a school where the administrator is visible; fosters a caring climate for staff, children, and parents; and encourages internal initiative, experimentation, and excitement. This must be done if schools are to achieve even a small measure of excellence (Mulkeen, 1981). Effectiveness is measured by the extent to which a "compelling vision" empowers others to excel; the extent to which meanings are found in one's work; and the extent to which individual and organization are bound together by common commitment in a mutually rewarding symbiotic relationship (Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984, p. 71). The challenge today is for leaders to develop a consensus around values that constitute an effective culture—high expectations, commitment, mutual respect, confidence, continuous improvement, risk-taking, and an "insistence that students will learn" (Stolp & Smith, 1997, p. 160).

The Principal as a Leader

Leadership is a topic that has been written about by many researchers in the corporate world and in the realm of education. People have exerted a great deal of effort searching for what constitutes a leader. People in leadership positions have actively sought strategies that develop

effective leaders. Many people believe leadership is an art, while others proclaim it is a process. What exactly is leadership, and what does leadership have to do with exemplary schools?

Rosen and Brown (1996) concluded that leadership is not a status. "Leaders inspire rather than intimidate, motivate rather than monitor, mobilize rather than manage" (p. 15). They believed that leadership is an "activity." To emphasize this concept, Rosen and Brown preferred to use the word *leading* instead of leadership. They maintained that "leading does something," and that leading enables a group of people to "pursue a shared vision and create extraordinary results" (p. 15).

Lashway et al. (1996) identified several qualities of an effective leader. They stated leaders have high levels of energy and involvement. Principals effective in facilitating instructional improvement are actively involved (Hord & Hall, 1984). Principals actively involved walk the hallways and drop in on classes instead of sitting behind a desk in the administrative office. Lashway et al. stated effective leaders have competence—intellectually (tacit knowledge, practical know-how), technically (ability to demonstrate instructional skill and knowledge of teaching), and interpersonally (excellent expressive ability and listening skills). Effective principals listen to students, community, and staff members (Gorton & McIntyne, 1978). These writers revealed that effective principals have as their strongest asset, the ability to work with different kinds of people and understand people. Bass (1990) described effective leaders as those persons emotionally expressive, self-confident, independent, and insightful. By being insightful, he confirmed effective leaders were able to present a clear vision for the future and the conviction of attaining it. Effective leaders have a high degree of self-efficacy. Effective leaders are secure, not threatened by new ideas or conflicts (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986). Effective leaders have a moral strength—they do the right things (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1992).

<u>The Principal as an Instructional Leader</u>

The position of the principal has been approached from that of manager, politician, and instructional leader. With the latest emphasis on student achievement and teacher accountability, principals are being pressured to be instructional leaders. Effective schools researchers indicate that the principal is the person responsible for improving student achievement. Based on a review of the professional literature, Austin (1979) and Lewis (1986) concluded that the leadership of the principal is central to school effectiveness. It has also been found that the teacher's perception of

the school principal as an instructional leader is the most powerful determinant of teachers' satisfaction with their professional role (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Improving teacher perceptions of the principal as an instructional leader is essential to reading and mathematics achievement of students, particularly among historically low-achieving students (Smith & Andrews, 1989). If the quality of schools is to be improved, principals' professional practices must be improved. According to Smith and Andrews, this requires an understanding of the meaning of "instructional leadership" and the development of programs designed to select and educate principals who can perform these roles.

In their analysis of student achievement outcomes, Andrews and others found when behavioral descriptors were used to group schools in which teachers perceived their principals to be strong, average, or weak instructional leaders, there were significant differences in incremental growth in student achievement. Schools directed by principals who were perceived by their teachers to be strong instructional leaders exhibited significantly greater gain scores in achievement in reading and math than did schools operated by average and weak instructional leaders (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Principals in high-performance schools express different priorities than principals in low-performance schools. Principals in academically successful schools lead students and teachers in a distinctly different direction than principals in unsuccessful schools. The direction in low-performing schools is that of ranking basic literacy, good work habits, citizenship, and occupational skills above where principals in high-performance schools rank them. These are important goals, but principals in successful schools give greater priority to academic excellence, personal growth and fulfillment, and human relations skills (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Principals in high-performance schools articulate goals that are more academically ambitious and clearer than do principals in low-performing schools. Chubb and Moe (1990) reported effective schools seem to be headed by principals who have a clear vision of where they are going, who are knowledgeable enough about teaching and education to help teachers and students work toward desired ends, and who are able to protect schools from the kinds of demands that make it difficult for schools to operate on a professional basis.

Principals of high- and low-performance schools differ in the basic motivations they bring to their jobs. Principals, when asked to rank a variety of possible reasons for assuming their

current positions, gave four reasons that distinguished high-performance schools from low-performance schools. Principals in high-performing schools gave higher priority to gaining control over their school's curriculum; gaining control over their school's personnel; and gaining control over their school's policies. Principals in low-performance schools chose to advance their careers. America's low-performance schools appear to be headed by principals who perceive their roles to be more that of a "middle manager," while high-performance schools seem to be run by persons who view themselves more as educational leaders (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

According to Chubb and Moe (1990), teachers in high-performance schools state that principals tend to show a greater propensity to know what kind of school they want, to value innovation and new ideas, and to keep apprised of where the school is going. High-performance schools are more likely than low-performance schools to be led by principals who are above average in vision. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) brought to light that successful principals are pro-active and direct behaviors at formulating and articulating a vision of what the school can become. Lipsitz (1984) concluded that effective middle school principals made their schools' members feel special. Each authoritative principal had a "driving vision," and they institutionalized this vision in program and structure.

School Cultures

Every school is different, each having its own personality. Some schools are perceived as being good schools, others are not. Geertz (1973), a noted anthropologist, stated culture represents both a written and implied message. A school's mission statement may identify written goals for student achievement, and the unwritten goals may be evidenced by the value the school places on student academic success (Stolp & Smith, 1997). These researchers recognized school culture as everything from nonverbal communication (Does a teacher nod and smile when passing a student in the hallway?) to the walls of the cafeteria (Are they painted in institutional blue or decorated with a mural?). Stolp and Smith wrote that the most important aspects of culture are those whose meaning is shared by members of the organization. Culture is concerned with those things that give life meaning (Maxwell & Thomas, 1991).

Some schools are more structured than others, and some schools have a higher rate of turnover than others do. Some schools have teachers that more willingly get involved in the decision-making process, while other schools house reluctant participants. In a study of high

involvement elementary schools, Edwards (1998) discussed an elementary school's journey to high involvement built on shared experiences. These experiences led to personal and trusting relationships; relationships that appear to define the school's culture.

Handy and Aitkin (1986) studied schools as organizations and reported that cultural organization may be extremely strong and sometimes foreign from surrounding organizations. They affirmed there was no one right culture because all cultures are "good in the right place" (p. 85). These researchers suggested that successful organizations have a "mix" of four cultures. The four cultures they identified can be observed in schools.

The first type of culture is the *club culture* (Handy & Aitkin, 1986). This culture focuses on the founder or head of the organization. The club culture is described as a "spider" web with the head or founder of the group at the center. This culture functions as a club, promoting the ideas of the founder and like-minded people. Everyone knows one another's mind. This is a very personal culture. Handy and Aitkin considered the strength of this culture to be communication.

The second type of culture is the *role culture*. The role culture has a set center and a set of roles linked to each other. Individuals occupy roles specified as job descriptions. Rules, handbooks, and evaluation procedures ensure a managed organization. This culture is sometimes predictable and boring.

The third culture is the *task culture*, which centers on the completion of tasks. Handy and Aitkin (1986) stated that most primary schools are task cultures with members working in groups sharing responsibilities in a cooperative manner without much formal hierarchy. Members in this culture are friendly. They have lead teachers rather than managers. They reward success with additional assignments. The task culture appears to be composed of groups of people who spend large amounts of time discussing problems and searching for solutions. Groups in this culture change as tasks change.

The *person culture* is the last type of culture identified by Handy and Aitkin (1986). "Because organizations are people, people have their own preferences and inclinations" (p. 91). The talents of individuals within the organization are the focus of this culture. It is a difficult culture to run according to Handy and Aitkin. Persons in this culture can be persuaded but not commanded.

A positive school culture is associated with higher student motivation and achievement, increased teacher collaboration, and improved attitudes among teachers toward their jobs (Stolp & Smith, 1997). Studies by Fyans and Maehr (1990) presented strong evidence that school culture relates to motivation and ultimately, school achievement. McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) stated that cultural norms that characterized the context in which teachers work influence teachers' sense of efficacy with students. Schools with weak professional learning communities are instructionally ineffective with students (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Newman & Wehlage, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989). More than almost any other factor, the sense of a professional community in schools enhances student achievement (Moffett, 2000).

The Role of the Teacher in Student Achievement

Teachers are key players in any educational reform movement. Teachers should be knowledgeable about assigned subject matter and possess the skills necessary to be effective teachers. Combs (1991) reminded us that knowledge of subject matter is no guarantee of good teaching. He stated an understanding of children and the developmental stages and processes they encounter serve to enhance the professional skills of teachers. Researchers have been unable to establish any single method that distinguishes a good teacher from a poor one. Methods are complex and must fit so many variables that it would be extremely difficult to find a universal method that promises success for all teachers (Combs, 1991). Brophy (1982) alleged teacher expectations, role definitions, and sense of efficacy as essential teacher characteristics or behaviors associated in producing student learning and achievement.

A whole series of studies on good teachers and poor teachers (including administrators) demonstrate "good practitioners can be clearly distinguished from poor ones on the nature of their belief systems" (Combs, 1991, p.78). Combs indicates good teaching is dependent upon teacher belief systems, specifically what teachers believe about themselves, their students, their subject assignments, and their profession. A study of urban elementary and middle schools by Kushman (1992) supports this theory. Kushman examined the relationship of teacher commitment to student learning. He stated teachers demonstrate a commitment to student learning by a sense of teacher efficacy (the belief that a teacher can make a difference in student learning), the expectation that students will learn, and a willingness to put forth the effort required for student

learning to occur. Kushman pointed out a correlation between teacher commitment to student learning and gains in student achievement.

As a result of reviewing 18 studies relative to social and service agencies, Combs (1991) identified important characteristics of good and poor practitioners in the "helping" professions:

- Good teachers and administrators are person-centered. They are sensitive to how things seem to the person they work with. They are tuned in to the personal meanings or perceptions of those they hope to teach and use this information to guide their own thinking and action. Poor practitioners, on the other hand, are preoccupied with how things seem to them. Good practitioners have the empathy characteristic, which keeps them in touch with the fundamental data required to carry out their functions effectively. Good practitioners are people rather than things oriented, more concerned with what is happening with their students or colleagues than with rules, regulations, or the mechanics of their jobs. They are the kinds of persons needed to conceive and operate person-centered schools and programs.

- Good helpers see themselves in positive ways. They see themselves as liked, wanted, accepted, able persons of dignity and integrity. Poor helpers do not. Because they see themselves in positive ways, good administrators and teachers carry themselves with assurance and approach their tasks expecting to be successful and usually are. Such concepts of *self* provide the confidence and security to confront problems, to be innovative, and to be risk-takers. Feeling secure in themselves, good practitioners behave with confidence, and students and colleagues in turn respond to them with trust and respect, making their efforts more likely to succeed.

- Good practitioners see the people they work with in positive ways. They see them as trustworthy, friendly, able, persons of dignity and integrity. Poor helpers have grave doubts about the character and capacities of those they work with. Such attitudes are destructive of reform. Teachers are the frontal operators on whom the process of reform must depend. If one does not believe people are able—then don't let them! If you do not consider people trustworthy you do not give them responsibility. Any reform dependent upon

the conception of others must begin from positive beliefs about those it hopes to influence. The self-renewing, person-centered schools required for effective reform will need teachers and administrators with positive views of students and the people who teach them.

- The behavior of good practitioners is motivated by their beliefs about purposes and goals. Good helpers tend to have opening, freeing goals and purposes rather than controlling, restraining ones. These are the kinds of qualities required for person- centered schools and programs. Poor helpers are unclear or confused about their purposes. To break loose from the status quo requires teachers and administrators ready and willing to innovate and experiment with new assumptions and ways of working.

- The belief systems of good practitioners tend to be self-revealing rather than self-concealing. Good teachers and administrators are authentic. Their behavior comes from deeply held feelings and beliefs. It is not put on. This also applies to methods they use. Poor helpers tend to be self-concealing. Good practitioners operate in the courage of their convictions. They utilize methods that fit the students and circumstance they work with and their own belief systems, even if such methods are quite different from those around them. Such personal integrity and willingness to risk is essential both for effective reforms and for participation in person-centered schools. (Combs, 1991, pp. 79-80)

Teachers should be free to behave as professionals and encouraged to exercise their knowledge and skills with little interference. Confining teachers to "canned curriculum, workbook approaches to techniques, or required methodologies is a shameful waste" (Combs, 1991, p. 80).

In effective schools teachers are a community of learners. They form a professional community in which ideas are shared and nurtured, and the feeling of efficacy is common. Hanushek (as cited in Chubb & Moe, 1990) revealed research indicates that formal qualities— educational credentials of teachers, teacher competency scores, or salary—do not make a significant difference in academic performance. He claimed teacher experience and student

achievement appear to be unrelated. Chubb and Moe asserted those teachers in low-performing schools present more of a problem of absenteeism for their principals than do teachers in high-performing schools. High-performance schools tend to have above average levels of staff harmony; low-performance schools have below average levels (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Effective teachers maximize learning time, experience fewer disruptions, perform fewer administrative tasks, devote less time to student discipline, and have students focused on academics both in and out of class, getting students to complete more homework. Chubb and Moe (1990) stated, "The big differences in the classrooms of high and low performance schools are not the academic demands on the time of the students, but in the nonacademic demands made on the time of the teachers" (p. 97).

This study will explore the instructional emphasis of each targeted school, paying special attention to teacher expectations for self and students, the schedules of teachers in grades three and five, non-instructional responsibilities assigned to teachers, and the amount of time spent by teachers dealing with student discipline matters. Homework policies will be reviewed at each site, and the average amount of homework assigned daily by teachers will be studied.

<u>Teacher Efficacy</u>

Teacher efficacy is a key element in improving teaching and the quality of schools (Lanier & Sedlak, 1989). Smylie (1990) reported that results of the Rand studies indicated a "robust relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher classroom behavior, student achievement, and individual and organizational change" (p. 48). Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). Smylie (1990) asserted self-efficacy was grounded in perceptions of "personal ability, instrumentality, and control linked to future acts" (p. 49). He stated that individuals with a weak sense of self-efficacy are more likely than individuals with a strong sense of efficacy to avoid activities, tasks, or social situations they believe exceed their abilities. Smylie reported a strong sense of efficacy is associated with individuals who actively seek activities that challenge their knowledge and skills, thus, contributing to individual growth. People with strong self-efficacy are more likely to extend more effort and persist longer in that effort than people with weak self-efficacy. He emphasized that people with lower senses of

efficacy tend to dwell upon their personal deficiencies and view potential problems more "formidable" than they really are (p. 52).

This study will examine teachers' attitude toward their abilities and beliefs that their efforts and teaching behaviors will improve student performance. Teacher involvement in the school's programs will be studied to gain insight into their beliefs that they can, and will, make a difference in student achievement, and in their school's Standards of Learning tests results.

<center>Attributions for Success and Failure</center>

Today's uneasiness regarding "success," especially academic success, is reflected in the educational literature concerned with the determinants of success and failure. Virginia's parents and teachers want children to perform well on the Standards of Learning tests. This motive has educators and the public wondering why some schools attain high-test results on SOL assessments while other schools do not. Educators are vigorously searching for strategies to improve student performance on state-mandated tests.

Weiner's study (as cited in Ames, 1983) proposed the idea of attribution theory of achievement motivation. This theory viewed one's affective and cognitive reactions to a success or failure on an achievement task as a function of the causal attributions used to explain why particular outcomes occurred. Causal attributions are related in systematic ways to feelings of pride and shame, expectancies for the future, and future achievement behavior (Ames, 1983). The model predicted that students attributing their failures on a test to lack of ability would feel shame about doing poorly and would be discouraged in the future on specific tasks. However, students who felt their poor performance on an undertaking was the result of bad luck (a question in which they were weakest happened to be on the test) would feel less shame and would not be discouraged. These students felt their luck would be better the next time. After providing instruction to students, teachers receive feedback about the effectiveness of their behavior in the form of student performance and their own self-assessment. Teachers respond differently to students' performance. Students performing negatively because of lack of ability would not cause teachers to make new changes in their teaching behavior. Students that perform poorly but are not perceived to be weak students will cause teachers to try to alternate teaching strategies (Ames, 1983). Ames concluded that teachers who have a strong belief in the importance of teaching and its associated outcomes (i.e., value competencies and effort in teaching) attribute the

<center>27</center>

evaluation of their own teaching acts, and associated student outcomes, differently than do teachers who do not hold strongly to this value.

In his writings, Ames (1983) described high-value teachers as those teachers who take the responsibility for their actions and consequent student outcomes. He noted that high-value teachers give credit to the student for successful performance. In contrast, low-value teachers do not place much value on the importance of their efforts and would not be expected to see a relationship between their intentions and student outcomes (Ames, 1983). Ames theorized that high-value teachers believe if students fail, it is the result of ineffective teaching behaviors. He stated that since low-value teachers do not assume that teaching is important, student outcomes are not the result of teacher actions.

Everston (1980) conducted a study dealing with the responses of 39 English teachers and 19 math teachers of junior high school in Texas. Teacher beliefs, expectations, and assumptions about teaching and instructional practices were noted. Student outcomes were measured by an achievement test, and student ratings of teachers were collected. Teachers of high achieving math students (a) ranked high in general liability, (b) took personal responsibility for management and discipline in their classes, and (c) communicated to students the rules of class operations and expectations in their classes. Effective English teachers (a) used a whole class approach, (b) stressed punctuation and capitalization, and (c) demanded that students pay attention to instruction and make up missed work.

Everston concluded that high achieving, high attitude classes show good organization, a high proportion of time spent on instructional activity, and task-oriented instruction. Low achieving, low attitude classes were characterized as chaotic, unstructured, and less task-oriented. Anderson (1982) observed that teacher's high expectations strongly correlate with student achievement. Research suggests time-on task is related to achievement—the more time students spend on task, the more they learn (Bloom, 1976). In this study, teachers will be interviewed to gather information about their teaching behaviors and how these behaviors may influence student performance.

The Role of the Parent

One cannot easily dismiss the influence of the socioeconomic effect on children and their school performance, especially since findings of researchers such as Coleman et al. (1966) have

indicated that teachers and schools have little impact on student achievement when compared to the effect of poverty. The biggest measurable differences between schools that have high academic achievement and those that have low academic achievement is the extent to which families "create a home environment that encourages learning, expresses high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future causes, and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community" (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 1).

Researchers indicate parental involvement and attitude make a larger difference in student achievement than the instructional program offered. The strongest and most consistent finding in research on student achievement is that family background is a major influence. It is a major influence because some parents establish basic educational values and school work habits and others do not. The most dramatic differences between families of high- and low-performance schools are in income and education. Two-parent families have a more positive influence on student achievement than single parent families.

Schools that relate well to their communities have student bodies that outperform other schools. Children whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school score higher than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved (Henderson, 1987). A study of 22 school districts in the metropolitan Milwaukee area found that parental involvement is associated with higher school performance regardless of family income, the grade level of the school, or the location of the school (Phillips et al., 1985).

Effective schools have supportive parents. It should be noted that most parents are equally likely to attend parent-teacher conferences, visit classes, and telephone the school to inquire about problems. "Schools with apathetic, uneducated, or incompetent parents will have less effective support against external threats" (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 168). Based on their research, it appears that administrators are more willing to intervene in schools with parents who are less well educated and who demonstrate less interest in or support for their schools.

Several studies illustrate the importance of parental support to student achievement. In a New Haven inner-city elementary school that maintained school committees with selected parent representatives to evaluate programs, help with the selection of staff, and to assist with curriculum needs, student ranked ahead of all other inner-city schools in reading and math skills (Comer, 1980). Three Michigan school districts sought to improve reading scores of their students. All

three schools had parent participation as a component. Reading scores improved as involvement of parents increased (Gillum, 1977). Studies point to higher student achievement when parents participate in school activities, monitor children's homework, and support the beliefs and values of the school (Epstein, 1987; Heath & McLaughlin, 1987).

This study will interview parents, principals, and teachers to determine parental support for the school, specifically, the instructional programs. Interview questions will be used to determine if parents value education and maintain high expectations for teachers and students.

Summary

Based on a review of the literature, 45 practices associated with exemplary schools have been identified for use in this study. This researcher believes the practices listed in Table 1 are critical for exemplary schools that wish to promote and accomplish high student academic achievement.

Table 1

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Ames	Brophy	Baldridge & Deal	Bolman & Deal	Blumberg & Greenfield	Chubb & Moe
Change is a stable feature of the school's organizational behavior.				X		
Academically effective schools have distinctive organizational characteristics.					X	X
In effective schools, teachers take responsibility for their actions and consequent student outcome.	X					
Teacher expectations, role definitions, and sense of efficacy are essential teacher characteristics associated in producing learning and achievement.		X				
Effective schools are free from bureaucracy.						X
Effective schools have a positive climate.						X

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Ames	Brophy	Baldridge & Deal	Bolman & Deal	Blumberg & Greenfield	Chubb & Moe
Principals in high-performance schools give priority to gaining control over their school's curriculum; gaining control over their school's personnel; and gaining control over their school's policies.						X

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Kushman	Lipsitz	Edwards	Bloom	Chubb & Moe
In effective schools teachers form a professional community—less absenteeism and above-average staff harmony.					X
Effective teachers maximize learning time.				X	X
Effective teachers experience fewer disruptions.					X
Effective teachers perform fewer administrative tasks.					X
Effective teachers devote less time to discipline.					X
Effective teachers focus students in and out of class by getting them to complete more homework.					X
Effective schools have supportive parents.					X

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Kushman	Lipsitz	Edwards	Bloom	Chubb & Moe
Effective schools have teachers that expect students to learn and put forth the effort to ensure they learn.	X				
Effective schools make members feel special.		X			
Effective schools have members with personal and trusting relationships.			X		

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Combs	Handy & Aitkin	Henderson	Henderson & Berla	Mulkeen
Effective schools have a mix of four cultures—club (personal); role; task (working in group without hierarchy; person- (talent of individual).	X	X			
Good teachers are person-centered.	X				
Effective teachers see themselves in positive ways.	X				
Effective practitioners see the people they work with in positive ways.	X			X	
Effective principals and teachers are motivated by their beliefs.	X				

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Combs	Handy & Aitkin	Henderson	Henderson & Berla	Mulkeen
Effective principals and teachers are authentic.	X				
In high-performance schools, parents help their children at home and stay in touch with the school.			X		
In effective schools, parents create a home environment that encourages learning.				X	
Effective schools allow room for creativity.					X
In effective schools, the principal fosters a caring climate for students, parents, and staff.					X

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Phillips, Smith & Witte	Rosen & Brown	Schein	Sergiovanni	Sergiovanni & Corbally
Successful schools have principals that "lead."		X			
Parent involvement is associated with higher student performance.	X				
Culture is created by the principal.			X		
Effective schools have norms, beliefs, and principles to which members give allegiance.				X	
Effective schools have students who achieve well in basic skills as measured by standardized tests.				X	
Effective schools have a principal with a compelling vision, persons empowered to excel, and bound to the organization by a common commitment.					X

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Smith & Andrews	Stolp & Smith	Lashway, Mazzarella, & Grundy
Effective schools have strong leaders.	X		
In effective schools, teachers have the perception of the principal as an instructional leader.	X		
Effective schools have murals in hallways.		X	
Effective schools have teachers that work collaboratively.		X	
Effective schools have teachers with positive attitudes toward their jobs.		X	
Effective schools have principals and teachers that nod and smile at students in the hallways.		X	

(table continues)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Smith & Andrews	Stolp & Smith	Lashway, Mazzarella, & Grundy
Effective schools have principals that have high energy levels and involvement.			X
Effective schools have principals that have teacher skills.			X
Effective schools have principals that drop in on classes.			X
Effective schools have principals that can work with anyone.			X

Table 1 (cont'd)

Characteristics of Exemplary Schools and Researchers Used in the Study

	Gorton & McIntyne	Stolp & Smith	Kouzes & Posner
Effective schools have principals with an "insistence" that students will learn		X	
Effective leaders have a moral strength—they do the right things			X

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The differences in 1998 and 1999 Standards of Learning test results of two identified elementary schools in northwest Virginia were investigated in this study. One school, a high-gain school, was identified as demonstrating significant gains in the percentage rate of students passing the English and math SOLs from the previous year's test administration. The second elementary school, a low-gain school, was identified on the basis of showing little or no improvement over the previous year's test results. A description of the research methods used in the study is contained in this chapter. The chapter has the following sections: Introduction, Research Design, Population and Sample, Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation, Data Analysis, and Ethical Issues.

Research Design

This qualitative paper is a comparative case study of a high-gain school and a low-gain school. The researcher is concerned with the understanding of educational actions in an attempt to enrich the thinking of principals, teachers, and parents as they share the responsibility for improving student achievement on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments.

Population

The population includes all northwest Virginia elementary schools in Region XX Superintendent's Study Group participating in the Virginia SOL assessment program. There are 15 county school divisions, four city school divisions, and 113 individual elementary schools in this region.

Selection of Cases

The 113 elementary schools were analyzed for comparable grade levels and student numbers. To narrow the number of possible cases, schools with a 1998 fall membership between 350 and 450 students were selected. Three schools fell within this range (see Table 2). All three of these schools contained grades KG-05. Other criteria for consideration were then added to the selection process. These criteria included: (a) the school division's Local Composite Index (LCI), (b) the number of low-income students, and (c) the ratio of pupils to instructional personnel. All four of the schools identified as falling within the membership range also had similar numbers in the four additional criteria areas considered.

Table 2

Elementary Schools in Northwest Virginia Meeting the Selection Criteria

Division & schools	Average daily membership[1]	Local composite index[2]	Number of low income[3]	Percent low income	Ratio of pupils to instructional personnel K-6
County L					
School C	362	**0.2963**	193	54.5	**18.4**
County J					
School B	363	**0.2678**	224	61.7	**18.1**
County N					
School A	365	**0.3287**	185	51.8	**18.7**

Note. From: School Summary [on line:www.pen.K12.va.us/VDOE/dbpubs/Fall_Membership/1998/miso86.html and Report on Public Education, 1998 Annual Report. Virginia Department of Education
[1]The daily membership for grades K-12 including (1) handicapped students ages 5-21 and (2) students for whom English is a second language who entered school for the first time after reaching their twelfth birthday, and who have not reached twenty-two years of age on or before August 1 of the school year, for which the first seven months (or equivalent period) of the school year in which state funds are distributed from appropriation. Does not include preschool and postgraduate students. [2]In VA, the state's determination of a locality's ability to pay for education. The formula uses local and state true values of property, adjusted gross income, and taxable retail sales in a weighted formula. [3]Students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

The three northwest Virginia elementary schools' results on the 1998 Virginia SOL tests in English and math were then compared to the 1999 Virginia SOL test scores in English and math. The percentage rates of change from the 1998 test results to the 1999 test results were then compared. See Tables 3 and 4 for these results. Of these three elementary schools two, Site A and Site B were consistently low in the 1998 testing in both English and math. These two schools also met two other important criteria: (a) they were located within a 70-mile radius of the home of the researcher, and (b) both schools' leaders were willing to participate in the study.

Table 3

Standards of Learning Assessment Adjusted Results in English and Math, Third Grade, 1998 and 1999

Schools	English 1998[a]	English 1999[a]	% pt. of change	Math 1998[a]	Math 1999[a]	% pt. of change
School C	55.80	44.10	-21.00	54.20	55.10	1.50
Site B	42.40	38.80	-08.50	41.70	50.80	21.80
Site A	42.30	53.90	27.42	59.20	79.30	34.00

[a]Percentage passing by content area.
Report on Public Education, 1998 and 1999 Annual Report

Table 4

Standards of Learning Assessment Adjusted Results in English and Math, Fifth Grade, 1998 and 1999

Schools	English 1998[a]	English 1999[a]	% pt. of change	Math 1998[a]	Math 1999[a]	% pt. of change
School C	62.50	75.00	2.00	31.80	45.70	43.70
Site B	59.60	63.10	5.90	25.00	20.80	-16.80
Site A	48.30	59.60	23.40	33.00	31.40	-4.90

[a]Percentage passing by content area.
Report on Public Education, 1998 and 1999 Annual Report

Although Site A and Site B differed in the five additional criteria areas, (a) student population demonstrated a six student variance according to 1998 average daily membership, (b) the LCI for Site A was .0609 more than the LCI for Site B, (c) based on participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program, Site B had a 9.9% higher rate of students from low-income families, (d) Site A has a .6 higher ratio of pupils to instructional personnel.

The differences in student population, Local Composite Index, and ratios of pupils to instructional personnel were miniscule. The 9.9% difference in the number of students from low-income families was more significant. The effect of socioeconomic status on student achievement has implications for this study and will be addressed briefly.

In a study to determine the relationship between student achievement and the physical condition of school buildings and classrooms in Virginia elementary schools, Lanham (1999) discussed indirect influences on student achievement. In an analysis of Standards of Learning third and fifth grade English, math, and technology assessment scores, five variables were found to be significant in explaining the differences in scores among schools. The one variable, percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch accounted for the greatest portion of variance (48.6) percent (pg.109). In English 5 scores, the variance was 52.2 percent. In math 3 and 5 scores, the variance was 25.9 percent and 15.8 percent respectively. Regression analysis conducted established that free and reduced-price lunch participation extends as the first significant variable in the equation. Lanham's data further suggested that student achievement in math appeared to be less effected by socioeconomic factors than student achievement in English or technology. This research would not support the claim that all schools, regardless of socioeconomic status, should achieve the same level of achievement (Lanham, 1999).

The Virginia Department of Education reported that Site A's third grade students made positive gains in English between 1998 and 1999. Math improvement gains were also impressive for this school. Site B school had a less impressive profile. Third grade scores dropped in English in 1999 from the previous year. However, this school did experience an increase in math scores between 1998 and 1999 (see Table 5). Fifth grade Standards of Learning assessment scores mirror the third grade results. Site A demonstrated positive gains in English and a slight loss in math. Site B had a percentage rate loss in English and a drop in math percentage rate as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparable Adjusted Percentage Pass Rates, Third and Fifth Grade English and Math, for the High-Gain School and the Low-Gain School

SOL Assessment	Site A			Site B		
Year	1998	1999	% pt. change	1998	1999	% pt. change
Third Grade English	42.30	53.85	27.30	42.40	38.81	-8.50
Third Grade Math	59.20	79.25	34.00	41.70	50.75	21.70
Fifth Grade English	57.80	60.00	3.81	61.54	54.72	-11.90
Fifth Grade Math	33.30	31.40	-5.71	25.00	20.80	-16.80

* 1999 information is data from fall 1998 combined with spring 1999.
* Adjusted Pass Rate reflects the percentage of students passing in the subject area.

School and Community Profiles

The State Department of Education in 1937 first accredited Site A. The present facility was completed in 1937. It is the smallest of the school division's seven elementary schools. The school is located on Highway 78, which contains fourteen classrooms, a library, a multi-purpose room, kitchen, an office suite and clinic. In October 1973, a new wing was dedicated for students that included a large gymnasium area with moveable walls. This addition houses the kindergarten, first grade, and computer room.

During the fall of 1991, the Novak County School System implemented the middle school program. Site A served kindergarten through grade five and received students from the Lake Elementary area and Hawkins Elementary. Site B is part of the Jacob County School System. It is located on a ten-acre site adjacent to East Main Street, approximately one mile from the business district. The school houses grade kindergarten through grade 5. Facilities are located on one floor with the exception of the electrical equipment room, storage facilities, and a special education class, which are located in the partial basement. The administrative offices and the media center separated the primary and intermediate wings of the building. The building is all-

electric. The physical plant was completed in December 1966 with occupancy in January 1967. Four classrooms were added on in 1983.

The town has a population of approximately 2500 and lies in the beautiful high ridge valley between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains in the northwestern part of Virginia. The community, covering 144.82 square miles, is uniquely located in two counties, Jacob and Novak. Site B is a historic town on the North Fork of the Lawson River, known as a quaint town.

The town developed into a company town after the Cooper Alkali Works began operation in 1892. People lived in company owned houses, bought from the company store, and depended upon the plant as the chief source of tax revenue to support the town and schools. This relationship came to an end when the plant, at the time a division of Olin Corporation, closed operations over a two-and-a-half year period ending June 30, 1972. The closing was due to economic reasons and to strict new standards of the Virginia Water Control Board.

This phase-out appears to have had a tremendous impact on the community whose residents are mostly native-born Americans of English, Scotch-Irish, or Irish Ancestry and whose families had lived in the area for several generations. Many families have had to relocate. Many remain in the area with some finding employment nearby and others having to drive relative long distances. Many women had to seek jobs outside the home for the first time.

The town has hope for the future and offers many advantages. There are opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other recreation. The town has a nine-hole golf course, two clinics, a Jacob County Health Department Satellite office, and recently embarked on a program to modernize the water works and install a new sewage disposal system. There is an abundant supply of water, electric power and easy access to a well-trained and equipped volunteer fire department and rescue squad.

Although cultural opportunities in the community are somewhat limited, persons interested in the arts and sciences can attend community concerts and other activities at nearby colleges and towns. Civic organizations take an active interest in youth. One example is the Lions Club who often furnishes glasses to indigent children.

The many churches in the area provide a wide range of activities and programs of varying interest for young people. The citizens of the community voluntarily operate little league

programs for the children year round, including baseball, softball, basketball, football, cheerleading, etc. While the town of Site B is limited in size and population, it does offer special advantages. A closely-knit relationship exists between home, school, and community. The environment is such that it is conducive to good family living and the rearing of children. Site B is a quaint, historic town located near the Northwest River.

Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation

Using multiple methods of data collection, the researcher focused on two individual elementary schools to determine what made one school more successful than the other in student achievement on the Standards of Learning assessments in specific content areas. Each school's performance on the English and math Standards of Learning assessments was used to investigate why one school had high-scoring results and a school with comparable attributes had low-scoring results. Even though English test results varied slightly between the two schools, accountability efforts from both institutions warranted further exploration. The researcher studied how organizational structure, principal leadership practices, instructional practices, school culture, and parental support differed between the two schools.

Data were gathered during the months of June 2000 through October 2001. The research questions guided the data collection. The researcher collected data from observations; structured open-ended interviews; and relevant document reviews.

Observations

Observations were conducted in each school during a three-day period. Classroom observations occurred only during a scheduled language arts block or a math instructional period. Most of the teacher observations were conducted in the morning session of a regular scheduled school day. This time period was selected based on several beliefs of the researcher. First, English and math SOL results were used to identify the exemplary schools. Second, most teachers plan instructional activities in these two skill areas for the duration of one hour. Last, subject areas were selected on the basis of the observer's perceived importance among both parents and educators.

Elementary principals were observed in their professional settings, both in the office and in the school facility. Principals were observed during a regular school day, performing routine leadership practices. The observation was for a six-hour and followed the daily routine of the

principal on the date of the visitation. The form in Appendix A and hand scripted notes were used to indicate observed leadership practices and to gain insight into the organization of the school, the instructional emphasis, and parental support. A check mark ($\sqrt{}$) was used to denote that a practice or behavior was observed. Additional observations were conducted to clarify data.

The teachers were observed in their natural settings. The observer visited two third and two fifth grade English classes and two third and two fifth grade math classes at each school. All teachers, or a minimum of four teachers at each site, were observed in their classrooms for a period of one hour each. The reason for this observation was to study teachers' instructional practices to determine whether the teachers in the two schools differed on what they taught and how they taught. It was expected that teachers in the high-gain school would demonstrate more of the effective teaching behaviors than teachers in the low-gain school.

Observations focused on variables that affect both teacher and student performance on SOLs, as identified in the principal and teacher observation form in Appendices B and C. Detailed field notes were taken that included remarks and reactions of persons observed either during or immediately following observation sessions. Field notes contained behaviors, incidents, and events of interest. The researcher recorded behaviors corresponding to the Observation Form in Appendices B and C. A category system was used to facilitate the observation process so relevant behaviors could be identified and readily classified. Each behavior was from a single domain listed previously in Table 1. Both formal and informal comments were recorded.

<u>Development of the Observation Instruments</u>

The observation instruments used in this study to identify effective principal and teacher behaviors are in Appendices B and C. The principal observation instrument (see Appendix A) was developed from the characteristics of effective principals contained in the literature review in Chapter 2.

The teacher observation instrument (see Appendix B) was developed using Tazewell County's Teacher Observation Form which was developed in 1989 under the leadership of Dr. Dave Parks, Professor, Educational Leadership at Virginia Tech, working with division supervisors, principals, and teachers. The majority of the teaching behaviors were taken from the Tazewell County Teacher Observation form. The form also embodies several of Smith's effective teaching criteria developed for a 1996 Virginia Tech dissertation. *Arranges classroom*, *maintains*

smooth transitions, and exhibits *control and calmness* were the three behaviors taken from Smith's study. These three items address classroom management techniques that minimize disruptions to the instructional process. With the successful implementation of classroom management skills, students know what is expected of them and perform accordingly.

Each observed behavior was checked (√) on these forms. A blank space indicates the behavior was not observed during the observation. Once the notes and audiotapes were transcribed, the researcher coded and rated the leadership and teaching behaviors by using the effective leadership and instruction criteria listed in Table 1. Handwritten notes were taken during each observation and transcribed at a later time.

<center>Development of the Interview Instruments</center>

Structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions were taken from the research review identifying variables by Bolman and Deal (1984, 1993), Combs and Moe (1991), and Shein (1995). The interviewer followed a well defined structure and format for interviews to ensure accurate and complete information from all respondents. Interview questionnaires are in Appendices D-F. Interview questions were framed in language that guaranteed effective communication between the interviewer and the respondent. Principals, teachers, and parents answered respective questions in the same context, using a conversational procedure to facilitate the exploration of themes and issues that emerged (see Appendices D-F). Questions developed for the interview were based on the research review of effective schools, leadership styles, organizational structure, the instructional process, parent support, and changes brought about by the Standards of Learning. Interview questions were reviewed by Educational Leadership and Policy Studies educators and were pre-tested with non-participants to eliminate inferior items and to provide coverage of all necessary and appropriate domains. Appendix C was used to assist with content validation. Changes and modifications in the instrument were made accordingly.

The interview process was shaped as it transpired. The researcher served as interviewer and observer of respondents. The two elementary principals, eight classroom teachers, and six parents were interviewed using the appropriate interview questionnaire contained in Appendices D-F. Respondents were given the opportunity to express themselves in their own way, in addition to providing information for clarification, when appropriate. Beginning questions were very general while closing interview questions were specific.

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Initially, the fieldwork was more formal with interviews being conducted at sites that were comfortable for the interviewee. The site selected for conducting the interview was a relaxed setting for principals, teachers, and parents involved in this process. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. A written log and a school site log (Appendix G) were maintained. At the close of data collection, the researcher had both an oral and written document.

<div align="center">Content Validation for Observation and Interview Instruments</div>

The content validity for the observation instruments (see Appendices C and D), was completed by a group of practicing educators—administrators and instructional teachers— currently employed in the researcher's school division. Two separate groups were used to complete the content validity form for each observation instrument.

Seven elementary and secondary administrators and five elementary and secondary teachers for a total of 12 educators completed the principal observation instrument validity form. Table 6 indicates there were five items that received a percentage rating less than 70%. These items were (5) *the principal has a compelling vision, (8) the principal has a high energy level, (18) the principal controls the school's curriculum, (19) the principal controls school personnel, and (20) the principal controls schools policies.* These items were deleted from the principal observation instrument but not without much discerning thought. First, the three items dealing with control (18, 19, and 20) received the most comments from respondents. Even after clarification of the statements, persons completing the form chose not to change their initial response. The researcher believes that most individuals completing the form were not comfortable with the word "control" in any form, thus resulting in a low percentage rating and the item being deleted from the instrument. Item 5, *the principal has a compelling vision* created more concern. Based on the literature review, it is believed that schools with high student achievement have principals with a commanding vision that is consistently conveyed to staff members. For this reason, item 5 was not deleted from the principal observation instrument.

Table 6

Principal Observation Instrument: Content Validation Results

The practices and behaviors listed below are characteristics of effective principals. Please check those you believe are closely associated with increasing student achievement.
At the bottom of this form, list other practices or behaviors that in your opinion are important practices of effective principals and that lead to student achievement.
 The principal:

1. 92% is visible in the school

2. 92% fosters a caring climate for students, staff, and parents

3. 75% encourages experimentation

4. 92% empowers others to excel

5. 58% has a compelling vision

6. 100% maintains high expectations for staff

7. 92% insistent that students will learn

8. 67% has a high energy level

9. 75% is actively involved—in instructional planning

10. 92% frequently drops in on classes

11. 67% demonstrates instructional skills

12. 83% is a good listener

13. 83% understands people

14. 75% is secure

15. 75% demonstrates a moral strength

16. 92% is perceived to be an instructional leader

17. 92% gives priority to academic excellence

18. 42% is in control of the school's curriculum

19. 25% is in control of the school's personnel

20. 17% is in control of the school's policies

21. 75% values innovations and new ideas

22. 100% is sensitive to students, teachers, and parents

23. 100% implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies

24. 100% has high expectations for student achievement

25. 75% has high expectations for parents

Five elementary and secondary administrators and nine elementary, middle, and high school teachers for a total of 14 professionals reviewed the teacher observation instrument. Table 7 contains the five items that received less than an 80% rating that respondents believed were associated with student achievement. *Arranges the classroom, maintains a smooth transition, proximity, engages in professional development activities, and helps students with their social and emotional problems* were eliminated from the Teacher Observation instrument. Several persons made individual suggestions.

The content validation for the interview instrument is in Appendix C. Seven teachers, five elementary and two secondary, completed the content validation form. Item 4, *Gains in student achievement are tied to the organization's structure,* and item 24, *Describe how the school is held together,* were the only items recommended by respondents for deletion. Due to the initial clarity of items 4 and 24, these items were deleted from the interview questionnaires.

Interview questions were further field tested by asking five (5) non-participants—one principal, three classroom teachers, and one parent the questions developed for the interview questionnaires. There were no changes made in the interview instruments following the field test.

<div align="center">**Documentation**</div>

Documents were studied at each site to gain relevant knowledge concerning variables that may impact the instructional program and to generate information that classroom observations and staff interviews did not produce (see Table 8). The document study focused on the five identified domains listed in Chapter 1. These included: organizational structure, leadership skills, instructional strategies, school culture, and parental support. Specifically targeted at each school were teacher handbooks, student handbooks, school accreditation reports, administrative memos, school surveys, mission statements, staff development plans, collegial meeting minutes, committee assignments, instructional and technological plans, principal newsletters, school newsletters, teacher and student recognition programs, teacher and student attendance reports, grade distributions, discipline records, curriculum guides, pacing guides, instructional schedules, annual improvement plans, lesson plans, volunteer programs, homework policies, parent conference records, parent participation on school committees, established rituals or traditions, teacher turnover rate, principal class visitation schedule, facility maintenance plans, crisis plans, policies, PTA membership, committee membership, teacher turnover rate, and the facility plant in relation

Table 7

Teacher Observation Instrument: Content Validation Results

The practices and behaviors listed below are characteristics of effective teachers. Please check those behaviors you believe are closely associated with increasing student achievement.
At the bottom of this form, list other practices or behaviors that in your opinion are important practices of effective teachers and that lead to improved student achievement.

71%	1. Arranges classroom	71%	17. Proximity
79%	2. Maintains smooth transitions	86%	18. Utilizes effective procedures for managing students
86%	3. Exhibits control and calmness	100%	19. Accepts each student as an individual of worth
86%	4. Makes student aware of lesson objectives	93%	20. Maintains high expectations for student achievement
100%	5. Directs instruction toward stated objectives	86%	21. Bases grades on student performance
100%	6. Checks for understanding	71%	22. Engages in professional development activities
100%	7. Adjusts instruction as needed	79%	23. Helps students with their social and emotional problems
100%	8. Provides guided practice to reinforce learning	100%	24. Implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies
100%	9. Provides independent practice to reinforce or enrich learning	100%	25. Uses positive reinforcement with students
93%	10. Summarizes learning and develops connections to other learning and to real life situations		
93%	11. Demonstrates established rules and procedures		
93%	12. Prepares equipment and materials for use		
93%	13. Begins class promptly		
86%	14. Actively involves students in the learning process		
100%	15. Knows the content of subject matter		
93%	16. Communicates effectively		

Table 7 (cont'd)

Teacher Observation Instrument: Content Validation Results

Additions or suggestions:

Is supportive of students in their social and emotional development

Utilizes different strategies to assist those students who are experiencing academic difficulties

Utilizes assessment tools to reflect upon the effectiveness of teaching, and implements changes when indicated

Provides students with hands-on activities (active learning)

Motivates students

Works collaboratively with colleagues

Table 8

Site Document Review: Sources of Data

Research domain	Documentation
1. Organizational structure of the school	a. Teacher handbook b. Current year memos addressing policy and procedures c. Minutes of principal's advisory committee d. Schedules e. Mission statement f. Student handbook g. School surveys h. Announcements/communications i. Principal's newsletter j. Teacher recognition program k. Accreditation report
2. Leadership skills that contribute to student achievement and teacher success	a. Current year staff development plans b. Instructional and technology plans c. Rituals and procedures that promote school climate and culture d. Minutes of Advisory Committee meetings e. Discipline reports f. School newsletter g. Student recognition programs h. Annual Improvement plan i. Written letters of accomplishment

Table 8 (cont'd)

Site Document Review: Sources of Data

Research domain	Documentation
3. Instructional program of the school	a. SOL test results b. Monthly teacher and student attendance reports c. Curriculum guides d. Pacing guides for SOLs e. Instructional time/organization of instructional day f. Lesson plans g. Designated Lead teachers h. Grade distributions i. Discipline records j. Volunteer programs k. Homework policy l. Student progress reports m. Improvement plans
4. Parent support	a. PTA membership and participation b. Parent liaisons c. Open houses and special meetings d. Record of parent visitations to school e. Parent conference logs-telephone calls, conferences with teachers records f. Participation in school accreditation g. Membership on school committees h. Participation in volunteer program i. Participation in program evaluation
5. The culture of the school	a. Student and teacher recognition programs b. Evidence of established traditions and rituals c. Teacher turnover rate d. Collegial activities e. Evidence of student and parent involvement in setting standards for behavior f. Facility maintenance plans g. Crisis plans h. Principal class visitation plans i. Personnel smile/nod to students in hallways

to a safe, clean, and orderly environment. Notes were taken that supported, via printed material, the organization's focus (leader, teacher, and parental support) relative to student achievement on the prescribed Standards of Learning.

Data Analysis

Research for the study of variables that affect student performance on Virginia Standards of Learning assessment was based on observation and interview information acquired from the principals, teachers, students, and parents. By using inductive reasoning, information analyzed emerged from the data. A cross-case comparison of selected schools was performed to check for commonalties. Analysis began immediately upon the informant's response to the first question. Emergent themes were examined and responses coded for future purposes. The researcher continuously assessed information retrieved from the informants throughout the data collection process. The researcher was careful not to present or interject ideas or thoughts into collected material.

Analysis of Observational Data

Data from observations and transcribed interviews and field notes was organized in a matrix formatted around the research questions to identify why one school was more successful than another comparable school in achieving the standards established by the state of Virginia. Data studied, marked, and coded in notes and transcripts corresponded to research questions. A wall chart was constructed for the purpose of displaying raw data from transcripts and field notes. Relevant passages addressing each research question was classified and affixed to the chart. Data were analyzed and organized; research questions were targeted and reviewed. Based on this information, the chart was sectioned according to applicable data for each research question, and questions were then answered in text form.

Analysis of Interview Data

Field notes were typed, and audiotaped interviews were transcribed. Collected information was coded to facilitate the identification of various sources used in the research process. The coding procedure followed Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) approach to using the constant comparative method for qualitative data analysis. Observations [O], interview transcripts [I], documents [D] obtained in the collection of data, and field notes [FN] were coded

in the upper right hand corner of each page. Participants were coded by using the first letter of their last name. Page numbers of specific documents were expressed as a numerical digit. To illustrate the coding procedure, one may assume that on the tenth page of an interview transcript with Mr. Barnett, the code would appear as **I/B-10**. Field notes from the third page of an observation at Southtown Elementary School would appear as **O/SES-3.** Collected data were photocopied to enable the researcher to analyze information in a meaningful way. Units of meaning were identified in the transcripts, field notes, and other pertinent documents.

<u>Analysis of Documents</u>

Document data were used to validate and support data from observations and interviews. The researcher compared data from the observations, the interviews, and the document reviews to identify and distinguish themes and patterns that emerged. Site participants reviewed the results of the study.

Ethical Issues

It was important to maintain the anonymity of the schools and participants in this study. Each school and participant was given a code prior to data collection. The code will remain in the secured files of the researcher and will be purged after a five-year time period. The researcher and university adviser will be the only ones with access to the code. The audiotapes will be maintained and secured in the same manner. The researcher complied with all rules and regulations prescribed by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) for this study. Participants were informed of data collection procedures and their permission was secured for the collection of data, taping of the interviews, and their desires about the storage and destruction of the tapes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The main focus of this study was to determine what makes one school more successful in promoting student achievement on the Standards of Learning assessment than another comparable school. In studying what makes the difference between the two schools, organizational structure of the school, leadership practices of the principal, the culture of the school, the instructional behaviors of teachers, and the individual school's parent support for education were explored.

Tables were constructed to summarize observation and interview data. The researcher focused on the 45 research-based effective school criteria. The tables and supporting data demonstrate how the researcher identified variables at one school that appeared to have positively influenced student achievement when compared to a school with similar attributes.

Findings for Site A

Organization of Site A

Academically effective schools have distinctive organizational characteristics. The organization of the school is the structure and functioning of the school in its efforts to achieve its goals, maintain its internal integrity, and adapt to its environment. Researchers (Chubb, 1987; Chubb & Moe, 1990) stated that learning doesn't depend on the instructional strategy but on a school's organization as a whole—goals, leadership, followership, and climate.

There were two major categories, structure and function, with the themes of *school improvement committee* and *specific committees* and *collaboration* that emerged from the organizational data of Site A. The first category to be discussed is school improvement and specific committees.

School Improvement and Specific Committees

Structure is how an organization is organized to achieve its goals. Figure 2 is the principal's drawing of a flowchart that she believed to be representative of her school. The principal provided opportunities for staff members to be involved in the decision-making process. It was her goal to focus the work of different committees on the school improvement process.
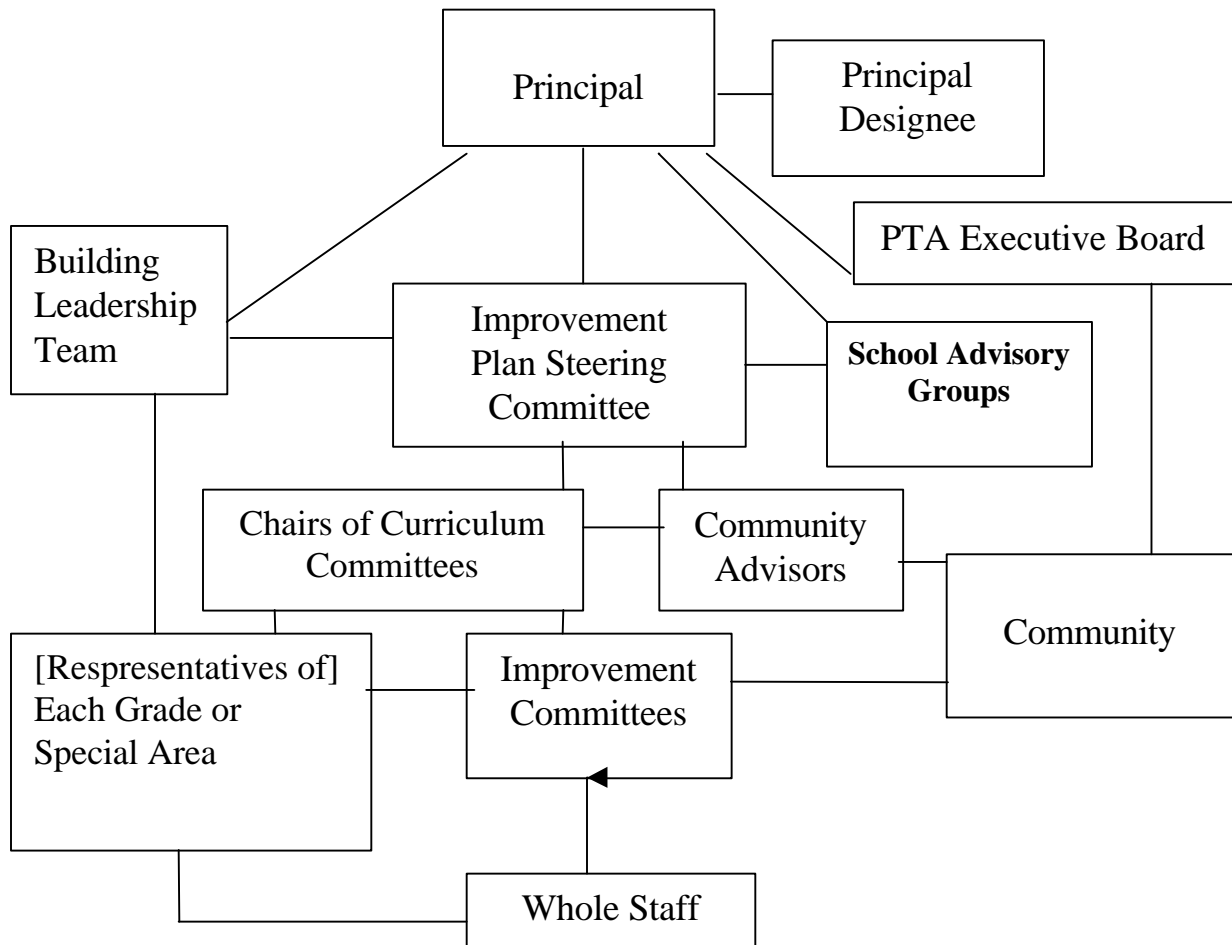
Figure 2. Organizational structure of school at Site A as drawn by the principal.

In Site A, the structure consisted of a Building Leadership Team (**BLT**), school improvement committees, hall designees, and grade-level groups (I/A-1).[1]

The **BLT** was composed of an individual from each grade level, a Title I teacher, and a special education teacher. Special areas such as art, music, physical education, and technology education had one representative as a member of this team. Members served approximately two year terms and then rotated to another committee. The Site A principal stated that due to the relatively small size of the school, staff members serve on at least two committees (I/A-3). Staff members were asked which committee they would like to serve on and received either their first or second choice. Staff members desiring to continue work on a committee were allowed to remain for another rotation. Persons wanting to change to a new committee were permitted to do so (I/A-4). The principal indicated that tenured teachers remained on committees for continuity and to offer the history of why things were developed in the manner they were to younger staff members (I/A-4). Parents and community members serve on committees, specifically those committees associated with curricular issues (I/A-4). Parents and community partners served the after-school program, served as tutors and mentors during the year, and were encouraged to serve on committees. Site A did not have a community representative on the **BLT** because the committee considers internal issues (I/A-4). The building principal thought this team "truly represents the entire staff" (I/A-3).

Several other specialized committees existed at Site A. The school maintained a child study committee, a gifted education committee, a character education committee, a drug education committee, and a courtesy or flower fund committee (I/A-3). These committees oversaw services to students and promoted school improvement. Meetings were scheduled to conserve staff time, thus several children or issues were considered at one meeting. Meetings were kept to a minimum, meeting once in six weeks but no less than four times a year (I/A-4).

The PTA and the PTA Executive Board met on a monthly basis. Parents approach the principal at these meetings and talked with her informally, offering suggestions or concerns (I/A-6). Together, the principal and a school board member conducted an open forum on one of the designated "Parents' Nights." This afforded parents the opportunity to discuss issues with school

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[1] (I=interview; F=initial of person being interviewed; -1=page number of interview document)

representatives in an informal setting. Title I and Special Education had advisory committees that served those students at Site A (I/A-6).

Collaboration

Collaboration is necessary if members of any group are to function successfully. In School A, school personnel worked together to support the vision of their leader, which was to improve student performance and achievement. The principal stated that one of the functions of the **BLT** was to disseminate information to other faculty members (I/A-3). This team was sometimes used in lieu of conducting meetings with all faculty members present. The **BLT** served as an advisory committee to the principal (I/A-3). Topics for discussion included new programs and extracurricular activities (I/A-3). When information was solicited by Central Office personnel, the **BLT** was used for this purpose. The Building Leadership Team served as a school-wide discipline team.

The issues considered by the school's committees were associated with the instructional needs of the school. The school struggled with not meeting the benchmarks of the Standards of Learning (I/A-4). Test scores were being reviewed and studied, and the teachers examined their teaching styles (I/A-4). Teaching models were studied and staff members were in the process of developing pacing guides to be used in the next school term (I/A-4). The staff decided they needed to make some changes in teaching assignments due to recognized gaps in student performance. First grade teachers admitted they were not as knowledgeable as they would like to be about what the children were facing in third grade with the SOLs. Third grade teachers admitted they did not have sufficient training in phonics to accomplish what they needed to with the students. With this in mind, new grade groups were being established for the next year to have the "best of all worlds" (I/A-5).

The staff at this school was experienced. Many of them were thirty year veterans (I/A-1). The principal stated the strength of the school is the qualified personnel that are willing to explore and try new things. She stated that individuals "look beyond the horizon" to improve their school (I/A-1). She indicated that staff members handled change easily and gained confidence with each change (I/A-2). Teachers worked extremely well together, and those interviewed affirmed they are a close-knit family (I/W-1; I/R-5).

Teachers at Site A planned together on a weekly basis; usually on Thursdays or Fridays. It was at this time that preparations were made for the upcoming week. Materials were shared among faculty members (I/R-1). The researcher's observations as well as statements made by staff members indicated that the school took great pride in helping students (I/R-1). Instructional staff members stated that by working together, sharing materials, and teaching targeted objectives, their students achieved and were more successful (I/R-2). School personnel pointed out that the school is tailored to the needs of the students to assure that all students are successful. Members of the organization proclaimed that their dedication is a strength and that their support for one another has enabled them to develop into a friendly, caring faculty that enjoys working together (I/T-1; I/P-1).

<div align="center">Leadership Practices</div>

Leadership practices are the beliefs and skills that an individual possesses and employs to communicate a vision that inspires members of an organization to obligate time and energy in an extraordinary manner to produce positive gains and rewards. It's the practices leaders use to get noteworthy things done in an organization (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The challenge for leaders is to develop a consensus around values that constitute an effective culture—high expectations, commitment, mutual respect, confidence, continuous improvement, risk-taking, and an "insistence that students will learn" (Stolp & Smith, 1997, p.160). The principal of Site A demonstrated many qualities associated with those of an effective leader. Interview data uncovered three categories and themes with reference to leadership practices. The categories that emerged were *organizational skills, beliefs and style, and relationships* (see Appendix H). The first category to be discussed is the principal's organizational skills.

Organizational Skills

The administrator of this school knew the curriculum and was very comfortable working with teachers in program planning and instruction. She knew members of the organization and placed them in situations according to their individual strengths (I/T-4). Staff members perceived their principal to be an instructional leader, and she was recognized by colleagues for having the skills necessary to work with special needs children. She was described by both teachers and parents as being a strong administrator. She was organized, supportive, and offered encouragement to all members of the school (I/T-2; I/W-1; I/B-1). She set high expectations for

students and teachers and communicated her expectations to them very well. More important, she followed up to see that her expectations were met. Described as having a loose management-of-instruction style, she was perceived by staff members as being aware of what is happening within the learning environment. She knew the successes being experienced by both teachers and students. She supervised in an efficient manner (I/B-1).

The Site A principal had clear policies and procedures for the operation of the school (I/W-1; I/T-2). Interview data denoted that the principal used consultative management for the operation of the school. She was viewed by all respondents as having a strong vision (I/W-1; I/R-2). Teachers described her as being positive, persistent, and thorough. It was noted that she could be dogmatic at times. This administrator was visible in the school and offered encouragement to both students and teachers. Staff members acknowledged that she was a good listener and maintained the confidentiality of all persons who talked with her. Teachers and parents viewed her as child-centered, caring for students both during the day and after school hours. During the interview process, Mrs. A. revealed that she was concerned that some students went home to no adult supervision and that some students did not get appropriate help with their studies. Having this concern, she and staff members wrote a grant and developed and implemented an after-school program to meet the needs of these students and parents.

Respondents at Site A described the principal as having effective organizational skills, providing an orderly environment conducive to learning and work. Teachers disclosed she was an effective manager, "She's meticulous and she's very good" (I/T-7). Teachers affirmed the principal had a positive attitude and provided a comfortable working atmosphere. She was nonthreatening, and everyone at this school seemed to work together (I/R-2). She took pride in recognizing both teachers and students for their accomplishments (I/W-1). Parents were adamant that the principal "runs a tight ship" (I/P-1). The principal at Site A handled conflict well, "Even though there is very little of it" (I/R-2). Parents relayed that she was a highly persuasive person (I/P-1). She was receptive to the ideas and suggestions of others (I/R-2). Teachers stated that she assigned and delegated duties in an equitable manner. All respondents were confident that the principal was willing to help them with any problem or concern they might encounter.

<u>Beliefs and Style</u>

The principal confirmed that the school and the community meant a great deal to her. She described herself as being parent and community oriented. She acknowledged that she had an open door policy and did not mind telephone calls at home, even late night calls (I/A-1). She considered herself to be a student-centered leader and stated that she "understands the interconnectiveness" of relationships. She realizes that parents have distinct time limitations due to schedules and are faced with many concerns of the adult world (I/A-2). Mrs. A. wanted the school to revolve around the needs of the students. She recognized her faults and was quick to admit to them. She maintained that she encouraged others but would not go so far as to say that she was an inspiration to others (I/A-1). Mrs. A. asserted there is so much "gray" in this process but that she tried to be fair and consistent (I/A-1). Teachers proclaimed she was strong in her beliefs; when she had something she believed in, she was dogmatic about it (I/T-2). Parents divulged that their principal had a compelling vision and wanted to go as far as she could go (I/P-1). One teacher put it best by saying, "She is super. She is so appreciative of the work we do and the program and things we have gotten, I feel, show her vision" (I/B-1).

The principal's management style was obvious to all persons around her. She led by example (I/P-1). Mrs. A. walked the talk. Teachers and parents said that she did anything that needed to be done. She stayed late at school and was always commenting, "There are not enough hours in a day" (I/P-1: I/A-1). She was a risk-taker and supported others in their willingness to try new things (I/W-1). She was bold, dedicated, and serious in everything that she did (I/T-2). She was a good listener and took time for both students and adults. Parents stated she acted and responded immediately to a situation (I/P-1).

<u>Relationships</u>

The confidence that staff members held for the principal kept being mentioned in the interviews. Members of this organization gave every indication that their principal was authentic in her beliefs and actions. There appeared to be a trust, the first lesson described in Ouchi's (1981) Theory Z for producing a successful organization that permeated the school. The principal at Site A appeared to have a good working relationship with both faculty and parents. Teachers stated that they knew when she was pleased with them (I/T-1). She was authentic because they recognized that her praise was real (I/T-2). Mrs. A. did little things that meant a lot; for example,

she gave teachers a token that could be used anytime when the need arose. This token allowed teachers to leave school early (I/B-1). Parents stated she readily displayed concern and support for others (I/P-1). A reoccurring focus of staff members was the trust they had for their administrator. "If I had a problem I would go to Mrs. A.," was a comment made by several teachers and parents (I/T-5). One teacher stated she would go to the principal even if her problem was with her (the principal). Respondents disclosed that information shared with their principal remained confidential (I/P-1).[2]

School Culture

Culture is a group's shared and understood allegiance to one another by giving one's individual best to achieve student success. Culture is concerned with those things that give life meaning (Maxwell & Thomas, 1991). A positive school culture is associated with higher student achievement because teachers and students are more motivated to perform. Site A had three distinct characteristics appear that are associated with a positive school culture and higher student motivation and achievement (see Appendix H). These characteristics were *positive staff outlook, staff cohesiveness, and non-threatening atmosphere.* The first characteristic to be discussed is positive staff outlook.

Positive Staff Outlook

Staff members at Site A proclaimed that they had a positive and relaxed work environment (I/R-2). The school had a good school climate and staff members stated, "They couldn't imagine working in a better school climate" (I/W-1). Teachers had high expectations, they were comfortable working there, and they insisted that each child would be successful at something (I/W-2: (I/R-2). Teachers stated that Mrs. A. understood the pressures they were under and was supportive of them (I/B-1). She responded immediately and appropriately to those students not motivated to do or complete their work (I/B-1). She always smiled and had a wonderful personality (I/B-1).

Staff Cohesiveness

Site A appeared to function as a community. Although everyone had different jobs, they shared responsibilities, coming together to support the vision of the principal and the mission of

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[2] At an Educational Forum months after the visit to Site A, the researcher spoke with a fifth grade teacher and she again disclosed the authentic attributes of her principal.

the school (I/B-2). Members of this group met with the principal to discuss grade level concerns, and to keep the principal informed of each grade level's focus (I/B-1). Each hall had a designated teacher that teachers could go to for help (I/B-1). One teacher stated that staff harmony was as good as it gets in a work place (I/W-2). Members of the organization revealed there was a culture there, a cohesiveness. They readily sought each other's opinions (I/A-2).

Non-threatening Atmosphere

Teachers at this site stated they were not afraid of change and were willing to try new things (I/W-2).   Not only did they view their administrator as a risk-taker, they felt she would support them in anything they did (I/W-1). Mrs. A. indicated the SOLs were defined by the creativity of the teachers (I/A-2). She affirmed that teachers had the freedom to adjust the curriculum to fit the needs of students (I/W-2). The principal frequently solicited suggestions and input from staff members (I/T-3). She was receptive to the ideas of others (I/R-2). Interview and observational data demonstrated that staff members were involved in the decision-making process within the school and outside the school. Several staff members stated that until their current principal arrived, they were powerless.

The principal provided a very comfortable working atmosphere, "It is not a threatening atmosphere, just one of people working together" (I/R-2). Site A had a qualified, cohesive staff (I/A-2). Members described themselves as hardworking (I/R-1), friendly (I/P-1), and focused (IW/-1). Some staff members appeared to be more actively involved (by choice) than others; however, most persons interviewed stated that responsibilities were shared equally (I/T-4; I/R-3). Data indicated that staff members worked collaboratively. They planned together, shared materials, and supported one another. The majority of the persons interviewed stated that their job was to help students do their best (I/R-1-2; I/T-1; I/P-2).

Teacher Behaviors

Teachers are instrumental in the success of students. No one method has been identified to distinguish a good teacher from a poor teacher. Teacher attitude, teacher expectations, sense of efficacy, and sincerity contribute to higher student achievement (Brophy, 1982). In effective schools teachers use methods that are suited to students' individual learning needs and that maximize instructional time. Teachers observed and interviewed at Site A demonstrated a genuine concern for students (see Appendix H). There appeared to be one overriding theme that

emerged from data gathered from study participants. The theme was teacher relationships: relationships with students, parents, peers, and principal. These relationships appeared to be the driving force that determined the school's achievements.

<u>Teacher Relationships With Students</u>

Teachers acknowledged that it was their responsibility to teach children relevant material that would help them to become successful, productive citizens (I/T-6). Even though the instructional program was mandated by the state, teachers proclaimed that they had the freedom to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of students (I/W-2). Teachers indicated that it was difficult to use the same book each year; therefore, they willingly sought materials from other sources (I/T-2). Teachers experimented, took field trips, and were creative in their approach to implementing the Standards of Learning objectives (I/A-2). The instructional staff at Site A realized that many things influenced student performance, and they were quick to look beyond the classroom to see what may be happening in the lives of students.

Teachers appeared to have realistic expectations for student behavior and school rules were applied in a fair and consistent manner. The observational data confirmed that the instructional environment was organized and structured for students. Teachers emphasized that they basically handled their own problems with students. Teachers at each grade level worked together to develop classroom rules and consequences (I/T-6). The amount of time spent in disciplining students was dictated by specific children. Data pointed out that third grade teachers appeared to spend a lot of time on discipline (I/W-2). One teacher stated that some staff members appeared to have a little higher tolerance level than other staff members (I/T-5). Another teacher related that the number of children in a classroom determined the amount of time spent on discipline (I/B-2). The consensus among interviewed teachers at this school was that they dealt with student problems and that the principal in turn, spent very little time disciplining students.

Teachers considered student needs when assigning instructional tasks. Students were heterogeneously grouped; however, teachers were free to move students among grade levels to ensure student success (I/B-2). It appeared that teachers were concerned that students have the necessary skills to be successful at their assigned tasks. The document review indicated that teachers designed the after-school program to offer homework and tutorial assistance based on individual needs of students (D/SIP-1). It was evident that teachers did not mind trying new

things as long as they would benefit their students (I/B-2). Teachers believed that methods that were valuable in furthering a student's skills should not be "thrown out" (I/B-2).

Teachers made it a point to know the home environments of their students. Various methods were employed to communicate on a regular basis with parents. Parents pointed out that their children had daily planners in grades three and five. These planners had to be taken home and signed by the parent (I/P-1). County policy mandated a certain amount of homework, and a one hour limit was established for the upper grades. Primary grades had homework two nights a week (I/W-2). Teachers were mixed on the effectiveness of various core subjects being assigned for homework. One teacher believed that reading should be assigned every night for homework (I/B-2). This individual believed that if students worked in class, they wouldn't require a lot of homework (I/B-2). Several teachers noted homework in math was important (I/T-6). Teachers stated that resources available to students at home should dictate the assignment of work outside of the school setting. One teacher mentioned that grandparents were raising many students and may not be able to assist with homework. She further stated that the work schedule of parents should also determine the amount of homework assigned to students. "Parents that work the way they do, do not need an hour or two of homework each night" (I/B-2).

Teacher Relationships With Parents

Parents indicated that they were comfortable coming to the school and even making a suggestion to any of their children's teachers (I/P-1). Teachers stated that parents supported what they did. Parents attended grade meetings to discuss important activities that were happening at the school. One parent stated, "I feel I am encouraged to come to school" (I/P-2). It appeared that teachers at this school realized the importance of parent involvement to student achievement and actively involve them in the instructional process. For example, teachers provided parents with a "make it-take it" workshop. One evening parents were invited to the school to make instructional materials that would assist them in working with their children at home (I/R-4).

Teacher Relationships With Peers

Staff members at Site A believed in collegiality. Observations indicated teachers appeared to work very well together. The teachers served on a variety of committees designed to develop and implement an effective school program. Site A had internal control of instruction.

"Instruction is not removed from the control of our school" (I/W-1). Committee membership changed from year to year, giving teachers many opportunities to work together and establish relationships. Teachers planned together in grade groups; they participated in staff development activities at school and with other teachers in division-wide activities. Teachers worked on pacing guides and served on curriculum committees. Teachers stated they did not have conflicts with other teachers (I/W-1). They felt the lack of conflicts were the direct result of being involved with children (I/W-1). The principal indicated that there was a manifestation of care and concern among teachers at this school (I/A-2). Teachers collectively implemented established policies and procedures. They were respectful of one another and worked to ensure that schedules were maintained (I/R-3). The principal indicated that members of the school were like every other family; there had been discord, but it had helped them to grow (I/A-2).

Teacher Relationships With Principal

Teachers mentioned consistently the support they received from their building principal. They viewed her as the instructional leader of the school (I/W-2). Parents who participated in the interview said, "She understands the instructional program" (I/P-1). Teachers realized that Mrs. A made every effort to limit interruptions to the instructional day (I/A-2). The learning environment was structured to limit movement throughout the building, either from members of the organization or from parents (I/A-2). Teachers participated in activities designed to ensure professional growth and received recertification points. The principal allowed teachers to select workshops to attend and counted them as part of their staff development requirements.

Teachers stated that the principal provided a very comfortable working atmosphere. They described it as not being a threatening atmosphere but one of people working together. Data showed the principal wanted very much to be accessible and visible in the school (I/A-1). One teacher commented that a significant change at the school had been the communication between the principal and staff members (I/T-1). The school had a good school climate and staff members stated that, "They couldn't imagine working in a better school climate" (I/W-1).

Parent Support

No educator will deny the importance of parent support to student performance and school success. Several themes emerged relative to parent support: *parent involvement in instruction*, which includes attitude and expectations; *parent involvement in extracurricular*

activities; homework; and *communication* (see Appendix H). The first to be discussed will be parent involvement in instruction.

Parent Involvement in Instruction

Interview data confirmed conflicting views from teachers relative to parent support or involvement in instruction. Teachers recognized that some years bring more parent involvement than others. Fifth grade teachers stated that parents were not as involved as parents in the primary grades (I/T-8). Teachers indicated that they did not feel there was a great deal of emphasis put on education by parents. One third grade teacher stated, "Parents think education is important but that it is somebody else's job" (I/W-2). A fifth grade teacher acknowledged that parents valued education but that they didn't recognize the correlation between education and success. "They just assume it's going to happen, but maybe there is responsibility in the process. I don't think they [parents] realize" (I/T-9). Another fifth grade teacher stated that because parents wanted what was best for their children, they valued education (I/B-2).

Data indicated that the majority of the school's parents had a high school education (I/P-2). A small percentage of parents living in the community had a college education, and participants speculated these were teachers living in the community (I/A-2; I/W-3). "A lot of our parents are intimidated by our schools. I think experience contributes to this" (I/W-2). The principal believed they were "getting there" with parents valuing education. She indicated the parents interviewed by the researcher were from one faction of the community. They valued education. She stated she had a community within a community; some who have not had a good educational experience, not completing their formal education. According to the principal, "Only three percent of the parents in our community have a college education" (I/A-2).

Parent Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

Parents were actively involved in extracurricular activities at the school. One parent stated that it was important for them to stay involved in the education of their child because that was when problems started (I/P-2). Several parents mentioned that children begin pushing parents away when they get to middle school   Site A parents communicated that parents could be involved in their children's educational program if they wanted (I/P-2). Parents assisted with field trips, attended PTA meetings, especially when children were participating in the program, and volunteered when called on to assist (I/P-2). Field notes indicated that parent volunteers were an

everyday sight at Site A. A sign-in sheet for volunteers and a basket of "Volunteer" badges were visible on the counter in the office. The researcher observed parents running the duplicating machine and processing materials for teachers and students. On one visit to the site, students were taking a trip to the zoo. It had been planned as a family event, and the observer witnessed as many parents as students participating in this activity.

Participants at Site A affirmed the importance of parent participation in a child's educational program. One parent stated that she had been at every program that her child had been in at school. Most all study participants, teachers and parents, stated that parents readily called the school with a problem or concern (I/P-2; I/T-8; I/A-2).

It appeared that school personnel provided many opportunities for parent involvement, and even parent education. The principal projected, "Parents are getting there, "Most of the parents have high expectations for their children. "We are learning together; even appropriate behavior at PTA meetings" (I/A-2). One may conclude that there was a general feeling among school personnel that there was a lack of confidence in parents. "They're lackadaisical. They have so much, what's the word, empathy, excuse me, apathy—they're apathetic. There are no expectations sometimes" (I/T-8).

Homework

Homework was a topic that received a mix of comments from both teachers and parents. At Site A, it appeared that the principal took the lead in involving parents in the educational process. On Monday, students had homework in math. Tuesday, students had homework in reading, and "whatever" on Thursday (I/R-5). One teacher indicated that parents expected homework (I/W-2). Most parents interviewed stated that homework was necessary, within limits (I/P-2). During the interview, one parent stated that homework taught children responsibility (I/T-8). Parents disclosed that children seemed to have a lot more homework since the SOLs (I/P-2). One parent affirmed that her child knew that school was the first priority (I/P-2). A fifth grade teacher mentioned that parents were too busy and somewhat overwhelmed to assist their children with two hours of homework each night (I/T-8). The principal at Site A indicated that they were working on getting the parents to view homework as important. By establishing an after-school program to assist students with homework in addition to providing SOL activities and enrichment activities, school personnel were aggressive in their efforts to provide all students

with needed assistance that parents could not provide (I/R-4). Participation was good in the "Students More Involved in Learning to Enhance Success" (S.M.I.L.E.S.) program, with approximately one-fourth of the student population remaining after-school each day to attend.

<p style="text-align:center">Communication</p>

Children were the focus of communications between the school and the home. Parents attended and support parent-teacher conferences. Teachers stated that parents wrote notes (even thank you notes) (I/B-2), called the school, had lunch with students, and visited classrooms. Daily planners were used with the students. Students wrote down their assignments in these planners so that parents would know what work they had to complete and return to school (I/R-4). Teachers used individual newsletters in addition to a school newsletter to communicate with the parents on a regular basis.

Findings for Site B

Organization of Site B

The principal of the school communicated a vision with an emphasis on student achievement, specifically, the state's mandated assessment:

> He wants it basically to be a strong school. We are one of the weakest in the county as far as scores. I know that is foremost in his mind to improve the SOLs. He has made that very plain. It's his mission. (I/L-2)

The organization at Site B revolved around the Standards of Learning objectives and test results (see Appendix I). The energy of the staff appeared to be focused on meeting the benchmark as prescribed by the state assessment program. "Everything is oriented toward the SOLs, so we are gearing toward that" (I/K-2). "They expect us to teach the Standards of Learning Objectives and we have the freedom to approach them" (I/J-1). Teachers stated the curriculum was left up to them and that they are thankful for that arrangement (I/R-2). One fifth grade teacher affirmed the teachers at the school influenced the curriculum (I/L-2). Parents affirmed the organization of the school was focused on the SOLs. "SOLs are the big thing now. They review a lot" (I/P-1). Standards of Learning booklets were sent home for parents to review with their children (I/P-1).

The upper grades were departmentalized for instructional purposes. Teachers appeared to be comfortable with the organization of their school, "It flows real well as far as how it is organized" (I/K-1). The administrator stressed that the SOLs were very much a part of what they

did and that he wanted to improve the school's test results. In addition to the themes of structure and function, the category of control of parent access emerged from the data collected. Structure will be the first category discussed.

Structure

The organization of the school was part of the county structure (I/J-1). The school was structured around school board and school policies. "Teachers know board policies and follow them according to the principal (I/B-1). A fifth grade teacher revealed that the central office listened not only to teachers, but to other employees before presenting something to the school board for approval (I/L-4). Interview data made known that teachers were frequently seeing the superintendent and central office personnel visiting the school. The assistant principal affirmed that policies determined the decisions made at the school. She indicated that teachers had a handbook and students had a Code of Conduct booklet (I/B-1). The observer reviewed both of these documents. The basic operating procedures were targeted for teachers, and basic conduct requirements were identified for students.

Everyone at Site B served as a member of a committee. Committee members rotated according to the assistant principal. Figure 3 is the principal's concept of Site B's organizational structure. The principal indicated that there were six teachers on the school's SOL team and that teachers were more involved in planning than they used to be (I/B-2). Mrs. D., the assistant principal, stated that teachers partner and give each other support (I/P-2). Grade level meetings were conducted for the purpose of sharing information, materials, and ideas (I/K-2). Teachers alleged that grade level meetings were "top notch" (I/L-1). One teacher disclosed that everyone was willing to do his or her part, even to the point of meeting on Saturdays (I/R-1). One third grade teacher declared that decisions were made by the democratic process, with input being required from all faculty members (I/J-1). A teacher noted that the principal recognized the experience of teachers in the decision-making process (I/J-1).
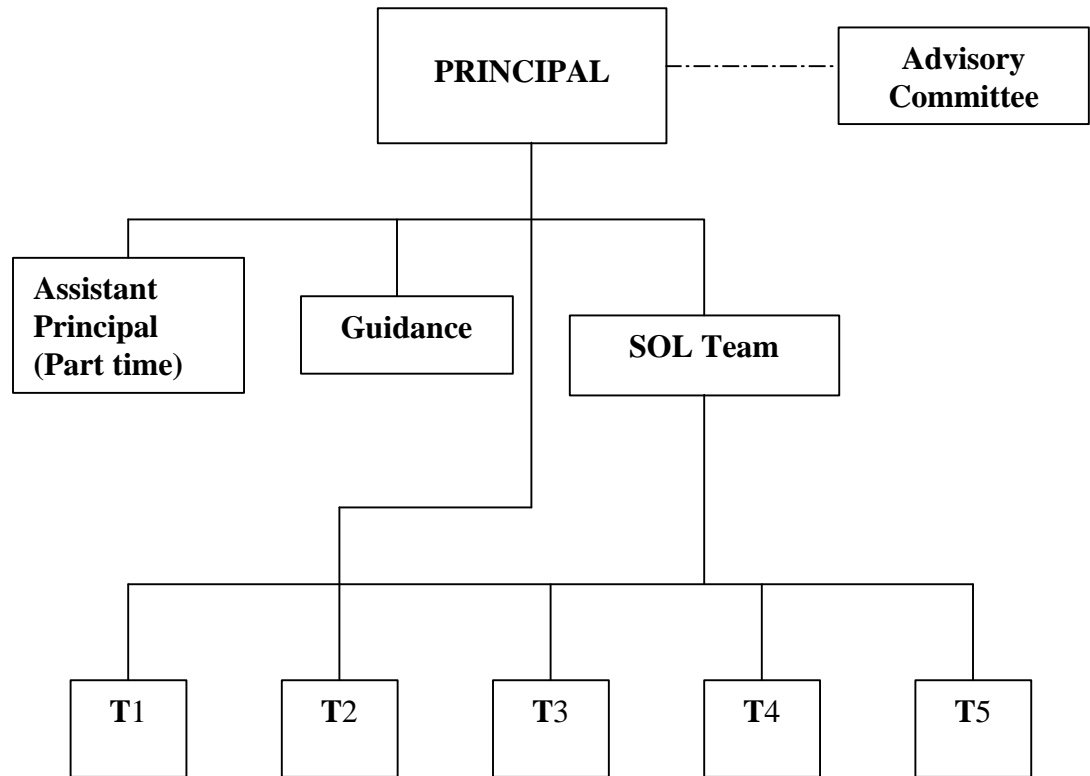
Figure 3. Line and staff relationships in Site B.

A third grade teacher indicated that power was evenly distributed at the school (I/J-1). Teachers served on different committees, and committee assignments were rotated. "Committees change, except for one, the child study committee. There is good reason for that; persons learn discourse [knowledge of the process used for eligibility] for placement" (I/R-2). Active committees at the school were the Audit Committee, Conflict Resolution Committee, Transition Committee, and School Improvement Committee (I/L-5). One teacher served on the county Reading Improvement Committee (I/R-1). Mr. B. stated there were various committees at Site B. In addition to the above committees, he specifically mentioned the Enrichment/Gifted Committee, the Technology Committee, the QUILT Committee, the School Crisis Committee, the School Health Committee, the Transition Committee (for fifth grade teachers who meet with the middle school teachers), the Principal's Advisory Committee (this is the first year for this committee), the Reading Success (AEL) Committee, and the School Safety Committee (I/B-3). According to the assistant principal and one fifth grade teacher, it was difficult to get people to serve on the audit committee (I/B-2; I/L-5). Teachers were given a sign-up sheet to select a committee they would like to serve on, and sometimes they met with the principal during the summer and were recruited for a certain committee (I/L-5).

Staff members acknowledged that the school and the instructional day were organized and controlled. One fifth grade teacher disclosed that the instructional day was really structured, especially in fifth grade. "Our schedules are back to back. We are real structured with them (children) and maintain a tight schedule with all of our classes" (I/K-1). A third grade teacher stated, "We have a routine here, and routine works best for students. We have very few changes in the schedule" (I/R-1).

The parent and teacher association was an important part of the school. Site B was proud of the PTA organization and the work and assistance it gave to students, the school, and the community. Members served the school in many ways, from volunteering to fundraising. Teachers and staff members recognized and applauded their contributions. The PTA was instrumental in purchasing equipment and building the playground at the school.

Function

Site B had a bureaucratic orientation. County curriculum guides and state resource guides were used by teachers to plan lessons (I/L-1). Teachers participated in monthly grade-level

meetings. There were lead teachers, who have been in place for several years, in the core areas of math and science. This program was started as part of an Eisenhower grant (I/K-2). Teachers teamed together and shared ideas and materials. "We tried new things last year that have made a difference. We are trying new things again this year, and if they work, we'll know whether to try them next year" (I/K-1).

The school had an established SOL Improvement Committee that met once a month to discuss strategies for improving student performance on the SOL tests. "With the Standards of Learning, we are looking at more things this year than we have the last couple of years. Really, since we started" (I/K-2). Teachers indicated they shared new materials they had received with other teachers in SOL meetings. Teachers at Site B were given the opportunity to visit other schools that were successful in meeting the benchmark on the SOL tests. Successful schools were identified by the principal via obtaining scores from the Internet (I/K-2). Two teachers from the school visit each year a high-performing school until all teachers had an opportunity to visit another school to investigate that school's approach each year to meeting the Standards of Learning mandate.

Teachers pointed out that the principal got involved in the school's efforts to improve SOL scores. "He is creative and imaginative. He gave us an SOL pep rally; our theme was 'I Can Do It.' We had popsicles" (I/R-1).

The principal mentioned that everyone at the school was use to change. "Change is a stated factor of this school" (I/B-1). One teacher stated that the principal did not change things that appeared to be working" (I/R-1). Change at Site B was readily noted by a parent when she mentioned that the school has had three principals, with the current principal coming the previous year (I/P-1).

Interview data established that teachers were committed to sharing information and helping one another achieve more success in the area of student performance. "Everyone knows each other's expectations" (I/B-1). Once a year an SOL activity was conducted for parents. Parents brought their children and participated in the activity with their children (I/K-8).

Control of Parental Access to the School

Parents influenced the organization of the school. Both teachers and administrative staff members were concerned about the freedom that parents seemed to have with coming into the

school to see their children or teachers. It appeared that parents freely came into the school, checked on students, brought various items to children, visited with the teachers, and were in the building without reporting to the office. It appeared that some parents had a tendency to stand in the halls, outside of classrooms, and visit with other parents.

The principal structured the school so that parents must report to the office when entering the school facility. Signs displayed in the halls indicated that parents must report to the office. All doors were locked and secured with the exception of the doors to the main entrance of the building. One teacher indicated that the principal was "still learning the ropes with the parents and teachers and making the school's environment mesh well" (I/L-2). "He spends most of his time observing and working with parents" (I/L-2). This fifth grade teacher further revealed that the principal still had things to work on as far as dealing with parents and their concerns.

<center>Leadership Practices</center>

The principal of Site B was beginning his second year in this position at the time of this study. Mr. B. demonstrated many qualities associated with that of effective leaders. Teachers considered his attitude toward employees to be one of his strengths. "His motivation and drive is very positive, and he is always available" (I/K-5). One teacher stated that he was always working on things to benefit them. He was concerned for their well being, as a school and for students (I/K-3). It appeared that the principal gave his best in his endeavors. "He never does anything halfway. If he is supposed to observe us five times, one hour each time, he does that" (I/J-1). Both he and the assistant principal observed classes periodically looking for SOL strategies. Similar categories of leadership practices to Site A emerged from the data: *organizational skills, beliefs and style, relationships with parents, relationships with teachers, relationships with students, school culture, close personal relationships, the consultative decision-making process, formal and informal groups, teacher behaviors, parent support, parent resources,* and *parent teacher organization.* The categories are discussed below.

Organizational Skills

Mr. B. stated that the assistant principal thinks he (the principal) is organized. "I know where to reach for everything" (I/B-1). One fifth grade teacher disclosed that the principal was very organized. "He carries around a pad and when you approach him with something, he writes it down. He will always get back with you" (I/R-1). Interview data confirmed that the principal

had clear policies and procedures for the operation of the school (I/R-1). He informed teachers of his expectations. He kept staff members informed of what was happening a week in advance. "We usually get just one memo a week" (I/R-1).

Likert (1967) wrote that the management of the human component in an organization was an important responsibility of management. In his study of different management systems, the consultative system, where leadership is by superiors without complete trust in subordinates, where motivation is by rewards, and where there is some involvement by organizational members, may appropriately describe the school. There appeared to be a Likert consultative system management style at this site. There was both vertical and horizontal communication and a moderate amount of teamwork. Teachers indicated that Mr. B. solicited ideas from others unless it interfered with key instructional time.

Teachers believed they were involved in the decision-making process at the school and were given a chance to respond. "You may agree or disagree, but let me know" one teacher quotes the principal saying (I/R-1). Mr. B. seemed to be concerned with how the teachers felt about how things were conducted at the school. One teacher stated, "Mr. B. always asks us how we feel about things. We are included in his decision-making process" (I/K-5).

One teacher stated that the principal was "really getting the feel for elementary education. "He has lots of new and exciting ideas" (I/J-1). Teachers at Site B pointed out that the principal "lets us be creative in the classroom. He encourages new ideas and techniques and likes to come and watch them. Sometimes, there is a little too much observation" (I/L-2).

Beliefs and Style

Mr. B. confirmed that he believed in motivation. He used positive reinforcement (I/B-1). One teacher stated that he tried new things to see what worked best. He emphasized doing your best and always having a positive attitude. He indicated that he had failed to hit a few things head-on. "I need to get more comfortable with confronting potential problems" (I/B-1). He believed he was a good listener. Staff members described the principal as a good listener. One teacher disclosed that Mr. B. worked extremely hard because "he is pressured more" (I/R-1). He was viewed as the instructional leader of the school. The observer witnessed Mr. B. teaching a math lesson one afternoon in the tutoring program for students after-school [O/SB-1]. He appeared to work very well with the other teacher assigned to this program. The principal stated

that it was a team approach and the faculty worked together on the instructional program (I/B-1). It appeared that Mr. B. pushed both students and teachers to not only get involved, but to do their best (I/R-1). One teacher stated, "He expects us [teachers] to do our best" (I/J-1).

He further revealed that teachers never knew when he was joking or serious (I/B-1). The principal tried to make everyone feel good. Teachers and staff members stated that the principal was very hard working and that he tried very hard to make everyone feel comfortable. "Comfort with trying new ideas for students and teachers. These are positive attitudes for us" (I/K-3). The principal thanked teachers in his announcements and commended them on doing a good job (I/K-3). Teachers revealed that the principal came up with new ideas like the citizenship program, which is a daily program (I/K-3). The principal seemed to always be working on things that benefited the students. He wanted what was best for the students and for teachers (I/K-3). He was aware of the concerns of students and what they had been through and the position they were in. One teacher stated, "We're just doing the best we can, working hard" (I/K-3). A teacher expressed that his principal was always working on things to benefit them. "His concern is for our well-being as a school and for students" (I/K-3). Teachers communicated that their principal gave them a lot of motivation for trying new things to see if they would work to improve education. "Mr. B. says 'next year.' He is always thinking about what to do next year" (I/R-1). "His motivation and drive is very positive, and he's always available" (I/K-5). One teacher suggested that the fact that Mr. B. was a new principal, and having to learn how to deal with certain situations would be considered a weakness. "He was a high school teacher and I think it's probably harder on him to get on our level when it comes to dealing with the younger students" (I/K-5).

> Teachers at Site B made known that their principal was professional. One teacher stated:
> It's a very professional relationship [the relationship that the principal has with faculty and staff]. He is accessible but he maintains the supervisory atmosphere. He doesn't "pal around" or things like that. When he comes into the classroom to observe you, you know why he is there. (I/L-3)

Relationships With Parents

Mr. B. did a good job with parents (I/J-2). "The principal spends most of his time observing and working with parents" (I/L-2). One teacher indicated that the principal needed to

learn a few things when dealing with parents. He got a little stressed with parents. "If there is a staff conflict, he takes the supervisory role and goes on with it, and we go on. With parents or repeat offenders, he gets very stressed" (I/L-3).

Relationships With Teachers

Teachers disclosed that the principal was supportive of them: "When we are trying to do something new for the children, he tries to come up with new ideas himself to help us" (I/L-2). He was not afraid to help teachers with instructional matters. Mr. B. shared ideas about how to teach certain things and how to make it more enjoyable as they taught. One teacher stated, "I guess his concern is to work on plans for us to better ourselves as teachers and to help us make the students feel more comfortable in the classroom" (I/K-3). The principal encouraged teachers to participate in staff development activities. He provided them with ten hours of computer technology training (I/R-1). He got other professionals to come in to do staff development activities for his faculty (I/R-1).

Relationships with Students

Interview data from both parents and teachers indicated that the students loved the principal. The parent stated, "He wants the students to achieve, to do well" (I/P-2). One parent acknowledged that the principal does a real good job (I/P-2). She was pleased that he interacted with the children, and that he was out doing things "with them, for them, and with parents" (I/P-2). She stated that Mr. B. called if he had a concern (I/P-2). Parents would come to talk with him if they had a problem or concern (I/P-2). "My husband visited him. It was a misunderstanding, but it got straightened out" (I/P-2).

School Culture

Teachers discussed that their school was not a rigid place to work. They described the school as personal, with a family-like atmosphere (I/J-1). Staff members stated they could go to the office and discuss things and feel they would be backed (I/J-1). Three distinct themes became apparent at Site B relative to the culture of the school (see Appendix I). The *close personal relationship* among staff members, the *consultative decision-making process* at the school. The existence of *formal and informal groups*. The first theme to be discussed is the personal relationships among staff.

Close Personal Relationships

"Most of us have gone to the same schools and grew up right here in this county" (I/K-4). The respondent explained that teachers had the opportunity to be around each other most of their lives. They appeared to be concerned about one another, even the personal things that happen to each other (I/K4). Teachers felt very comfortable with one another, even when it came to disciplining children or inquiring about a student's previous academic performance. One teacher stated, "It is very supportive as far as disciplinary situations" (I/L-3). If a teacher on bus duty had a problem with a student, she would go to the child's teacher and inform her of the behavior problem and count on her to take care of it (I/L-3). Most teachers at this school felt very comfortable going back and talking with the student's previous teacher about situations they may have encountered with the student (I/L-3). One teacher stated, "People are happy here. Most people are happy" (I/R-3).

The teachers at this school viewed the guidance counselor as an important member of the faculty and one that they felt very comfortable with and could count on (I/K-6). Teachers had confidence in their assistant principal. She was available and could handle problems they encountered when Mr. B. was not present (I/K-6). Teachers viewed the elementary supervisor as a person who was most helpful when needed. The supervisor visited the school a couple of times a month and assisted teachers with their recertification (I/K-6).

Staff members stated that they had some traditions; for example, they got together on PTO nights if they could secure babysitters. When they were free of family responsibilities, they went out to eat prior to the meeting. The staff at Site B had an end-of-the-year party. "It's a time to kick back and breathe that we made it through another year" (I/L-4). Sometimes, this get-together doubled as a party for those staff persons who were retiring, and persons previously retired were invited back to attend this party.

The Consultative Decision-Making Process

Interview and observation data yielded conflicting data relative to the organization of Site B. Even though participants indicated that the school was organized around the democratic process, faculty member's statements unveiled a tendency for top-down management. "Decisions are made by democratic vote, unless it is something mandated by the central office" (I/L-3). Teachers reported that the principal surveyed staff members and then "the results are announced

by memo or over the public address system" (I/L-3). "Teachers are given some opportunity for input on decisions made for the school. ….when it involves scheduling or work night, or Q.U.I.L.T. training, we do have" (I/L-5). This individual stated that if no choice were given to teachers, the principal determined what their particular need happened to be.

Faculty members participated in grade-group meetings on Wednesdays. The assistant principal indicated that teachers must take minutes of these meetings, listing things they discussed. The principal expressed some frustration at not being able to participate in decisions made for his school by stating he would like to be a little more involved in the elementary supervisor's role. "Things are pretty much dictation" (I/B-1).

Formal and Informal Groups

Site B had both formal and informal groups. One participant recognized, "We enjoy each other's company a lot here. We (teachers) enjoy having a cup of coffee together the first thing in the morning and talking about things that are going on with our classes" (I/K-6). Interview data affirmed that primary teachers stayed within their grade level group. One teacher indicated, "The weakness is there is not enough communication between primary level and the intermediate level. ...there's no communication from this side to that" (I/L-2).

Teacher Behaviors

Teachers declared that "everything is geared toward the SOLs" at this school (I/K-2). Resource people, a reading teacher, and a county reading and science teacher came to the school on a regular basis to work with students and teachers on the SOL objectives (I/K-2). Instruction at Site B was designed around self-contained classes with the exception of reading and math. In these core areas, teachers rotated (I/B-3). Primary level teachers concentrated on reading. In the subject area of science, teachers at third and fifth grades combined their classes so teachers could team-teach (I/B-3). The assistant principal discussed the partnering that teachers did and the support they gave to one another (I/B-2). It appeared that teachers worked very well together, especially grade level teachers. The assistant principal stated that the instructional process evolved around group instruction (I/B-2). She further emphasized that teachers spent most of their time on instruction (I/B-2).

The county developed a curriculum guide that teachers were to follow (I/L-1). Teachers indicated they had state resource guides that were used to plan lessons (I/L-1). The curriculum

was SOL driven and all programs at Site B focused on the Standards of Learning (I/J-1). Individual teachers designed and implemented the curriculum. Teachers made known that the curriculum was left up to them and that they appreciated that (I/R-2). Staff members indicated that the first year of the SOL tests was stressful (I/K-8). As teachers became more familiar with the Standard of Learning Objectives, they knew how to structure their lessons (I/K-8). Teachers had refined the instructional program to the extent that the same amount of time was spent on each core skill area of reading, math, science, and social studies, and when time was reduced in an area, they believed they fell down in that skill area (I/K-8). Little time was spent on non-academic demands or on non-SOL things (I/J-2). It appeared that teachers were very concerned about SOL scores and one third grade teacher stated she worried about SOL test results (I/J-2).

The principal invited other professionals to come to the school to see how teachers instructed and to offer suggestions (I/R-1). Teachers had opportunities to visit other schools and teachers to see how they were approaching the standards mandated by the state. It appeared that faculty members were comfortable with peer observation.

Basically, staff members relayed positive information about their school and community. Even though teachers indicated they used a kinesthetic approach to learning, teachers expressed some concern about one population of students at their school. It appeared that teachers tried to meet the essential educational needs of students; however, one teacher acknowledged that they were not meeting the unique learning needs of their special education population. "We don't have the facility or personnel to meet the needs of the special population" (I/L-7).

The principal stated that teachers did not spend a lot of time on discipline; however, they were planning to begin a detention program in the next school term (I/B-2). There appeared to be a difference of opinion among interviewed personnel relative to the amount of time spent on disciplining students. Most teachers felt that discipline was more directed to the older population (I/L-3). The school administrator indicated that it was sometimes difficult for teachers to discipline students because they did not have many options available to them to use with students. Specifically mentioned was not allowing the restriction of a student's participation in physical education class due to inappropriate behavior (I/B-1). One teacher acknowledged that a lot of time had been spent on discipline this year. She went on to point out that some children were disciplined more than others (I/K-2). Another teacher affirmed that most teachers had their own

method of dealing with discipline (I/R-2). A fifth grade teacher stated she handled her own discipline problems, and "intolerable" situations were referred to the principal (I/L-3). She went on to explain that she spent approximately 10% of her time on discipline and even handled discipline problems for other teachers. Several teachers commented that if students were actively involved in learning, there would be fewer discipline problems (I/J-1). The assistant principal stated the principal handled discipline because she was split between this school and another school (I/B-3).

Teachers acknowledged that homework was an important component of the instructional program. One teacher stated that homework was important because parents could see what teachers were doing (I/J-2). Homework was used to reinforce a lesson, not to introduce a lesson (I/B-3). Homework folders were sent home each night for parents' signatures (I/K-7). Teachers indicated that there was no homework policy as it varied from teacher to teacher (I/K-7; I/R-2). Parents stated to teachers that the school's homework didn't compare to what was given at the middle school (I/R-2).

<div align="center">Parent Support</div>

The principal at Site B stated that parents are part of the plan, and he welcomed their support and involvement in the educational process (see Appendix I). One teacher stated that parents were the school's strength (I/R-2). Two themes emerged from the interview data relative to parent involvement at the school. The themes are *parent resources and the PTO* organization, both of which are discussed later in this section.

Parents at this school were cooperative, but the principal declared that he wished parents would be more supportive (I/B-2). Two themes emerged from the interview data relative to parent support at Site B. Parent support centered on children and the activities they were involved in. One teacher indicated that parents were always there for workshops (I/K-8). Teachers pointed out that parents were generally supportive of the school. "They come out for PTO, Math and science fair night, they come out" (I/J-2). Three teachers mentioned that parents served as volunteers in the school. Parents took an active role in working at school and within the PTO (I/L-6). Teachers had a list of parents who were willing to volunteer at school, and one teacher stated, "They pretty much know who to call" (I/R-3).

Parents called the school if they had a problem or a concern. One teacher contended that parents would come to school if they had a problem (I/J-2). The principal was pleased to say that he had not had a complaint go to the superintendent. "When parents call, I take phone calls in a positive manner, I don't get gruff" (I/B-2).

Parent Resources

Overall, parents appeared to value education at Site B. Staff members affirmed that parents valued education. One third grade teacher acknowledged that parents viewed education as important. They wanted their child to do his or her very best. She felt that parents had high expectations for their children and most wanted them to go on to college (I/J-2). Considering the depressed economic situation in the area, "most parents realize children have to do well in school in order to go somewhere else and have a decent life" (I/L-7). One respondent disclosed that parents had chosen to be more active in school since they were "laid off" from the factories in the area" (I/L-6). Another teacher revealed that some parents exposed their children to good books and theatre. Other parents did not because of limited resources—"not knowing how or even that they should" (I/J-2).

One fifth grade teacher related that 70% of the parents felt that there was something they had to do with their children. "They have to push them and encourage them" (I/L-7). Teachers worried about 30% of the parents because "parents are going to be the answer" (I/L-7). This teacher went on to say that these parents listened to teachers and even agreed that their child may have a problem, but the support was not there (I/L-7). Many of the students attending Site B were from single-parent family units. There were some parents who had limited resources, but they wanted their children to learn. One important point that was mentioned by several teachers was that parents wanted their children to be mannerly; they wanted them to behave (I/R-3).

Parent Teacher Organization

All staff members at Site B were proud of the PTO and the work performed by this organization for children and the school. "The PTO is a wonderful organization. ...they were motivated to raise money for something beneficial for the kids" (I/L-6). The parent teacher organization worked hard the previous year to raise money for a new playground and equipment for the students of Site B. The group had various sales, collected box tops, and maintained a

recycling program to generate approximately $15,000. Parents were interested in helping the children and the school and worked hard to make additional resources available to them.

Cross Case Analysis and Results

Prior to discussing the cross case analysis and results, it is important to address the socio-economic variance between the two schools. The Site B student population has 9.9% higher free and reduced-price lunch participation than Site A (61.7 and 51.8, respectively). Some critics say that poor students need additional help to achieve at high levels; yet some educators continually serve the poor, helping them to achieve at the highest level on state assessments (Barth et al., 1999).

Since 1998 school divisions in the state of Virginia have endeavored to achieve established benchmarks on the Standards of Learning assessments in English, history and social science, math, and science. This study focused on variables distinguishing a high-gain school from a low-gain school. Similarities will be discussed at the beginning of each section. Five categories derived from research questions will be used to organize the identified differences: organization of the school, leadership practices of the principal, teacher behaviors, culture of the school, and parent support.

The Organization of the School

Both schools had numerous similarities; for example, they had common committees that served to develop programs and services for students and parents. Committee members rotated. Parents served on committees at each school; however, the Building Leadership Team at Site A was viewed by the principal as an "internal" committee and had no parent members. Site B's recently established Principal Advisory Committee contained two parent members. Each school followed established school board policies and procedures. The schools had teacher and student handbooks. They had experienced, qualified staff members who planned together and shared materials. Staff members worked well together at each site. Both schools had active PTA organizations. The schools were different in ways too. The schools were organizationally different, too. These differences are in Table 9.

Table 9

Characteristics of the Organization of Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School)

Site A	Site B
Committees: BLT-Building Leadership Team. BLT also serves as a school-wide discipline committee (I/A-3). Oral communications committee for students that do not have an opportunity to express themselves in public (I/A-5). Teachers select committee membership. Tenured teachers remain on committees to offer history (I/A-4). Improvement has been gradual and has occurred through committee meetings (I/A-6).	**Committees:** Principal Advisory Committee (started 2001). Teachers indicated 1st, 2nd, or 3rd choice. Final committee membership determined by administration (I/B-3). All school personnel serve on a committee (I/B-3). Difficult to get people to serve on Audit Committee. Grade level meetings and teachers take minutes of each meeting to be submitted to the principal.
Differences: Site A teachers selected committees, and tenured teachers remained on committees to offer history. Improvement has been through committees. Site B principal determined placement of teachers on committees. School has a school audit committee that members are recruited to serve on. Minutes are taken of committee meetings and submitted to the principal.	
Staff: Experienced and qualified staff, most are 30-year veterans. "Teachers look beyond the horizon" to improve the school (I/A-2). Designated teachers for each hall that teachers could go to for assistance. A close-knit family (I/W-1; I/R-5). Handle change easily and gain confidence with each change (I/A-2). Hard working, friendly, and focused (I/W-1; I/P-1; I/R-1). Believe in collegiality. Like a family (I/W-1). Actively involve parents in the process.	**Staff:** Have been together for a long time. Grew up together, went to school together. Math and science had lead teachers for school (I/K-1). "You can count on Mrs. __, she's a 'go-getter'. She knows the school board policy (I/L-4). Change is a stated factor of this school (I/B-1). Work together as a team (I/B-1). Take their job seriously (I/K-3). "Not enough communication" (I/L-2).
Differences: A visionary experienced staff at Site A. They handled change easily and gained confidence with each change. They believed in collegiality. They actively involved parents. Site B staff grew up together. Guidance counselor interpreted policy for peers. School does not have sufficient communication among staff.	

(table continues)

Table 9 (cont'd)

Characteristics of the Organization of Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School)

Management: Participatory management Principal is listened to at Central Office level. Principal leads by example. Runs a tight ship (I/P-1). All schedules are maintained (I/R-3). Careful with change. Change is based on needs (I/A-2). Power is as equal as possible. "There are no pockets of power" (I/A-1). People have varying strengths (I/A-1). In a small leadership role, teachers assume more responsibility (I/A-1). Creates opportunities for communication between upper and lower grades (I/A-6). Passive until Mrs. A. came (I/W-1). Charts duties at beginning of the year (I/B-1). Covers everything when out and calls back to check on things (I/B-1).	**Management:** Consultative orientation. "Top-down management" (I/L-3). Principal seeks assistance of superintendent (I/K-2). Principal and assistant principal make the decisions. Principal stated dictation from the Central Office (I/B-1). Lot of management from central office (I/L-4). Frequent visits from Central Office personnel. Little time on non-academic demands. Principal gets input from teachers for scheduling purposes (I/K-1). Principal listens before he makes final decisions (I/L-4).
Differences: *Site A principal was a participatory manager. She was listened to at central office level. Knew individual strengths of her staff. She led by example. Power was evenly distributed. She was careful with change. Principal believed with a little power, teachers would be comfortable assuming more responsibility. Had a structured school. Created opportunities for communication. Site B principal sought more control from central office. Principal got input from teachers before he made final decisions.*	
Mission: Improve student achievement and performance. Everyone has opportunity to learn (I/T-1). Motto: "Our Children, Our Future" (I/B-1).	**Mission:** Everything oriented toward SOLs (I/K-2). Student achievement, especially on SOLs. Instruction is first (I/B-1).
Differences: *Mission at Site A was student achievement and every student can learn. Site B's mission was centered on the SOL scores.*	

Table 9 (cont'd)

Characteristics of the Organization of Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School)

Learning environment: Structured and organized. Initiated grade level changes (I/A-5). Comfortable work atmosphere. Not monitored on an uncomfortable level (I/T-1). Pride in school and pride in helping students (I/R-5). Focused on same goals; working for same outcome (I/W-1). "Breakfast for community did more for SOLs than anything. There was such a pride about that accomplishment among teachers" (I/A-1).	**Learning environment:** Structured, especially in fifth grade (I/K-1). Maintain a tight schedule (I/K-1). Same amount of time spent on core subjects. An established routine; very few changes in the schedule (I/R-1). People are positive. Principal interested in attendance (I/R-1). Have "Kids Against Trash" program.
Differences: Site A had a good school climate. Faculty was focused on the same goals. Teachers took pride in their relationship with the community. Site B school maintained a tight schedule. Principal wanted children in school. School had pride in their recycling program.	
Staff development: Each teacher must select and participate in one individual activity of their choosing. Look at studies to get ideas (I/R-1). Principal provides activities. Provide make-it-take-it workshop for parents (I/R-4). Self-examination to improve.	**Staff development:** Visit other schools. Professionals come in at request of principal for SOL assistance (I/K-1). Principal meets with SOL committee once a month. Each grade level shares at the faculty meeting. Peer observation within grade group (I/L-1). Principal guides teachers on topics to be discussed and leads discussion (I/K-6).
Differences: Site A teachers assumed responsibility for professional growth and development. The principal developed and implemented a staff development program. They had researched improvement. They gave parents materials to use with their children at home. Site B teachers visited other schools that had scored well on the SOL tests. The principal invited professionals to come to present staff development activities. The principal lead discussions on selected topics.	

<u>Committees</u>

Site A and Site B had various committees with responsibility for designing and implementing programs and services for students. At Site A teachers selected their committee assignments (I/A-4). The principal of Site A indicated that tenured teachers remained on committees to offer the history of why things developed as they did for the understanding of new committee members (I/A-4). Site A had a Building Leadership Team (BLT) composed of one teacher from each grade level and a subject area teacher. Members on this committee discussed new programs and extra-curricular activities for students. The BLT disseminated information to faculty members. This committee served in an advisory position to the principal and as a school-wide discipline committee when needed. Site A had a unique committee that served students with limited language skills. The oral communication committee developed strategies and provided opportunities to students with language deficits to improve their oral communication skills. Changes have been gradual at this site and were the result of committee work.

At Site B, teachers selected their first, second, or third choice for committee membership; however, the principal and assistant principal determined the final membership of each committee. Teachers were required to take minutes of their committee meetings and submit those to the principal. Site B had a Principal Advisory Committee that was developed and implemented during the school term 2001. This committee was composed of a primary teacher, an upper grade level teacher, two students, and two parents. The committee advised the principal about concerns and assisted with the development of strategies for improvement. The Principal's Advisory committee met twice a year (I/B-3).

<u>Staff</u>

The principal at Site A was extremely confident in her staff. The staff was an experienced staff, with 30-year veterans. She stated that teachers "had a handle on learning" (I/A-2). Teachers were creative and experimented with the implementation of the Standards of Learning objectives (I/A-2). The principal stated, "Teachers look beyond the horizon" to improve programs and services for students (I/A-2). Faculty and staff at this school were a close-knit family, and they always helped one another with whatever may arise (I/A-2). Members of this organization handled change easily and gained confidence with each change (I/A-2). Faculty members described themselves as hardworking, friendly, and focused (I/W-1; I/P-1; I/R-1).

Parents agreed and used similar adjectives to describe teachers at Site A. Teachers believed in collegiality. They implemented programs that attracted parents to the instructional process.

Staff members at Site B grew up together and stated that they went to school together. Teachers, especially in grades four and five, appeared to be close and worked very well together. "Teachers partner and give each other support" according to the assistant principal (I/B-2). Site B had lead teachers in the core areas of math and science (I/K-1). Teachers described themselves as dedicated and serious about their jobs. They stated their strength was cooperation. Parents and teachers seemed to disagree on the skill of communicating. Parents described teachers as being good at communicating with all stakeholders (I/P-1). However, teachers did not communicate enough among themselves. The guidance counselor appeared to be an influential person and was viewed by peers as knowing the school board policy.

Management

The two sites differed because of the management styles of the two administrators. The Site A principal demonstrated a participatory management style. Teachers were actively involved in all phases of the educational process. The principal at this site appeared to command teacher input relative to programs and activities transpiring at the school. Teachers were equal, and there were no identified individuals having more power than other individuals at this school. All teachers were given leadership roles by the principal. The principal created opportunities for members of the organization to communicate with each other. Faculty members were proud of the fact that the principal brought them from a "passive" group to being a group with confidence and assertiveness. Changes were not made in a hurried fashion and were based solely on need. Site A's principal was listened to at the central office level. The school's principal ran a tight ship according to parents (I/P-1). All schedules were maintained at this school (I/R-3). Even in the principal's absence from school, she was organized. She intended for the school to operate in an effective and efficient manner in her absence.

Site B had a principal that used a top-down management approach. The principal sought the advice of the division superintendent. The principal stated that it was "pretty much dictation from the central office" (elementary supervisor) (I/B-1). Central office personnel visited this school frequently. The principal wanted faculty input to schedule the school's programs. Mr. B. considered teacher recommendations prior to making decisions that needed to be made for the

school. Teachers at Site B indicated that the same amount of time was spent on the core subjects, with very little time spent on non-academic demands.

Mission

The mission of Site A was the improvement of student achievement and performance. Teachers believed that everyone had an opportunity to learn, and they knew the school's motto: "Our Children, Our Future." At Site B, the principal indicated that instruction was first (I/B-1). Student achievement, especially on the Standards of Learning assessments, was the theme for Site B.

Learning Environment

Site A had a structured and organized learning environment. Teachers took pride in their school and in helping students learn. The community breakfast gave teachers a sense of great pride, and they considered that event as having an impact on their students' SOL scores. Teachers were focused on the same goal and working for the same outcome. Teachers worked together, sharing and teaching the prescribed objectives. Teachers described the environment as being comfortable. Teachers viewed themselves as a community of learners. This was evident when the principal told of faculty members reading the book, Who Moved My Cheese, and then discovering, through a process of self-examination, that individual teachers needed to initiate some grade level changes. This resulted in some teachers moving to another grade level to teach the following school term (I/A-5). The work atmosphere was comfortable, and teachers were not monitored at an uncomfortable level.

Site B had a structured learning environment, especially in fifth grade (I/K-1). Teachers maintained a tight schedule (I/K-1). Interview data affirmed there was an established routine at this school, with very few changes being made in the schedule (I/R-1). People were positive, and there was pride in their "Kids Against Trash" program. The principal was interested and focused on student attendance.

Staff Development

At Site A individual teachers were required to select and participate in one staff development activity of their choosing, either within the division or outside the school division. The principal provided staff development activities for the instructional staff. Teachers assumed some responsibility for training parents by offering a make-it-take-it workshop each year for

parents (I/R-4). It appeared that the faculty at this school was comfortable with self-analysis, examining their own professional skills and weaknesses and instituting needed changes.

The faculty at Site B studied and visited other schools that had performed well on the Standards of Learning assessments. They got on the Internet, looked at schools that had made noteworthy gains in their SOL results, and visited those schools to talk with staff members to see what methods helped students achieve success. Professionals came at the request of the principal to conduct staff development activities for teachers. The principal participated in discussion groups and often lead the discussions on specific topics. Teachers at Site B participated in peer observations within certain grade groups (I/L-1).

<u>Principal Behavior on SOL Performance</u>

In studying the leadership characteristics of each principal, data established that both principals had many of the attributes associated with effective leaders; however, there were distinct differences identified between the two administrators that may have affected student performance on the state assessment. Observation data indicated the principal at Site A possessed all 25 leadership skills for effective principals (see Table 10). There were eight criteria observed at Site A and not at Site B: fosters a caring climate for students, staff, and parents; empowers others to excel; maintains high expectations for staff; understands people; is secure; demonstrates a moral strength; is in control of the school's curriculum; and is in control of the school's personnel.

Interview data gathered from principals, teachers, and parents unveiled many similarities between the two administrators. Each principal was believed to have a positive attitude. They both were willing to work and wanted to know how they could help teachers with needs. Principals at both sites sought the opinions of others. Each principal recognized the work of students and teachers. Staff members described both principals as being good listeners. Faculty and staff members at each school stated that their principal was very organized. Teachers viewed both principals as instructional leaders. There were several differences between the two administrators. These differences are listed in Table 11.

Table 10

Field Study: Observation of Principals' Leadership Skills

Key: - (Behavior or characteristic observed by the researcher.)
        -(Behavior or characteristic not observed by the researcher.)

Criterion	Site A principal	Site B principal
Is visible in the school		
Fosters a caring climate for students, staff, and parents		
Encourages experimentation		
Empowers others to excel		
Has a compelling vision		
Maintains high expectations for staff		
Insistent that students will learn		
Has a high energy level		
Is actively involved in instructional planning		
Frequently drops in on classes		
Demonstrates instructional skills		
Is a good listener		
Understands people		
Is secure		
Demonstrates a moral strength		
Is perceived to be an instructional leader		
Gives priority to academic excellence		
Is in control of the school's curriculum		
Is in control of the school's personnel		
Is in control of the school's policies		
Values innovations and new ideas		
Is sensitive to students, teachers, and parents		

(table continues)

Table 10 (cont'd)

Field Study: Observation of Principals' Leadership Skills

Criterion	Site A Principal	Site B Principal
Implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies		
Has high expectations for student achievement		
Has high expectations for parents		

Note.   =observed by the researcher.

Table 11

Differences in the Behaviors of the Principals at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Site A	Site B
Motivation: Token reward system, high expectations. Always recognizing teachers and students (I/W-1). Communicates expectations very well and follows up to see they are met (I/B-1). Support from principal is great (I/W-1).	**Motivation:** Believes in motivation. Uses positive reinforcement (I/B-1). "Has a few things to learn about keeping staff motivated and in dealing with parents" (I/L- 2). Low expectations, "weakest school in the county" (I/L-2). Principal believed he had the best school in the county. Principal thanks teachers for doing a good job. Principal encourages teachers and students to do the best they can (I/K-3). Principal's drive and motivation is very positive (I/K-5). He wants the school to be strong (I/L-2). SOL pep rally; gave out popsicles (I/R-1).
Differences: *Site A principal maintained high expectations and expected them to be met. She supported teachers and rewarded them. Site B principal believed in motivation; however, faculty members felt he had a few things to learn about motivation. He wanted the school to be strong and achieve accreditation status.*	
Vision: Strong, compelling, Entire school is focused on the same goal (I/W-1). Developed program to assist parents: Students More Involved in Learning to Enhance Success (S.M.I.L.E.S.). Principal feels she communicates a strong vision (I/A-1).	**Vision:** Narrow, focused on SOLs. "He has a vision for this school. He wants our SOL scores up" (I/R-1). Other schools come to see how they teach and to offer suggestions (I/R-1). Principal's mission is to improve SOL scores (I/L-2).
Differences: *Site A had strong, compelling vision; it's an understood among members of the organization. Site B's vision was narrow; focused on SOLs.*	
Goals: Present, knows how to achieve them. Leads with an emphasis on culture (I/W-1).	**Goals:** Single-minded, improvement of SOL scores. Principal focused on getting everyone's best (I/J-1).
Differences: *Site A's goal was to have students to be successful. The principal was humanistic in her approach. Site B's goal was to improve SOL scores. The principal wanted everyone's best.*	

(table continues)

Table 11 (cont'd)

Differences in the Behaviors of the Principals at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Relationships: Authentic, fair, consistent, influential, and persuasive; a negotiator; teachers trust her; provides opportunities for teachers to interact with one another. Principal states she wouldn't say she was an inspiration to others (I/A-1).	**Relationships:** Principal and teachers have a good relationship (I/P-2). Teachers are uncertain of principal's meaning. Tries to make every one feel good (I/B-1). Principal tries new things to see what works best. He is concerned for our well being (I/K-3). Needs to get on younger level when dealing with students (I/K-5). Comfortable attitude with students (I/K-5). Teachers can count on the guidance counselor and feel very comfortable with her (I/K-6). Relationships with community and parents are the best in the county (I/R-2). Teachers are comfortable with evaluation (I/R-2). Principal interacts with the kids (I/P-2).
Differences: Site A principal was authentic. She was a skilled negotiator. She had created a trust relationship with stakeholders. Site B principal wanted everyone to feel good about things at his school. He had a good relationship with students. Teachers were uncertain at times about his comments and approach.	
Nature of the teachers' work: A journey charted by the teachers.	**Nature of the teachers' work:** Teachers should be high-energy people and keep busy. Teachers served as officers in the PTO (I/R-2).
Differences: Site A teachers were instrumental in developing school's programs and services for students. Site B teachers should be busy at all times according to the principal.	
Personal characteristics: Bold, dogmatic (decisive), risk-taker, comfortable with the curriculum, positive to a fault (I/A-1), serious in everything she does. Skilled negotiator. Very tactful. Handles conflict well. Gets to the bottom of everything (I/W-1). Sensitive. Teachers can't think of a weakness the principal has (I/R-2). Understands teachers (I/B-1).	**Personal characteristics:** Stressed. "Doesn't pal around" (I/L-3). Works hard, tries to make everyone feel comfortable. Creative and imaginative (I/R-1). He comes up with new things (I/K-3). Parents and students stress principal (I/L-3). Principal is flexible (I/J-1).

(table continues)

Table 11 (cont'd)

<u>Differences in the Behaviors of the Principals at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data</u>

Differences: *Site A principal was bold and decisive. She was positive to a fault. She was serious in everything she did. She was tactful. She handled conflict well. She understood teachers. The Site B principal was stressed by parents and students. He doesn't pal around. He was a hard worker. He tried to make everyone feel comfortable. He was creative and imaginative.*

Management style: Principal has a lot of energy (I/T-2). "A professional 100%. 100% plus" (I/T-2). Meticulous, assigns duties in an equitable manner, accessible, leads by example (I/P-1), responds immediately to a situation, visible, parent and community oriented, student centered, stern when she needs to be, sets people up for success (I/T-4). Weighs a decision. "There is so much gray" (I/A-1). Feels there is never enough time. Doesn't mind calls at home (I/A-1). Principal bothered when she feels she doesn't do her part (I/A-1). Recognizes her own faults (I/A-1). Confident. "She says what she means and means what she says" (I/W-1). Receptive to others' ideas and suggestions (I/R-2). Knows what she wants and asks for teachers' input (I/W-1). Supports teachers in anything they do (I/W-1). She is centered on education (I/R-2).	**Management style:** He never does anything halfway (I/J-1). He is the first one here and the last one to leave (I/R-1). "Always saying 'next year'--thinking about what to do next year" (I/R-1). Mr. B. pretty much makes the decisions. Principal stated he had failed to hit a few things head on. Needs to get more comfortable confronting potential problems (I/B-1). Tries to make everyone feel comfortable with trying new ideas, students and teachers (I/K-3). Principal stresses the importance of working together to over come differences (I/K-4). Informed teachers of committees to be formed and instructed them to apply for membership (I/K-5). Memos once a week. Announcements made at the same time each morning (I/K-6). Elementary supervisor visits school once a month. "She's a lot of help when needed" (I/K-6). Teachers have confidence in assistant principal (I/K-6). He encourages new techniques and likes to come and watch. Sometimes a little too much observation (I/L-2). Spends most of his time working and observing with parents (I/L-2). When conflicts arise, teachers are given an opportunity to voice their concerns (I/L-3).

Differences: *Site A principal had a lot of energy. She was a professional. She was honest and open. She was accessible. She knew what she wanted. She was confident. She was supportive of teachers. Site B principal was a hard worker. He was always thinking about next year. He needed to confront potential conflicts in a timely manner. He wanted teachers to be busy.*

Table 11 (cont'd)

<u>Differences in the Behaviors of the Principals at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data</u>

Curriculum: Has control over curriculum and personnel (I/A-1). Principal has a background in curriculum development and is a former LD teacher. Mrs. A. wants to be in classrooms more (I/A-1). Preschool and after-school programs (I/R-2). On Tuesdays, the computer lab was available for students and parents from 3-6 P.M.	**Curriculum:** Principal shows teachers how to teach certain things (I.K-3). He is supportive when we are trying to do new things with the kids. He tries to come up with new ideas himself (I/L-2). Principal has pushed both teachers and students to get involved with computers (I/R-1).
Differences: *Site A principal knew and had control of the curriculum. Teachers knew she had a strong instructional background. She had developed a community of learners. Site B principal was supportive of teachers and offered new ideas. He had modeled teaching for teachers. He had emphasized computer technology for students and teachers.*	
Parents: "Parents and community mean a great deal to me" (I/A-1). Principal extremely proud of the after-school program and the community breakfast. Enjoyed that the facility was used for community events.	**Parents:** Principal will call parents with a problem (IK-4). Principal states he tries not to answer phone in gruff way. "Mr. B. does a good job with parents" (I/J-2). Teachers stated principal still learning the ropes with parents (I/L-2). Principal has taken children home to speak with the parent (I/K-4).
Differences: *The Site A principal was concerned about parents and the community. She enjoyed the facility being used by the community for events. The Site B principal readily contacted parents with a problem. He didn't answer the phone in a "gruff" tone. He was still learning how to deal with parents.*	

Motivation

The principal at Site A maintained high expectations for students and staff members. Mrs. A. communicated expectations very well and followed up to see they were met. She was always recognizing students and teachers for their accomplishments. The Site A principal used a token system of appreciation with the teachers. Tokens were given to teachers for successes achieved with students and to recognize outstanding educational endeavors. Teachers could use tokens to leave school early when the need arose. Site A teachers acknowledged that their principal did little things that meant so much. Teachers stated that the support from their principal was great.

Mr. B., principal at Site B, believed in motivation; however, one teacher indicated that her principal "had a few things to learn about keeping staff motivated" (I/L-2). His drive and personal motivation were noted as being very strong. Interview data demonstrated that teachers may have had low expectations. One teacher stated, "We are the weakest school in the county" (I/L-2). The principal stated that in his view, it was the best school in the county (I/B-1). Mr. B. wanted his school to be a strong school. He consistently encouraged students and teachers to do their very best. The principal had an SOL pep rally for the school and gave out popsicles to everyone in attendance. He used positive reinforcement with students and teachers. He thanked teachers for doing a good job. Teachers had no bus duty on "Wonderful Wednesdays" (I/B-3).

Vision

The principal at Site A had a strong, compelling vision. The entire school appeared to promote this vision. One teacher indicated the entire school was focused on the same goal (I/W-1). School personnel implemented programs that contributed, aided, and encouraged parents in sharing their vision. The principal communicated a strong vision. As a result of a concern the principal had for students needing assistance with homework and for working parents, she developed an after-school program. The S.M.I.L.E.S. after-school program assisted approximately 90 students with homework and enrichment activities.

The vision of Site B had a more narrow concentration and focused on the SOLs. "He has a vision for this school. He wants our SOL scores up" (I/R-1). Teachers from other schools had been invited to this site to see how teachers teach and offer suggestions (I/R-1). One parent mentioned, "They talk about the SOLs all the time. It's the big thing now. It's 'We've got to

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pass them. We have to pass them'" (I/P-1). The principal's mission was to improve the school's SOL scores.

Goals

Interview data indicated the principal at Site A had definite goals and knew how to achieve those goals. One teacher explained that Mrs. A. lead with an emphasis on culture (I/W-1). At Site B, data confirmed that goals were single-minded: the improvement of the SOL scores.

Relationships

Teachers described the relationship with their principal at Site A with exhilaration. Interview and observational data acknowledged that the principal was authentic, fair, and consistent. Teachers stated that she was influential and persuasive (I/P-1). They confirmed that their principal was bold, dogmatic, and a skilled negotiator. She handled conflict well; however, staff members pointed out there was very little conflict in their school. Teachers trusted the principal explicitly. Teachers stated they knew when their principal was pleased. She provided staff members opportunities to interact with one another. She was always smiling. Parents at Site A acknowledged that their principal ran a tight ship. When questioned by the researcher, Mrs. A. stated she could not say that she was an inspiration to others.

The principal at Site B recognized that teachers never knew when he was joking or serious (I/B-1). Mr. B. tried to make everyone feel good. He tried new things to see what worked best and was concerned for the well being of the teachers. Teachers stated the principal needed to get on a "younger level" when dealing with students. One teacher stated he had a comfortable attitude with students and interacted well with them (I/K-5; I/P-2). Teachers were very comfortable with the guidance counselor and affirmed they could count on her for assistance, especially with policy issues. Relationships with the community and parents were the best in the county (I/R-2). Teachers appeared to be comfortable with evaluation (I/R-2). The Site B principal recognized that he focused on people being busy. "We need to be on the go" (I/B-1). He affirmed that he liked to be around high-energy people. He stated that killing time bothered and upset him. He wanted people to be as productive as they could be all of the time.

Nature of Teachers' Work

Teachers at Site A assisted the principal with the development and implementation of the instructional program. The administrator stated the success and direction of her school was a journey charted by teachers.

At Site B, the principal acknowledged that teachers should be high-energy people, and that they should keep busy. Teachers served as officers in the PTO.

Personal Characteristics

The administrator at Site A was described as being bold, dogmatic, and decisive. She was a risk-taker. She indicated that she was comfortable with the curriculum. She stated that she was positive to a fault (I/A-1). Teachers discovered that their principal was serious in everything she did.

The principal at Site B was stressed. One fifth grade teacher stated that parents and students stressed the principal. Teachers disclosed that their principal "doesn't pal around" (I/L-3). Teachers stated that he was a hard worker, always at work early in the morning and remaining long after teachers had left the school at the close of the workday. Teachers described the principal at Site B as creative and imaginative (I/R-1). One teacher stated that Mr. B. was flexible.

Management Style

The two principals in this study differed in their management style in numerous ways. The administrator of Site A was meticulous. Teachers stated that she dotted her i's and crossed her t's. Staff members viewed her as a professional 100 percent; 100% plus. Mrs. A. was confident, recognizing her own faults. She led by example. "She says what she means and means what she says" (I/W-1). Mrs. A. was accessible to constituents. She was receptive to others' ideas and suggestions. She knew what she wanted and asked for teachers' input. She didn't mind telephone calls at home. She responded immediately to a situation. She weighed carefully each decision that she made. "There's so much gray" stated the principal. She felt there was never enough time for her to get things done. She was bothered when she felt that she did not do her part. Mrs. A. was noted as being stern when she needed to be. She was visible in the school. She was student centered, and parent and community oriented. She supported teachers. The

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researcher sensed a "servant" leadership approach adopted by Mrs. A. It was noted that the principal set people up for success (I/T-4).

The principal at Site B carried around a pad and wrote everything down (I/R-1). Mr. B. asked teachers for their opinions; however, he pretty much made the decisions at the school (I/K-1). Teachers stated that he never did anything half way (I/J-1). He was the first one there and the last one to leave (I/R-1). Mr. B. appeared to always be thinking of how to make things better for students and teachers. "He was always saying 'next year'—thinking about what to do next year" (I/R-1). The principal stated that he failed to hit a few things head on and that he needed to be more comfortable confronting potential problems (I/B-1). Mr. B. tried to make everyone feel comfortable, students and teachers, with trying new ideas. He encouraged new techniques and liked to watch them being implemented. Teachers mentioned that the administrators spent a little too much time observing. Mr. B. spent most of his time working with and observing parents (I/L-2). The principal stressed the importance of working together to overcome differences. When conflicts arose, teachers were given an opportunity to voice their concerns. He informed teachers of new committees being formed and instructed them to apply for membership on these committees. He sent memos once a week and made announcements at the same time each morning. The elementary supervisor visited the school once a month and teachers disclosed that she was a lot of help when needed. Teachers at Site B had confidence in the assistant principal.

Curriculum

The principal at Site A had control over curriculum and personnel. She had a background in curriculum development and stated that she was a former LD teacher. She wanted to spend more time in the classrooms. Preschool and after-school programs were maintained at this site. On Tuesdays, the computer lab was available from 3:00-6:00 P.M. for students and their parents.

Site B's principal showed teachers how to teach certain things. He was supportive when teachers were trying new things with the students. He appeared very comfortable teaching a math lesson in the after-school remediation program. Mr. B. pushed both students and teachers to get involved with computers.

Relationships With Parents

The principal at Site A seemed to care about parents and the community. She was extremely proud of the annual breakfast the school conducted each year for the community. She

wanted to help parents, and the after-school program demonstrated her concern for children after school hours. She recognized the limited amount of time and resources some parents had to give to their children.

Site B's principal had a good working relationship with the parents of the community. "He does a good job with parents" (I/J-2). He readily called the parents with a problem. Mr. B. indicated that he wished parents would be more involved in the educational process. He wanted to listen to parents and stated that he tried not to answer the telephone in a gruff way when parents called. Mr. B. took children home to speak with parents when there was a problem or concern. Teachers sensed that their principal was still learning the ropes with parents (I/L-2).

<u>Teacher Behavior and SOL Performance</u>

No single method promotes teacher or student success in the instructional process. Teacher observations afforded the researcher an opportunity to examine the instructional practices of teachers to determine whether the teachers in the two schools differed in their instructional practices or in material being taught. Observational data suggested that teachers at Site A displayed a total of 68 noted instructional behaviors during observed lessons as compared to 64 noted instructional behaviors observed at Site B (see Table 12).

Data verified similarities between Site A and Site B. The instructional program at each school was defined by the Standards of Learning objectives. Some teachers at each school had developed pacing guides and were using them to assist with the implementation of their instructional program. Both schools had a structured instructional day for students, and teachers spent a specified amount of time teaching the core subjects. Neither school spent a lot of time on non-academic demands. Instruction at each school was not removed from the control of the individual teacher. Students were heterogeneously grouped at both schools. They used cooperative learning activities to strengthen the instructional program. Site A and Site B teachers planned together within their individual schools; teachers met in grade groups and coordinated instructional activities. Teachers at these schools worked together, shared materials and gave each other support. Teachers at the upper grade level worked directly with middle school teachers to facilitate the transition of students to the middle school programs in their respective school divisions. Site A and Site B teachers perceive their principals to be instructional leaders. Principals at each site limited interruptions. Teachers at each school basically handled their own

Table 12

Field Test: Observation of Teachers' Instructional Behaviors

Key: Y- (Behavior or characteristic observed by the researcher.)
　　　 - (Behavior or characteristic not observed by the researcher.)

Criteria	Site A Teachers				Site B Teachers			
	3-A	3-B	5-A	5-B	3-A	3-B	5-A	5-B
Exhibits control and calmness	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Makes students aware of lesson objectives	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Directs instruction toward stated objectives	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Checks for student understanding	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Adjusts instruction as needed		Y			Y	Y		Y
Provides guided practice to reinforce learning	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Provides independent practice to reinforce or enrich learning	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Summarizes learning and develops connections to other learning and to real life situations		Y		Y	Y			Y
Provides independent practice to reinforce or enrich learning		Y	Y	Y	Y			Y
Demonstrates established rules and procedures		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Prepares equipment and materials for use		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Begins class promptly	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Actively involves students in the learning process	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Knows the content of subject matter	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 12 (cont'd)

Field Test: Observation of Teachers' Instructional Behaviors

Criteria	Site A Teachers				Site B Teachers			
	3-A	**3-B**	**5-A**	**5-B**	**3-A**	**3-B**	**5-A**	**5-B**
Communicates effectively	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Utilizes effective procedures for managing students	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Accepts each student as an individual of worth	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Maintains high expectations for student achievement		Y	Y			Y		Y
Bases grades on student performance		Y				Y		
Implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies		Y						
Uses positive reinforcement with students	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y

Note. 3 and 5 denote grade level, respectively. A and B denote teacher one and two, respectively.

discipline problems, with neither principal viewed as spending a lot of their time on the behavior of students. Both principals limited the movement of parents within their school facilities. Teachers at the schools used homework to reinforce student learning. Students had homework folders that were taken home during the week for parent's signature. Parents in both communities appeared to readily contact the school with a problem or concern. Teachers at these two schools were flexible, and they were used to trying new ideas, especially if they thought it would improve the program for students. Students at Site A and B were actively engaged in the learning process. Personnel at each site were committed to meeting the individual needs of students and to the success of all students.

There were differences in the behavior of teachers that may have influenced student performance on the Standards of Learning tests (see Table 13). However, the instrument was probably not sensitive enough to capture all of the differences that had an effect on the scores. More research is needed on this area.

Curriculum

The curriculum of both schools was defined by the Standards of Learning objectives; however, the schools differed in their approach to implementing the SOLs. At Site A, the SOLs were defined by the creativity of teachers. Teachers stated they had the freedom to adjust the curriculum. At Site B, there was a county curriculum teachers go by and teachers were in the process of building units for each SOL objective. The principal at Site A stated the teachers defined the curriculum by their creativity. At Site B there was a county curriculum guide, with division-teacher-developed teaching units. At Site A the curriculum fit the unique learning needs of students. Teachers identified the strengths of students to address and target specific weaknesses. At Site B teachers stated they helped children develop their talents (I/J-2).

Table 13

Differences in Behaviors of the Teachers at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Site A	Site B
Curriculum: Defined by the SOLs, have pacing guides, curriculum defined by creativity of teachers, teachers are creative (I/A-2)	**Curriculum:** Defined by the SOLs, county curriculum, developed units for SOL objectives, teachers work together and share materials.
Differences: Site A teachers creatively defined the curriculum. Site B teachers had curriculum guides.	
Teacher control: Freedom to adjust the curriculum, teachers in control of the curriculum, "have a handle on learning" (I/A-2)	**Teacher control:** Share ideas and materials through the SOL team. Weakest school due to SOL scores (I/L-2).
Differences: Site A teachers had the freedom to adjust the curriculum; control the curriculum. They had a handle on learning. Site B teachers shared ideas and materials through an SOL team. Believed they had the weakest school in the division due to SOL scores.	
Planning: Teachers have weekly grade level meetings. Teachers plan weekly in grade groups. Teachers plan to be successful.	**Planning:** Have a transition committee for fifth grade teachers to meet with sixth grade teachers to ensure students have needed skills for middle school. Grade level meetings once a month (I/B-3).
Differences: Site A teachers believed they were responsible for student success. They planned to be successful. Site B fifth grade teachers met with sixth grade teachers to help students make the transition to sixth grade. Grade level meetings were held monthly.	
Homework: Had a well defined homework policy, parents stated more homework since SOLs.	**Homework:** No homework policy, teachers indicated homework was an important part of school's program.
Differences: Site A had a well-defined homework policy. More homework since the SOLs. Site B did not have a homework policy. Teachers believed homework was an important part of the instructional program.	
Communication with parents: Thursday folders, students' work sent home for parents review and signature, know home environment, teachers have confidence to teach (I/P-2) Controls involvement and educates parents about instructional process.	**Communication with parents:** Teachers in primary grades frequently call parents (I/B-2). Homework folder taken home each night containing the weekly schedule and parents are required to sign it (I/K-7). Have an SOL activity for parents (I/K-8). "I see the parents I need to see (I/J-2).

Table 13 (cont'd)

Differences in Behaviors of the Teachers at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Differences: *Site A sent weekly folders home. They knew the home environments of students. They take the initiative to equip parents with needed skills for successful student achievement. Site B primary teachers frequently called parents. Weekly schedules were sent home and parents were required to sign it. Teachers felt they saw the parents they needed to see.*	
Policies and procedures: Clear policies and procedures, structured school, limit interruptions.	**Policies and procedures:** Teachers "maximize" instructional time.
Differences: *Site A had a structured learning environment, conducive to student learning. Site B teachers had a routine. They maximized instructional time.*	
Relationships among teachers: Discord but it helps us grow (I/A-2). Has an open-door policy (I/A-1). "We're a family" (I/R-5).	**Relationships among teachers:** Personality conflicts. Some isolation, even with new addition. Now have multi-grade group meetings (I/B-3).
Differences: *Site A teachers were accepting of others and their opinions. They felt they grew from discord. Staff harmony was good and they described themselves as a family. Site B teachers indicated there were personality conflicts. Some teachers felt isolated.*	
Instructional time: Students successful when teachers successful, developed after-school program for instruction and enrichment, self-examination of teaching style (I/A-4).	**Instructional time:** Teachers sometimes not on task (I/B-1). Teachers have problems because not putting forth the effort (I/B-1). Pilot ITBS tests for money (I/B-3).
Differences: *Site A teachers assessed their skills to see how they could best help students. Teachers offered assistance to parents. Daily after-school program. Site B principal wanted the faculty to be busy. He felt they had problems because they were not putting forth the effort. School piloted ITBS tests for money.*	
Staff development: Participate in staff development activities at school and within the division. Teachers must individually select one activity to participate in.	**Staff development:** Visit successful schools to get ideas and techniques to improve SOL scores. Pushed to get involved in computers (I/L-4).
Differences: *Site A teachers assumed responsibility for their professional growth and development. Site B teachers visited schools that had good SOL results. Teachers had been involved in computer classes.*	
Discipline: Little time spent on discipline.	**Discipline:** Added a detention class.
Differences: *Site A teachers spent little time on discipline. They felt when teachers were successful students were successful; even in behavior. Site B teachers and parents mentioned the behavior of students. They recently added a detention class. The principal stated that teachers were limited in discipline options.*	

Teacher Control

Teachers at Site A indicated they were in control of the curriculum. Even though they had county pacing guides, teachers disclosed they were free to choose what they taught. The principal was confident that teachers had a handle on learning. Site B teachers stated they did not have a canned curriculum, but that they worked together sharing materials and ideas through the SOL team. Teachers stated that they were the weakest school in the division due to their low SOL scores. It was evident that teachers at Site B were anxious about the state assessment requirements.

Planning

Teachers had weekly grade level planning sessions at Site A, the high-gain school. Site B teachers participated in grade level meetings once or twice a month (I/B-3).

Homework

There was a well-defined county and school homework policy at Site A. The division homework policy specified 15 minutes of homework per grade level. Parents affirmed that homework was a necessary component of the instructional program; it taught them responsibility. Parents indicated that students had more homework since the SOLs were implemented. Site B did not have a county homework policy but several teachers indicated that homework was an important part of the instructional program. Individual teachers at this school determined assigned homework.

Communication with Parents

Site A had Thursday folders containing student work that went home each week for parent's signatures. Site B had a folder that went home each night. This folder was used to take the weekly schedule home and would also contain student work for parent's signature. Teachers at Site A know the home environment of their students. Site A parents stated that teachers have the confidence to teach (I/P-2). Site A teachers controlled parent involvement and educated parents about the instructional process and the importance of their role in this process.

Policies and Procedures

Site A had clear policies and procedures and staff members implemented these policies and procedures. The instructional environment was structured and organized with few interruptions.

Site B teachers "maximized" instructional time. They had established routines, and teachers maintained their instructional schedules, especially in the upper grades.

Relationships Among Teachers

Site A had experienced some discord among teachers and staff members, but this discord has helped them to grow. Site B has had some personality conflicts. There is some isolation of teachers at this school. Even with the new addition, some isolation still exists. Teachers are now conducting multi-grade group meetings (I/B-3).

Instructional Time

Site A students were successful because the teachers were successful (I/T-3). Teachers at this site wrote a grant to develop an after-school program to not only assist students with homework, but to provide them with enrichment activities. Teachers at this school assumed responsibility for their own professional growth and teacher effectiveness. The teachers did a self-examination of their individual teaching styles, and how their skills may shape student achievement and performance (I/A-4). Site B teachers were sometimes not on task according to the principal (I/B-1). Mr. B. acknowledged that teachers had problems because they were not putting forth the effort. Teachers at Site B spend time piloting ITBS tests for money (I/B-3).

Staff Development

Teachers at Site A participated in staff development activities, both within the school division and outside the school division. Teachers were required by the supervisory personnel to select a staff development activity or a workshop to attend that was of personal interest to them. Site B teachers visited successful schools, which was determined by their performance on the Standard of Learning assessments. Teachers visited these schools to get ideas and techniques for the purpose of improving their SOL scores. The Site B principal required teachers to participate in computer training sessions (I/L-4).

Discipline

Data showed little time was devoted to student discipline at Site A. Teachers at this school handled their own behavior problems. Their principal spent very little time dealing with discipline problems. Site B teachers, especially the ones with fewer years of tenure, solicited the assistance of the principal when dealing with students exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Site B was planning to implement a detention class for next year.

<u>A School's Culture and its Influence on Student Performance</u>

A positive school culture gives life to schools. A positive school culture has been associated with higher student motivation and achievement (Stolp & Smith, 1997). No two schools are alike and the two schools in this study corroborated this fact. Each school had established traditions. They participated as a staff in after hours social activities. Staff members at both schools were comfortable talking to peers about students, concerns they were experiencing, or requesting their opinions on specific matters. There were few similarities; the two schools in this study were different. Each school had a personality of its own. Table 14 denotes the differences between Site A and Site B.

<u>Atmosphere</u>

The atmosphere at Site A was positive. The school climate was non-threatening, with a relaxed work environment. One teacher was quoted as saying, "I couldn't imagine working in a better school climate" (I/W-1). The Site A organization functioned as a community to support the vision of the principal and the mission of the school (I/B-2).

The atmosphere at Site B was a family-like atmosphere. The school was not a rigid place to work. Data verified that most people were happy working there (I/R-3). Interview data established that parents and repeat offenders (discipline problems) stressed the principal (I/L-3). Data indicated that teachers felt there was "sometimes a little too much observation" (I/L-2).

<u>Trust</u>

There was a relationship of trust that existed at Site A. Teachers trusted the administrator. Teachers trusted the principal enough to go to her with a problem, even if the problem was with her (the principal). Teachers were comfortable telling their principal anything (I/T-5). Teachers knew Mrs. A. would not break confidentiality. Parents seemed sure that the principal maintained confidentiality (I/P-1).

Table 14

Differences in the Culture of Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School)

Site A	Site B
Atmosphere: non-threatening**,** positive and relaxed work environment. "...couldn't imagine working in a better school climate" (I/W-1). Functions as a community, comes together to support the vision of the principal and the mission of the school (I/B-2).	**Atmosphere:** Family-like, not a rigid place to work, most people are happy here (I/R-3). "Sometimes there is a little too much observation" (I/L-2). With parents or repeat offenders, he (principal) gets stressed (I/L-3).
Differences: Site A had a positive work environment. Teachers felt very good about their school climate. School functioned as a community. Everyone supported and adopted the vision of the principal and the mission of the school. Site B was not a rigid place to work. Teachers felt there was a little too much observation. The principal at this school got stressed.	
Trust: Principal understands pressures teachers are under and supports them (I/B-1). A cohesiveness here, readily seek one another's opinions (I/A-2). Teachers trust their administrator; even if they had a problem with the principal they would be comfortable telling her (I/T-5). Principal maintains confidentiality (I/P-1). Loose management style.	**Trust:** Teachers feel they will be backed by the administration (I/J-1). He's still a new principal who has quite a few things that he still needs to learn (I/L-2).
Differences: Site A had an understanding and supportive principal. A cohesive group at this school. They trusted the principal emphatically. She knew what was going on even though she didn't supervise teachers at an uncomfortable level. Site B teachers felt their principal would support them; however, they were unsure of his expertise.	
High expectations: Insist that every child will learn something.	**High expectations:** Passing the SOL assessment, stress the SOLs, wants teachers busy.
Differences: Site A maintained high expectations for all students and staff. Site B had the expectation of passing the SOLs. The principal expected teachers to be busy.	
Staff: supports the vision and mission of the school, genuine concern for "total" student, respectful of one another, No teacher is biding her time (I/W-1).	**Staff:** Most have gone to the same schools and have grown up in county, concerned about personal things that happen to one another, supportive of one another's disciplinary practices, enjoy each other's company.

Table 14 (cont'd)

Differences in the Culture of Site A (The High-Gain School) and Site B (The Low-Gain School)

Differences: Site A teachers enjoy working at this school. Staff members share the same beliefs. They teach the total child. Site B teachers grew up together and are concerned about the personal needs of peers. Support one another, especially in controlling behavior of students.	
Principal: Always has a smile and has a wonderful personality (I/B-1). Staff has confidence in principal. Praise is real (I/T-2). Does little things that mean a lot. Spends very little time with discipline.	**Principal:** Believes in motivation, needs to be comfortable confronting potential problems (I/B-2). Teachers never know if he is joking or serious (I/B-1). Like to be around high-energy people. Hard working, unsure, recognizes achievement of students, good relationship with students.
Differences: Site A principal always had a smile for everyone. She offered "real" praise to teachers. Staff members had great confidence in her. She spent little time with discipline. Site B principal stated he believed in motivation. Teachers have a difficult time determining where the principal was "coming from." He had a good relationship with students. He worked hard.	
Risk-taker: Teachers and principal are risk-takers. Teachers felt powerless until their new principal.	**Risk-taker:** Principal wants teachers to be busy. Always working on things to benefit teachers (I/K-3). Lets teachers be creative in the classroom (I/L-2).
Differences: Site A principal and teachers were risk-takers. Principal had been an inspiration to teachers. Site B principal wanted teachers to be busy. He wanted to help teachers, and he allowed them to be creative in the classroom.	
Traditions: Community breakfast at school.	**Traditions:** Teacher would go out and eat on PTO nights. Had an end of year party and maintained ties with retired faculty members.
Differences: Site A had several traditions but is especially proud of the community breakfast. Site B had traditions and they would go out to eat when they had PTA meetings.	
Decision making: Participatory management.	**Decision making:** Teachers have some opportunity for input (I/L-5). Principal desires to be more involved in elementary supervisor's role (I/B-1).
Differences: Site A had a participatory management organization. Teachers helped make the decisions. Site B organization was a consultative one. Teachers had input but the principal made the final decision. Principal sought more control of his school.	

The principal of Site A had a loose management style, which was indicative of the trust shared by members of the school. It was evident that Mrs. A. trusted her staff to perform their duties and responsibilities, and even though she was not directly observing them at all times, she definitely knew what was happening in their program. The principal knew the pressures teachers were under and supported them (I/B-1). There was cohesiveness among staff members at this site. Teachers helped, supported, respected, and valued one another (I/A-2).

Teachers at Site B were backed by the administration (I/J-1). The principal at Site B was perceived as still being a new principal "who had quite a few things he still needed to learn (I/L-2). Teachers were supported as far as "disciplinary situations" by the principal (I/L-3). Teachers felt very comfortable talking with a student's previous teacher about a problem or a concern they were currently experiencing with this student (I/L-3).

High expectations

Site A staff members had high expectations for students. Teachers acknowledged that every child would learn something. At Site B, passing the SOL assessments was the top priority. The principal stressed the SOLs and that teachers should keep busy.

Staff

Staff members at Site A supported the vision and mission of the school. There was a genuine concern for the "total" child. Observation data acknowledged that teachers and students were respectful of one another. Teachers believed in what they were doing. "No teacher is biding her time" (I/W-1).

The staff at Site B had a certain intimacy; most had gone to the same schools and had grown up in the county together. There was a concern for what happened to individual members of the organization. They appeared to enjoy one another's company.

Principal

The principal at Site A established the culture of her school. She was observed as always having a smile for all persons encountered in the building. Mrs. A. had a wonderful personality (I/B-1). Staff members had complete confidence in the principal. They knew her praise was real (I/T-2). They enjoyed the little things that the principal would do for them. The management of students was always positive. Teachers affirmed little time was spent with discipline at the school.

The principal at Site B believed in motivation. He was convinced he needed to be more comfortable confronting potential problems (I/B-2). Teachers could not determine if he was joking or serious (I/B-1). The principal liked to be around high-energy people (I/B-1). Teachers described him as hard working, unsure, and one that had excellent rapport with students.

Risk-taker

The principal at Site A gave her staff a feeling of power. They were risk-takers. The principal at Site B wanted his teachers to be busy. He was always working on things that would benefit teachers (I/K-3). Mr. B. allowed teachers to be creative in their classrooms (I/L-2).

Traditions

There were established traditions at both sites. Site A had a secret pal program for staff members and various activities throughout the school year for members of the organization to enjoy. The school hosted an annual breakfast for the community. Both teachers and community members enjoyed this activity. Site B teachers would go out to eat on PTO nights when babysitters could be secured. Site B had an end-of-the-year party and invited retired faculty members to attend.

Decision Making

Site A maintained a participatory management type organization. Site B offered some opportunities for teachers to have input (I/L-5). The principal made the final decisions at this site. He desired to have more "control" of the instructional program and school. He wanted to be more involved in the decision-making process, especially with the elementary supervisor.

<div align="center">What Parents Do to Affect SOL Performance</div>

Educators know the importance of parent involvement in a student's educational program. Students achieve more and are more successful when parents are actively engaged in the instructional process. Parents at these sites had comparable qualities. They lived in rural communities. Each community had children from sing-parent families and grandparents that were serving as guardians for children. Parents in the communities had high school educations, with very few possessing a college degree. Persons with college degrees were believed to be teachers living in the communities. Parents had high expectations for their children at each of these schools. Principals at each site had good rapport with parents. They were comfortable contacting the schools with a problem or a concern. Parents were active in the PTA organizations; however,

parent work schedules limited their participation. Special programs were well attended at both schools by parents. Site A and Site B offered a workshop for parents relative to the Standards of Learning objectives. Parents served as volunteers at each of the schools. Both sites had parent limitations when it came to helping children in the upper grades with homework.

There were differences noted in parent behavior at each school that may impact student performance on the SOLs. Table15 is used to demonstrate the identified differences in Site A and Site B relative to parental involvement in the educational process.

Involvement

Parents at Site A indicated that parent involvement varied according to grade level. Primary grades had more parental involvement than the upper grades (I/T-8). Parents were actively involved in the educational programs. They attended programs, visited their child's classroom, and visited the school to have lunch with their children. Observational data confirmed that the school sponsored a trip to the Zoo as a family event. Fathers and mothers accompanied their children on this trip. Participation by fathers was impressive for a weekday. Parents rode the bus with their children. Parents stated they were comfortable coming to the school and acknowledged they would readily call the school to express a concern.

Site B parents were generally supportive (I/T-2). Teachers did not see many parents at the fourth or fifth grade level (I/R-2). Teachers provided students and parents with an SOL activity once a year. Staff members indicated that parents would readily contact the school to reveal a problem or concern. It was important to the principal that no complaint made its way to the division superintendent (I/B-2).

Communication with School

Children were the focus of communication at Site A. Parents attended parent-teacher conferences. Parents wrote teachers thank you notes (I/B-2). The school maintained a parent resource center for parents. Parents could obtain information of an educational nature at this center. Also, parents had access to the computer lab every Tuesday night. Staff members at Site A assumed some responsibility for the training of parents to help them acquire needed skills.

Parents at Site B were comfortable communicating with school personnel; however, some parents were viewed as not being supportive of the educational process (I/L-7). It was evident that some parents were more active than others (I/J-2). Usually, parents would contact the school

Table 15

Differences in the Behaviors of Parents at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Site A	Site B
Involvement: Varies according to grade level (I/T-8). Actively involved in educational program at school. Attend programs and visit classrooms, and have lunch with students. Parents feel comfortable coming to the school. They readily call the school with a problem.	**Involvement:** Wish for more parent involvement (I/B-2). No complaints to superintendent (I/B-2). Parents are generally supportive (I/J-2). Readily contact the school with a problem. More likely to come to school if there is a problem (I/J-2). Don't see many fourth and fifth grade parents (I/R-2). Once a year an SOL activity for parents and children (I/K-8).
Differences: Site A parent participation varied according to grade levels. Attendance and participation in programs was great at this school. They were comfortable coming to the school. Site B personnel desired more parent involvement. Principal was proud that no complaints had been made to the superintendent.	
Communication with school: Children are the focus of communications. Parents attend parent/teacher conferences. Write teachers thank you notes (I/B-2). Parent resource center.	**Communication with school:** Parents will communicate; but with some, don't see the support there (I/L-7). "Usually I see the parents I need to see. Some parents are more active than others" (I/J-2). They feel they can contact the school when they have a problem. Maybe not in a positive tone but they will express their opinion (I/L-6).
Differences: Site A communicated with parents about children. Parents attended parent/teacher conferences. Parents even wrote teachers thank you notes. Established a parent resource center. Site B was concerned with lack of communication on the part of some parents. Parents contacted the school, sometimes not in a positive tone.	
Volunteer program: Have an active volunteer program. Work at school assisting with mundane tasks for teachers.	**Volunteer program:** Since lay-off at factories, more parent participation (I/L-6). "Wonderful PTO" (I/L-6). Parents raise a lot of money. Teachers know who to call (I/R-3).
Differences: Site A had an active volunteer program. They assisted teachers with mundane tasks. Site B had more participation since factory lay-offs. Parents raised money for playground equipment. Participation varied—teachers knew who to call.	

(table continues)

Table 15 (cont'd)

Differences in the Behaviors of Parents at Site A (High-Gain School) and Site B (Low-Gain School) Recorded in Interview Data

Homework: Believe homework is necessary; teaches children responsibility (I/T-8).	**Homework:** View homework as important (I/R-3).
Differences: County homework policy was implemented at Site A. Parents and teachers believed homework was an important part of the instructional program. Site B personnel viewed homework as important however, there was no policy for homework.	
Education: Majority have a high school education.	**Education:** Most are not well educated (I/J-2). Have a high school education.
Differences: Site A's parents had a high school education. They appeared to value education. Site B's parents had a high school education; many were not well educated. They wanted their children to have a better life than they have had.	
Attitude: Parents know the importance of an education. Need to put more emphasis on education (I/W-2). Some feel education is up to teacher (I/P-2). Most have high expectations for children (I/A-2).	**Attitude:** View education as important. Want their children to be mannerly (I/R-3). "Parents feel that it is important that their children are behaving" (I/R-3). Some parents expose their children to good books and theaters (I/J-2). Have high expectations. Most want them to go to college (I/J-2).
Differences: Site A parents realized the importance of education. Site B parents viewed education as important. They wanted their children to behave and to be mannerly.	
Family unit: Grandparents as caretakers.	**Family unit:** Most are single-parent (I/R-3).
Differences: Site A had grandparents that were caretakers of children. Site B had single-parent family units.	
Relationship with principal: Controlled through "Students More Involved in Learning to Enhance Success" (S.M.I.L.E.S.), the after-school program.	**Relationship with principal:** Controls movement and access to school building.
Differences: Site A principal and staff took the initiative to assist working parents with childcare and homework in addition to offering enrichment activities. Site B principal was concerned about parents moving freely through the building during the school day.	

(S.M.I.L.E.S.). This program was developed to assist parents as well as offer parents better skills and techniques in working with their children. At Site B, the principal controlled parent movement through the building.

Volunteer Program

Site A had an active volunteer program. Parents assisted teachers with mundane tasks such as copying materials, bulletin boards, and gathering supplies and equipment for various activities. Observational data suggested parents were visible and that they routinely worked in the school.

The volunteer program at Site B had improved since lay-offs at factories (I/L-6). The school had a "wonderful PTO" (I/L-6). Parents raised approximately $15,000 to purchase playground equipment for the school.

Homework

Site A parents acknowledged that homework was necessary and that it taught children responsibility. Site B parents viewed homework as important (I/R-3).

Education

The majority of Site A parents had a high school education. Site B parents had a high school education but many were not well educated (I/J-2).

Attitude

Site A parents need to put more emphasis on education according to teachers (I/W-2). Parents stated education was the responsibility of the teacher (I/P-2). The principal stated that most parents had high expectations for their children (I/A-2).

Site B parents viewed education as important. Most wanted their children to go on to college (I/J-2). Parents wanted their children to be mannerly (I/R-3). "Parents feel that it is important that their children are behaving" (I/R-3). Some parents exposed their children to books and the theatre (I/J-2).

Family Unit

Site A had many grandparents as caretakers of children. Site B family units were single-parent units (I/R-3).

<u>Relationship With Principal</u>

At Site A, the principal encouraged and controlled parent participation by incorporating the use of an after-school program called "Students More Involved in Learning to Enhance Success."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study focused on identifying the variables that make one school more successful in promoting student performance on the Virginia Standards of Learning assessments than a comparable school with similar attributes. Spring 1998 and 1999 third and fifth grade SOL scores in English and math were used as the basis for identification of the high-gain and low-gain schools. Highlighted in the study were the organizational structure, leadership practices, teacher instructional behaviors, school culture, and parent support. The researcher collected and analyzed data on two schools, one making significant gains on the SOL tests and another school, making little or no gains on the SOL assessment in English and math. This chapter is divided into four sections. Conclusions and discussions are followed by implications for further study and recommendations for future research.

Conclusion I: Creating an Effective Organization

Effective schools are schools whose students achieve well in basic skills as measured by standardized tests. Edmonds and Brookover and Lazotte (1979) affirmed effectiveness in schools was determined by student performance on standardized tests of reading and math skills. Site A performed more reliably on English and math SOL assessments than did Site B. The principal at Site A appeared to demonstrate more consistently the skills associated with creating an effective organization. The Site B administrator was less effective in creating an effective organizational structure.

<u>Discussion for Conclusion One: Effective Human Resource Skills</u>

Principals with effective organizational skills pay attention to details, are well organized, and provide clear and consistent goals and directions. They demonstrate support and concern for others, even publicly. They are continually responsive to others; they listen well; and they are open to new ideas. Principals with effective human resource skills are highly participative managers. Schools are organizations that have no control over the selection of who attends. Control problems can play a major part in teacher-teacher and teacher-administrator relationships (Willower et al., 1973). Political discussions of effective principals include the ability to mobilize people and resources. These persons are extremely persuasive and influential. They respond well to organizational conflict. They lead with an emphasis on culture. Members of Site A appeared

to share a common commitment. Effective schools have members with personal and trusting relationships.

Interview and observation data indicated that the Site A principal was sensitive to others. She was a good listener and encouraged ideas from teachers. She was a participatory manager. She had a strong vision and was compelled to get that vision and mission to the forefront. She was a skilled negotiator and responded well to conflict. The researcher interpreted this organization to function as an educational community in which members learn from interaction. The principal at Site A demonstrated a symbolic dimension of inspiring others to excel. She was imaginative, creative, and charismatic. She was a "multiframe" person. She was perceived by the researcher to be more humanistic in her approach to students and teachers; however, she did control parents' active participation to a certain extent.

The Site B principal was a top-down manager. The researcher interpreted comments made by the principal that he was seeking more control: control of teachers; control of students; and control of parents. Fullen (1991) reminded us that certain things cannot be mandated; one being committed action. The principal at Site B appeared to be struggling with this belief. A custodial approach such as this leads to impersonal relationships (Willower et al., 1973). He was responsive to the behavior of administrative supervisors. Chesler et al., (1975) wrote that principals with innovative staffs were in tune with their teachers' feelings and values about education. At this school, teachers could not determine when their principal was joking or serious. The principal at Site B readily admitted he needed to handle conflict in a more assertive manner.

Conclusion II: Creating Effective Leadership Practices

The principal of Site A exhibited more behaviors associated with those of effective leaders than did the Site B principal according to observation data collected by the researcher.

Discussion for Conclusion Two: Servant Leadership

Rosen and Brown (1996) concluded that leaders inspire rather than intimidate, motivate rather than monitor, and mobilize rather than manage. They perform an activity, leading. Lashway et al., (1996) explained that leaders have high levels of energy and involvement. Effective principals listen to students, community, and staff members (Gorton & McIntyne, 1978). Bass (1990) described effective leaders as those persons emotionally expressive, self-confident,

independent, and insightful. Principals in high-performance schools give priority to academic excellence, personal growth and fulfillment, and human relations skills (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Principals in low-performance schools rank basic literacy, good work habits, citizenship, and occupational skills above where principals in high-performance schools rank them. Lipsitz (1984) concluded that effective middle school principals made their school's members feel special.

The Site A principal motivated rather than monitored personnel. Interview and observation data indicated she was leading—an active process. Interview data noted she was a high-energy person. She solicited suggestions from community members in addition to faculty and staff members. She was emotionally expressive, independent, insightful, and self-confident. She made the members of her organization feel special. She always had a smile and recognized everyone with some kind of greeting.

The Site B principal believed in motivation but may have at times been intimidating to employees. Staff members were occasionally unsure of the principal's meaning. The principal seemed concerned about the school's SOL scores and the work habits of personnel.

Conclusion III: School Culture

Interview and observation data indicated that Site A had a more positive school culture than Site B.

Discussion for Conclusion Three: A Common Commitment

Each school has its own personality. A positive school culture is associated with higher student motivation and achievement, increased teacher collaboration, and improved attitudes among teachers toward their jobs (Stolp & Smith, 1997). The sense of a professional community in a school enhances student achievement (Moffett, 2000). Cultural norms that characterize the context in which teachers work influence teachers' sense of efficacy with students (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

Site A had a positive relaxed work environment. The school climate was conducive to teacher and student performance. Teachers had high expectations for student achievement. The principal understood the pressures teachers faced and consistently supported them in their endeavors. She responded immediately to problems. There was a cohesiveness among staff members at Site A. She encouraged teachers to be risk-takers and encouraged them to have confidence in the work they did. Staff members at this school worked collaboratively.

The culture of Site B according to data collected by the researcher was not as positive. Most teachers at this school grew up together and went to the same schools in the county in which they were currently working. Most people were happy at this school. Teachers believed the principal needed to learn additional motivational strategies and methods for establishing relationships with fellow workers.

Conclusion IV: Teacher Behaviors

There were no major differences identified by observation data on teacher behaviors. Teachers implemented the instructional model well. The researcher believes the major differences in teacher behavior between the two schools studied were relative to staff harmony, the ability to create relationships of trust, and teacher efficacy.

Discussion for Conclusion IV: Teacher Efficacy

Teachers are instrumental in the educational process. No single method distinguishes a good teacher from a poor teacher. Teacher expectations, role definitions, and sense of efficacy are essential characteristics associated with producing student learning and achievement (Brophy, 1982). Good teachers see themselves in positive ways. They see colleagues in positive ways. Good teachers operate in the courage of their convictions. They utilize methods that fit students (Combs, 1991). Staff harmony is above average in high-performing schools (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Research suggests time on task is related to achievement—the more time students spend on task, the more they learn (Bloom, 1976). Effective teachers perform fewer administrative tasks and devote less time to discipline. Effective teachers focus students in and out of class by getting them to complete more homework.

Site A teachers were genuinely concerned about students. They were committed to students, parents, peers, and the principal. They looked beyond the classroom to determine what was happening in the life of their students. They believed in collegiality. They did not have conflicts with fellow teachers. They were respectful of one another and perceived discord as an opportunity for growth. Teachers believed that every child at the school could learn something. They had a homework policy. Teachers felt they were in control of their school. The principal was viewed by both parents and teachers as one that maintains confidentiality. Teachers believed they could go to their principal with anything; even if the problem was with her (the principal).

Site B interview and observation data confirmed a staff that doubted their potential and ability. They maintained minutes of grade level meetings. Teachers were concerned about SOL results. There was no homework policy for the school. The principal appeared to lack complete trust in his staff members due to the fact that he stated he was bothered by "killing time." He stated that he wanted people to be as productive as they could be, all of the time.

Conclusion V: Parental Support

Site A and Site B parents are similar in their basic desire to want what is best for their children. They wanted their children to be successful at school. Interview and observation data indicated that parents appeared to be more actively involved with their child's educational program at Site A. Site A personnel actively encouraged and initiated parent involvement in their school's programs. Site B parents wanted their children to be mannerly and behave at school. Observation data indicated the need for more parental involvement at Site B, especially with the volunteer program. Site A and Site B established parent controls, especially concerning the movement of parents within the school facilities.

Discussion for Conclusion V: Effective Communication

Parents are their child's first teacher. Research confirms a strong, positive correlation between student achievement and parent involvement (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Educators know the importance of parent involvement to student performance and achievement and must take the initiative to establish good lines of communication with them. Eccles and Harold (1994) report that parents who receive more communications from schools asking them to participate in school activities report higher levels of involvement in their child's education both at school and at home.

Family background is a major influence because some parents establish basic educational values and school work habits and others do not. The most dramatic differences between high- and low-performance schools are in income and education levels of parents. Studies indicate higher student achievement when parents participate in school activities, monitor children's homework, and support the beliefs and values of the school (Epstein, 1987; Heath & McLaughlin, 1987).

Implications for Practice

Improvement efforts will continue to focus on higher standards and greater accountability for Virginia's schools and teachers. As a result of this study, administrators need to focus on several factors that may serve to improve the effectiveness of their organization and improve student performance and achievement. First, administrators need to establish clear policies and procedures for members of their organization. They should develop and implement strategies to create an environment that promotes a shared vision among all stakeholders. Principals need to be willing, and capable, of sharing the leadership with teachers and parents. Principals need to know the strengths and skills of faculty members and to assign them roles that will allow them to use their expertise to enhance their own professional growth and student achievement. To advance student achievement, principals need to develop strong interpersonal relationships, both within the school and outside the school, within the community. A school culture that rewards risk-taking serves to enhance student performance. Principals that have the ability to develop a relationship of trust will have effective schools and successful teachers and students. Principals need to "model the process."

Limitations of Study

The impact of parent income and education on student achievement cannot be dismissed. Site B had a larger student participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program. Secondly, third and fifth grade students tested in the spring of 1998, 1999, and 2000 are from different populations. One could compare scores of third grade 1998 tested students to fifth grade 2000 tested students for a more accurate picture of student performance. Consideration should be given to the differences in principals and their leadership styles on the effectiveness of the schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

As public school educators continue to search for innovative ways to guarantee that students meet the benchmark on the Standards of Learning assessments, an increased anxiety has now occurred among parents of Virginia's public school children. More schools are doing better according to recent data released by the state on individual schools' performance on the SOL tests. Still, there are students and schools struggling with this mandate. What makes the difference?

Studies such as this are designed to offer administrators suggestions for creating effective schools, thus enhancing student performance and achievement. Research should be conducted to compare principal effectiveness in creating an organization that encourages risk-taking and shared leadership, and one that supports student achievement.

Research should continue to be conducted on the importance of school culture and implications for both student and teacher performance. Studies should be done to identify the effect of climate and culture on the effectiveness of an organization. Further research may render valuable strategies to assist school leaders in creating organizations that have shared purposes, values, and beliefs.

Additional studies should be performed to determine the impact of teachers as leaders on student performance. Research should focus on teaching behaviors and what behaviors appear to enhance student performance and achievement. Teacher training programs and staff development activities should be studied that will assist and encourage leaders and teachers to eagerly recognize the importance of professional development and its implications for student achievement.

Research should continue to study the impact of parent support and involvement to the success of students and teachers. Strategies should be identified and developed to not only encourage parent participation in the instructional process, but to create a community of learners. Policies studied and developed that will generate close, non-threatening relationships between public school personnel and all community members, not just parents.

Reflections

One can not minimize the importance of the instructional person in the classroom. Although the teacher observation instrument did not yield profound differences in teacher behaviors, the researcher believes that over time, this instrument would produce valid information that would have implications for student performance.

The study presented the observer with opportunities to meet other educators and to study their approach in creating an effective school, one that motivates students and teachers. The Site A principal was exciting to observe. She was dynamic and filled with enthusiasm. For this reason, a partiality may have emerged. This principal possessed a sensitivity that may be a gender related bias.

The Site B principal assumed responsibility for his own professional growth. He was continuously evaluating his behavior and its impact on others. The observer was impressed with his desire to have an effective school and no doubt, he will.

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Principal Observation Form

Principal_____**Date**_____**Started**_____

School/Location/Activity_____**Ended**_____

Checked items were observable in the principal observation. The principal:

1. _____is visible in the school
2. _____fosters a caring climate for students, staff, and parents
3. _____encourages experimentation
4. _____empowers others to excel
5. _____has a compelling vision
6. _____maintains high expectations for staff
7. _____is insistent that students will learn
8. _____has a high energy level
9. _____is actively involved in instructional planning
10. _____frequently drops in on classes
11. _____demonstrates instructional skills
12. _____is a good listener
13. _____understands people
14. _____is secure
15. _____demonstrates a moral strength
16. _____is perceived to be an instructional leader
17. _____gives priority to academic excellence
18. _____is in control of the school's curriculum
19. _____is in control of the school's personnel
20. _____is in control of the school's policies
21. _____values innovations and new ideas
22. _____is sensitive to students, teachers, and parents
23. _____implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies
24._____has high expectations for student achievement
25._____has high expectations for parents

_____
Note. Descriptors taken from the Literature Review, Chapter 2, and as summarized in Table 1.

Appendix B

TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM

Teacher_____**Date**_____**Started**_____**Class/L**

ocation/Activity_____**Ended**_____

Checked items were observable in classroom observation:

_____1. Exhibits control and calmness	____12. Actively involves students in the learning process
_____2. Makes students aware of lesson objectives	____13. Knows the content of subject matter
_____3. Directs instruction toward stated objectives	____14. Communicates effectively
_____4. Checks for student understanding	____15. Utilizes effective procedures for managing students
_____5. Adjusts instruction as needed	____16. Accepts each student as an individual of worth
_____6. Provides guided practice to reinforce learning	____17. Maintains high expectations for student achievement
_____7. Provides independent practice to reinforce or enrich learning	____18. Bases grades on student performance
_____8. Summarizes learning and develops connections to other learning and to real life situations	____19. Implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies
_____9. Demonstrates established rules and procedures	____20. Uses positive reinforcement with students
____10. Prepares equipment and materials for use	
____11. Begins class promptly	

Observations/Comments

_____

<ins>Note:</ins> Adapted from the 1986 Tazewell County Teacher Observation Form with classroom management additions from Beth Smith's effective teaching criteria for a 1996 Virginia Tech dissertation.

Appendix C

**VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT
PERFORMANCE ON SOL TESTS IN VIRGINIA:
A COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS
Content Validation for Instruments**

Principal Observation Instrument: Content Validity Form

The practices and behaviors listed below are characteristics of effective principals. Please check those you believe are closely associated with increasing student achievement.
At the bottom of this form, list other practices or behaviors that in your opinion are important practices of effective principals and that lead to student achievement.

The principal:

1._____is visible in the school
2._____fosters a caring climate for students, staff, and parents
3._____encourages experimentation
4._____empowers others to excel
5._____has a compelling vision
6._____maintains high expectations for staff
7._____insistent that students will learn
8._____has a high energy level
9._____is actively involved—in instructional planning
10.____frequently drops in on classes
11.____demonstrates instructional skills
12.____is a good listener
13.____understands people
14.____is secure
15.____demonstrates a moral strength
16.____is perceived to be an instructional leader
17.____gives priority to academic excellence
18.____is in control of the school's curriculum
19.____is in control of the school's personnel
20.____is in control of the school's policies
21.____values innovations and new ideas
22.____is sensitive to students, teachers, and parents
23.____implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies
24.____has high expectations for student achievement
25.____has high expectations for parents

Note. Descriptors taken from the Literature Review, Chapter 2, and as summarized in Table 1.

Teacher Observation Instrument: Content Validity Form

_____

The practices and behaviors listed below are characteristics of effective teachers. Please check those behaviors you believe are closely associated with increasing student achievement.
At the bottom of this form, list other practices or behaviors that in your opinion are important practices of effective teachers and that lead to improved student achievement.

___1. Arranges classroom

___2. Maintains smooth transition

___3. Exhibits control and calmness

___4. Makes students aware of lesson objectives

___5. Directs instruction toward stated objectives

___6. Checks for student understanding

___7. Adjusts instruction as needed

___8. Provides guided practice to reinforce learning

___9. Provides independent practice to reinforce or enrich learning

__10. Summarizes learning and develops connections to other learning and to real life situations

__11. Demonstrates established rules and procedures

__12. Prepares equipment for use

__13. Begins class promptly

__14. Actively involves students in the learning process

__15. Knows the content of subject matter

__16. Communicates effectively

___17. Proximity

___18. Utilizes effective procedures for managing students

___19. Accepts each student as an individual of worth

___20. Maintains high expectations for student achievement

___21. Bases grades on student performance

___ 22. Engages in professional development activities

___23. Helps students with their social and emotional problems

___24. Implements federal, state, county, and local programs and policies

___25. Use positive reinforcement with students

Additions or suggestions:

_____

Note: Adapted from the 1986 Tazewell County Teacher Observation Form with Classroom management additions from Beth Smith's effective teaching criteria for a 1996 Virginia Tech dissertation.

Content Validation for Interview Questionnaires

This content validation instrument is designed to assist the researcher with the development of an interview questionnaire. This instrument will be used in a study that will assess variables associated with student performance on the Virginia SOL tests, why one school may perform well while another school demonstrates little or no improvement. Items on this instrument are in five domains: organization, leadership, instruction, culture, and parent involvement.

Instructions
Please review the contents of the items and respond as follows: First, select the domain in which you think the item best fits. Second, rate how strongly the item is associated with the domain. Third, rate the clarity of the item.

Domains and Definitions
Using the definitions of the domain below, categorize each statement by circling the appropriate number in the column labeled "Domains." Leave blank any statements that do not fit a domain. Listed below are the domains and their definitions.

DOMAIN | **DEFINITION**

1. Culture — A pattern of basic assumptions and beliefs held by a group of people within an organization and taught to new members as the correct way to behave.

2. Parent support — The persons who are legal guardians or the primary caretakers of children enrolled in and attending the public schools. These persons view education as important and actively participate in the educational process.

3. Leadership — The process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization.

4. Organization — Educationally, a group of people governed by well-established rules and standards of behavior whose environment is shaped by goals, leadership practices, relationships, a shared vision, a concern for students, and a commitment to quality instructional programs and student achievement.

5. Instruction — The process of teaching, informing, and imparting knowledge.

Association Rating
Please indicate how strongly you feel each item is associated with the domain in which you categorized it. Circle the appropriate number in the column labeled "Association." Use the following scale to make your determination:
1=Very weak, **2**=Weak, **3**=Strong, and **4**=Very strong

Clarity Rating
In the column labeled "Clarity," tell how clear you think each item is by circling the appropriate number using the following scale:
1=Not clear at all, delete; 2=Somewhat clear, revise; and 3=Clear, leave as is.

Variables Associated with Exemplary Schools

Directions: Circle the number of the appropriate response.

Domain: (1) Organization, (2) Leadership practices, (3) School culture, (4) Instruction, and (5) Parent support

Association Ratings: 1= Very weak, 2= Weak, 3= Strong, and 4= Very strong

Clarity Ratings: 1= Not clear at all, delete; 2= Somewhat clear, revise; and 3= Clear, leave as stated. If you rate an item a 1 or 2, please make recommendations for needed changes in the item. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

Item	Domain	Association	Clarity
1. Organizational structure of the school	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
2. Change is a constant part of the organization	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
3. The organization has well-established rules, policies, and management strategies	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
4. Gains in student achievement are tied to the organization's structure	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
5. Principal leads with an emphasis on culture	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Item	Domain	Association	Clarity
6. Principal is politically skillful and sensitive	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
7. Principal communicates a strong vision	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
8. Principal encourages internal initiative, experimentation, and excitement among colleagues	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
9. Principal and teacher are learner-centered	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
10. Principal is good listener	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
11. Power is evenly distributed	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
12. Teachers are encouraged to be risk-takers	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
13. Involvement of parents is actively sought	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
14. Principal is an instructional leader	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
15. Parents view education as important	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
16. Principal has a clear understanding of effective instructional practices	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
17. People in organization are self-revealing	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
18. Children are from double-parent families	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
19. County developed strategies for student improvement are implemented for SOLs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
20. Members respond well to organizational conflict	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
21. Instruction is removed from the organization of the school	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
22. Principal encourages others to excel	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
23. Principal inspires others to do their best	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
24. School is held together by common beliefs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Item	Domain	Association	Clarity
25. Principal is extremely organized	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
26. The organization functions as autonomous, free from external control	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
27. Organization is held together by shared values	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
28. School devotes much time to discipline	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
29. Parents are well educated	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
30. Staff harmony is great	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
31. School is personal	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
32. Groups and committees change frequently	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
33. School has handbooks, policy manuals, and an evaluation system	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
34. The school effectively communicates with its stake-holders	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
35. Responsibilities are equally shared	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
36. The organization focuses on the talents of its members	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
37. The school promotes the ideas of its leader	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
38. Members of the organization search for solutions to problems and concerns	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
39. The school's culture reduces anxiety	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Appendix D

Interview Questionnaire for Principals

1. How is your school **organized** for instruction?
   - How does this organization work?
   - Who makes the decisions at this school?
   - Does this school have department chairs or lead teachers?
   - How is the school organized to deal with the Standards of Learning?
   - Tell me about anything that you do in this school that is designed to improve SOL scores.
   - Think about the changes over the past five years. What areas do these changes affect?
   - How has division policy changed with the implementation of the Standards of Learning?
   - How is the curriculum organized to improve the school's SOL test scores?
   - How are personnel selected in this school?
   - Describe this school as a working organization?
   - How does the organization of the school affect student achievement?
   - Identify a strength of this school.
   - Identify a weakness of this school.
   - Who determines the curriculum used at this school?

2. Tell me about your role in this school?
   - As the principal of this school, what are the most important things to you?
   - What do teachers think is most important in this school?
   - How do teachers describe you as a principal?
   - What do you want your school to be?
   - How much change has there been in your staff within the last two years?
   - Tell me about how your faculty gets along.
   - Think of a situation when there was disagreement among staff members. How did you deal with this?
   - Recall a recent change in your school. Describe how it happened.

3. Tell me how the work of educating children is performed in this school?
   - Describe the relationship among teachers in this school.
   - How are decisions made at this school?
   - Describe the working relationship teachers have at this school.
   - Describe how the central office personnel work in your school.
   - How are committees formed at this school? What committees do you have? How do they work?
   - What's important in this school?
   - How are division policies and procedures used in this school? How are these policies and procedures viewed?
   - How are problems solved in this school?
   - Describe staff development practices in this school.

Interview Questionnaire for Principals (cont'd)

4. Describe **instruction** in this school.
   - What instructional strategies are most frequently observed as you walk around the school?
   - Describe teacher involvement at this school.
   - What is your relationship with teachers?
   - How do teachers work to improve student achievement?
   - Describe teacher-training programs that have been, or are being, conducted in this school.
   - What strategies have been employed to align the curriculum with the Standards of Learning?
   - Describe how discipline is handled in this school.
   - Describe your school's homework policy.
   - Excluding instructional responsibilities, what do teachers spend most of their time doing?
   - Who develops the curriculum used in this school?

5. Describe how **parents** participate in the education of their children in this school.
   - Tell me about the parents.
   - Describe how parents are involved in this school.
   - Are there formal parent organizations associated with this school? Tell me about them (it).
   - What kind of budget, if any, do these organizations have?
   - Describe the relationship parents have with this school.
   - How do parents view this school?
   - What one criticism do parents present most often about this school?
   - What one compliment do parents make most often to you about this school?
   - Describe what teachers do to involve parents in the education of their children.
   - Describe parents' expectations for this school.
   - Describe parents' expectations for their children.
   - How often do parents contact you and for what reasons?
   - What do parents do that affects student achievement the most?

Appendix E

Interview Questionnaire for Teachers

1. Describe the **organizational structure** of your school.
   - How does this organization work?
   - Who makes the decisions at this school?
   - How is your school organized for instruction?
   - Does this school have department chairs or lead teachers?
   - How is the school organized to deal with the Standards of Learning?
   - Tell me about anything that you do in this school that is designed to improve SOL scores.
   - Think about the changes over the past five years. What areas do these changes impact?
   - How has division policy changed with the implementation of the Standards of Learning?
   - How is the curriculum organized to improve the school's SOL test scores?
   - How are personnel selected in this school?
   - How is the curriculum organized to improve the school's SOL test scores?
   - What makes this school a good working organization?
   - How does the organization of the school impact student achievement?
   - Identify a strength of this school.
   - Identify a weakness of this school.
   - Who determines the curriculum used at this school?
   - What appears to influence this organization's structure?

2. Describe the **leadership skills** of your principal.
   - Describe your principal.
   - What does the principal want for this school?
   - What do you think the principal emphasizes to teachers?
   - What does the principal appear to spend the most time doing?
   - Identify a strength of your principal.
   - Name a weakness of your principal.
   - Describe the relationship the principal maintains with the faculty and staff.
   - How does the principal handle conflicts?
   - Within the last two years, how much change has there been in the faculty of this school?
   - Recall a recent change in this school. Describe how it happened.
   - Recall a situation when there was a disagreement among staff members. How was this situation resolved?

3. Describe the school's **culture**.
   - What's important in this school? How do you know this is important?
   - Describe how people get along in this school.
   - How are decisions made at this school?
   - Are teachers given an opportunity to have input on decisions made at the school?
   - How are problems solved in this school?
   - How do teachers view the school?

- Is there any one individual you can always count on in this facility? Do you have working committees in this school? How are these committees formed?
- How does the principal communicate with faculty and staff members?
- Describe how central office personnel work in this school.
- Tell me how the work of educating children is performed.
- Discuss established procedures of this school.
- How are division polices developed and disseminated?
- Identify any routines that are established at this school.
- Have you been a member of a group or committee at this school? How long have you been a member of a group or committee?
- Are people friendly at this school?
- Do people appear to get along at this school?

4. Describe the **instructional** program.
   - Describe the instructional program of this school.
   - Identify the strengths of your instructional program.
   - What do you consider your most important responsibility as a teacher?
   - Describe how discipline is handled at this school.
   - Describe the behavior of your students.
   - Describe the homework policy.
   - How do parents get involved with their child's schoolwork?
   - When students do not perform well on a test, what do you do?
   - How has your school done things differently since the Standards of Learning were implemented?
   - How has your school tried to improve SOL scores?
   - How do teachers view the SOLs?
   - Describe the school's curriculum.
   - Who participates in curriculum development activities?

5. Describe **parent support** in your school.
   - Describe your parent population.
   - Describe how parents are involved in this school.
   - Do parents contact the school? When, and how often?
   - Does this school have formal parent organizations?
   - What kind of budget do these organizations have during the year?
   - How do parents view education?
   - How do parents view this school?
   - How do parents view homework?
   - Do parents contact you with a problem or a concern?
   - Do parents feel comfortable making suggestions to you about their child or his/her program?
   - Do parents have high expectations for their children?

Appendix F

Interview Questionnaire for Parents

1. Describe this school and its programs.
   - What is the number one priority of the school?
   - How is the school organized to meet the learning needs of students?
   - What makes this a good school?
   - How has the school changed since the Standards of Learning were mandated?
   - What has the school done to improve student SOL test scores?
   - What has the school division done to improve student test scores?
   - What do you consider a strength of the school?
   - What do you consider a weakness of the school?
   - How are teachers selected for this school?
   - Think about changes made at the school over the past two years. What areas did these changes influence?
   - Do you feel students enjoy attending this school?
   - How do teachers and parents get along?

2. Describe the principal.
   - What does the principal want for this school?
   - What seems to be important to the principal?
   - Describe the kind of teacher the principal would be.
   - How does the principal get along with the students?
   - How does the principal get along with the faculty?
   - How do you feel teachers view their principal?
   - Tell me about a recent visit to the principal. What was the result of your visit?
   - In your opinion, who deals with student behavior problems?
   - Describe the school's discipline policies.
   - How does the school communicate with you?
   - Think of a problem or conflict among people at this school. How did the principal solve the problem or conflict?

3. Describe the school's **instructional** program and services.
   - What seems to be important in this school?
   - How do teachers view this school?
   - How do most students view this school?
   - Describe your child's teacher(s).
   - Over the last couple of years, how many times have your child's teachers contacted you? Recall the reasons for this communication with you.
   - Do teachers develop their own instructional program?
   - Tell me about a time that you visited your child's teacher. What was the result, if any, from this visit?
   - Describe some of the ways you have participated in the school's programs.

- Have school personnel asked for your help in any way?
- Tell me about the school's discipline?
- Describe the school's homework policy.
- What do teachers in this school appear to spend a lot of time doing?

4. Tell me about your relationship with the school.
   - What role do you play in your child's work at school?
   - How do you help your child with school assignments?
   - Are you a member of a parent organization?
   - What activities are you involved with at your child's school?
   - Describe any community activities you are involved in.
   - What are your expectations for your child?
   - What do you think about homework? Is it necessary?
   - Where does your child do homework?
   - Tell me about a time within the past several months in which you visited the school to discuss a problem or concern. Who did you speak with?
   - Describe your own educational experiences.
   - What do you envision your child will do when he/she completes the public school program?

5. Describe **parent support** in your child's school.
   - Describe your community.
   - How do most parents view the school?
   - How do parents view the principal?
   - How do most parents view their child's teacher?
   - How do most parents view homework?
   - In this community, what is the highest level of education most parents have achieved?
   - Describe how most parent view education in this community.
   - How, and when, do most parents take an active part in community affairs?
   - Describe most parents' expectations for their children?
   - What do parents do that helps their children in school?
   - Describe a situation in which parents worked together to bring about a change in the school.

Appendix G

SCHOOL SITE VISITATION LOG

Organization

_____The school has well-established rules, policies, and management strategies.

_____The school meets the needs of its people and has effective communication.

_____The school is held together by shared values and culture.

_____Change is a stable feature of the school's organizational behavior.

_____ The school's structure stabilizes relationships and develops realistic expectations

of each other.

Leadership practices

_____The principal is extremely organized.

_____The principal provides clear, consistent goals and directions.

_____The principal listens well and demonstrates support and concern for others.

_____The principal is a highly participative manager who seeks ideas from others.

_____The principal responds well to organizational conflict.

_____The principal inspires others to do their best.

_____The principal leads with an emphasis on culture.

_____The principal is learner-centered.

_____The principal gives priority to academic excellence, personal development and

fulfillment, and human relationships.

_____The principal has a compelling vision, which empowers others to excel.

_____The principal has a high-energy level and involvement.

_____The principal has teacher skills.

Culture

_____Teachers willingly get involved in the decision-making process.

_____There is a set of norms, beliefs, and principles that members of the school

give allegiance.

_____Members in the school work in groups, sharing responsibility for tasks.

SCHOOL SITE VISITATION LOG (cont.)

_____The culture of the school does more than solve problems, it reduces anxiety.

_____Groups never stay the same in the school.

_____The success of the school focuses on the talents of staff members.

Instruction

_____Teachers in this school are sensitive and child-centered.

_____Teachers in this school have a strong belief system.

_____The school devotes little time to discipline.

_____Homework is an important component of the instructional program at this school.

_____Teachers in this school spend a lot of time on nonacademic demands.

_____Student performance is a result of teaching behaviors.

_____The principal is visible in the school.

_____The principal fosters a caring climate for staff, students, and parents.

_____The principal encourages internal initiative, experimentation, and excitement.

_____Teachers have the perception of the principal as an instructional leader.

_____Teachers in this school plan to be successful with students.

_____Teachers in this school are not confined to a "canned curriculum" and a workbook

    approach to meeting the Standards of Learning.

_____Staff harmony at this school is above average.

_____Instructional time is maximized—with few interruptions.

_____Teachers at this school have a strong sense of self-efficacy.

Parent support

_____ Parents are actively involved in the activities of the school.

_____ Parents are involved in community activities.

_____ Parents readily telephone the school to inquire about problems or concerns.

_____ Parents create a home environment that encourages learning.

_____ Parents have high but realistic expectations for student achievement.

_____ Parents value the importance of an education.

Appendix H

Raw Data Matrix: Interview with Site A Personnel

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"I have a principal and a designee in my absence. Last year I had an administrative team. I had three people and one ultimately responsible. Currently I have a BLT—building leadership team. Because this is my second year I haven't had to use it that much this year. Each grade is represented on this team and also Title One" (I/A-1). "I am careful with change. I came in March. I met with all the people. I got	"I feel I have control over curriculum and personnel. I am comfortable with curriculum. I did curriculum designing for two years. I feel I have some control over the curriculum" (I/A-1). "I feel I have the people I need" (I/A-1). "I care. Students, school and community mean a great deal to me" (I/A-1). "I try to weigh my decisions. I try to	"The SOLs define the instructional program. We haven't forgotten the Stanford 9" (I/A-2). "We have a handle on learning. Teachers experiment, take field trips, SOLs are defined by creativity of teachers" (I/A-2). "There is an outpouring of care and concern. Like every other family, there has been discord. And, that helps us grow. People always pitch in and help" (I/A-2).	"There is a culture here. There is cohesiveness here. The staff seeks each others' opinions" (I/A-2).	"Parents feel comfortable to call us. We have many parents that work. Parents will help if we ask. The support is there in other ways. The PTA is continuing to grow. It is more organized" (I/A-2). ". . .we're getting there (parents valuing education). The parents you met today are from one faction. They value education. I have a faction a community within a community some have not had a good experience, not finished school.

(table continues)

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Principal (P)	suggestions from them and I used them" (I/A-1). "Many of the teachers here are thirty year veterans. Some of the things we talked about when we met were not issues. Some options were changed. Change has been based on needs" (I/A-1). "Power is equal as possible. People have varying strengths. There are no pockets of power here. I give them some power in that small leadership role they'll assume more responsibility" (I/A-1).	be fair and consistent. There is so much gray" (I/A-1). "I feel I am a positive person maybe to a fault" (I/A-1). "There is never enough time" (I/A-1). "I believe in being visible. I'm not in classrooms as much as I want" (I/A-1). "I do have an open door policy. I don't mind calls at home. I want to be accessible. It bothers me when I've not been able to meet my part" (I/A-1).	"I limit interruptions" (I/A-2). "I have instituted policies. I protect instructional time" (I/A-2). "I limit parent movement" (I/A-2). "There are not a lot of frivolous programs" (I/A-2). "I have learned a lot from people here at this school. I have a great appreciation for people" (I/A-2). **************** "Instruction is not removed from the control of our school" (I/W-1).		Only three percent in our community have a college education. Thirty percent have a high school education" (I/A-2). "We're working at getting parents to see that homework is important. Many parents can't help their children with homework. For that reason, we have a parent resource center. We have ten to fifteen parents that come weekly to the center" (I/A-2). "Most of the parents have high expectations for the children. We are learning together. Even appropriate

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"I feel the breakfast we had for the community did more for our SOL scores than anything. . . .there was such a pride about that accomplishment among teachers. I feel that helped our SOL scores" (I/A-1). "Our school strength is the qualified staff that is willing to explore and try new things. They are willing to look beyond the horizon. Teachers suggested some changes and I am comfortable with it" (I/A-1).	"I'm parent oriented and community oriented. I'm happy to have people use my facilities" (I/A-1). "There is an organization and a grand scheme. I want to be accessible to my teachers and weigh decisions very carefully" (I/A-1). "I think I communicate a strong vision. It may a bulleted vision. Part of the fun in the journey has been charted as much by the staff as me" (I/A-1).	"She works well with our community. She has a vision for our parents and community" (I/W-1). "She leads with an emphasis on culture. It is important for her to know families of our community. She wants to understand where children come from" (I/W-1). "Committees at our school change. Mrs. A appoints the committees. If there is a conflict she willingly makes changes. We don't		behavior at PTA meetings" (I/A-2).

<div align="right">(table continues)</div>

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"The staff handles changes easily. With each change they gain a little confidence" (I/A-2). "The change in the superintendent has had some impact. Ongoing structure changes have been taking place" (I/A-2). "I feel our opinions have value" (I/A-2). "Some decisions have been the result of principal recommendations. I don't hesitate to ask" (I/A-2). "We have several committees that satisfy our SACS requirement as part	"I'm home here. I recognize my faults. I feel I encourage others but I couldn't go as far to say I'm an inspiration" (I/A-1). "I feel I'm a student centered leader. I understand the interconnectiveness" (I/A-2).	have teacher conflicts. Teachers are involved with children" (I/W-1). "We know Mrs. A expectations. We have teacher handbooks. Policies and expectations are clear" (I/W-1). "The instructional program is mandated by the state. The county has the same textbook series. We have the freedom to adjust the curriculum to fit our students" (I/W-2). "Discipline depends on the group of children. Third grade teachers spend a lot of time		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	of our on-going improvement plan that is linked strongly to our overall improvement plan. We have redesigned our committees because we have integrated the bi-annual school plan, the Department of Education Improvement Plan for SOLs, and our SACS Improvement Plan" (I/A-3). "…I have a BLT—Building Leadership Team. Each grade is represented on the team and also Title 1, and a special education teacher. Special areas such as art, music, PE,		on discipline. Most of the teachers handle their own problems" (I/W-2). "When students do poorly on a test, I feel I've done a bad job. I'll go back and reteach. I feel we have to do all we can here at school to help them" (I/W-2). "Several things influence student performance. What goes on at home the night before a test, etc." (I/W-2). "Mrs. A is an instructional leader" (I/W-2). "County policy mandates we give homework. Most of		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Principal (P)	and technology have one representative…" (I/A-1). "Part of the fun in the journey has been charted as much by the staff as me" (I/A-1). "Members serve for approximately two years. So I have some going off as new ones are coming in, but I have approximately one third to one half that remain from one year to the next. ….then by virtue of just some small school issues, we do of course have to have a child study committee. Of course, a gifted committee, a		the teachers give the required amount of homework. One hour limit is established for the upper grades. Third grade students have homework two nights a week" (I/W-2). "An asset to our school is the S.M.I.L.E.S. program. It is an after-school program. Students have thirty to forty minutes to work on homework. Then a snack and activity time" (I/W-3). *************** "We have our guidelines, our SOLs we work around. Our		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Principal (P)	character education committee, a drug education committee, and then we have a courtesy or flower fund committee in addition to the aforementioned more structured committees. And because I am such a relatively small school, each staff member serves on at least two committees" (I/A-3). "We do have parent members and community members, stake-holders on the curriculum areas" (I/A-4).		schedule is usually set up. We have so much time set up for language arts, so much time for science, social studies. We have our activity programs. Those are music and all those kinds of things are within a block. They are set up each day. So it works out really well this year" (I/R-3). "Again, we plan together, third grade teachers. We have time to get everything ready for next week" I/R-3. "I think we all feel we sometimes spend time on non-		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"Basically we have addressed curricular needs such as the four curriculum areas such as technology, overall communication skills, both oral and written" (I/A-3). "We have also looked at facilities and plans for growth in the future as part of now our <u>one</u> improvement plan" (I/A-3). "As a type of advisory committee and as a tool for communication, both from me to the staff and from the staff to me, I formed what we call the Building Leadership Team-BLT" (I/A-3).		academic things" (I/R-3). "Sometimes I work with a small group of students. I have been lately, if it's a student who may be having difficulty reading the test or whatever, a lot of times, I read with them, a lot of times I'll back up and say that the next day or whatever, remember in the test, we did this, just to review with them. Talk about it again and sometimes I'll flash up examples for those who have had problems with it and just kind of review with them, just go back over it" (I/R-4).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"This committee is used sometimes when I need to disseminate information, but it may not be necessary for me to meet with all staff members. But it also acts as an advisory committee to me and we discuss things such as programs we would like, extracurricular activities" (I/A-3). "Oftentimes when asked to secure opinions from the staff by Central Office, we use the BLT team to give data" (I/A-3). "When I have to have a school-wide		"We spend a lot of time trying to stay on task. We must do this. Are we on track? We must do this. We won't have a lot of freedom in choosing this. Pacing yourself and making time you have time to review and those kinds of things" (I/R-4). "I think most parents support what we do. We do an after-school tutorial program with our third grades to beef up the SOLs. It's a tutoring kind of thing. Parents are…a lot of times we have grade meetings with the parents and we talk		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	discipline committee, the BLT will substitute for that as well and those committees are not necessarily the same people each and every year" (I/A-3). When we organized our three separate plans into one, we saw the need to rename our committee to best address the needs of our one improvement plan" (I/A-4). "….we've looked a lot at data. We've looked at the students. We've also had to self-examine what we're		to them about this important thing that we're going to be starting—the after-school tutorial. We've had very good response" (I/R-4). "This year we're doing a 'make-it, take-it' workshop. One evening this week parents will come in. We will be making flash cards and materials to help them with multiplication tables, division, and so forth" (I/R-4). *************** "This year in the afternoon, I've spent a lot of time on discipline. A lot		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	doing as far as our own teaching styles. So we're looking at teaching models. Along with other teachers within the county, we're beginning to develop pacing guides. ….we have made what I call some 'sweeping changes'" (I/A-4). "While each committee dealt with the certain topics, such as Oral Communication dealt with the children that do not have the opportunity to express themselves in a public way often" (I/A-5).		of kids in my room" (I/B-2). "I'm most interested in reading. I work with fourth grade students also. They are heterogeneously grouped. We are split because of fifth grade" (I/B-2). "One in-service day, we did pacing guides" (I/B-2). "We have wonderful grammar books. Last Thursday, I was at the school board office and met with other fifth grade teachers. We were meeting with sixth grade teachers. They told us what we were to send students to the		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"There were no opportunities to interact at all. And so, even such things as small changes…of changing bus duty partners. So that an upper grade person was paired with a lower grade so that at least you began to have that interaction. It has made such a difference, and I think that by doing that we were also ready to make some of the decisions that we've made now that I could not have done three years ago. It has been a gradual movement up to this point. But it has been through those		middle school with. I felt good about that. I feel my children had the necessary skills" (I/B-2). "I don't mind trying new things. It depends on what it is. I think there are things that are valuable that I don't think needs to be thrown out. I'm not against trying something different if it will help my children" (I/B-2).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Principal (P)	committee meetings" (I/A-6). "Because having people serve on these committees and serving on PTA Board sometimes has been a challenge" (I/A-6).				
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"We have a variety of programs. We have pull out programs. We have Reading Recovery. I think we try to cover all the bases" (I/R-1). "We focus in our grade groups. We have our grade group meetings. The third grade teachers and I know others do also plan together" (I/R-1).	"Our principal is wonderful. She says what she means and means what she says" (I/W-1). "She is extremely supportive of teachers. She is always there to help with a problem. She is willing to do what she has to do to help us" (I/W-1). "You have to be organized to be a principal. She has	▬▬▬▬▬	"We help one another. I can't imagine working in a better school climate" (I/W-1). "No teacher is biding his or her time. In fact there are several about ready to retire and no one is talking about it" (I/W-1). "We definitely spend a lot of time with unnecessary paper work" (I/W-2).	"We try hard to involve the parents. Unfortunately we have a small select group that will help" (I/W-2). "A lot of our parents are intimidated by our schools. When parents call it has usually been a problem. Parents are intimidated by coming into the school. I think experience

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"We plan every week to be sure this is what we cover" (I/R-1). "We plan usually on Thursday or Friday. We get everything ready for the next week. You know we share materials" (I/R-1). "We have a hard working faculty. Strong principal leadership. Pride in our school. Pride in helping our students" (I/R-1). "We work well together, share, striving to help our students do the very best they can do" (I/R-2).	clear policies and procedures" (I/W-1). "She is always recognizing teachers and students. She gives 'A Principal Stamp of Approval'" (I/W-1). "Mrs. A is a very good listener" (I/W-1). "Mrs. A has in mind what she wants and then asks for input. She will consider input. Our principal is a persuasive person" (I/W-1). "She is a skilled negotiator. She is very tactful. She handles conflict extremely well. She	⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯	"I'm not afraid to try new things. I'll try things once. The faculty is split fifty-fifty on the taking of risks" (I/W-2). "The most important responsibility we have is helping each child feel successful in something" (I/W-2). "The staff harmony is as good as you're going to get in a workplace" (I/W-2). "Very positive and relaxed. We do our very best work for our students. We have high expectations. Comfortable" (I/R-2).	contributes to this" (I/W-2). "Work schedules won't allow some parents to be involved. Others use that as only an excuse" (I/W-2). "Parents expect homework" (I/W-2). "A large majority of our children don't get help with homework. A lot of our parents are not able to help their children with homework. Parents don't see the need for homework. Parents feel our job is to teach children and we shouldn't be sending that work

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"We are all involved in the decision making process" (I/R-3). "There's always communication back and forth. Information about studies, things like that. Information is passed along about "We plan every week to be sure this is what we cover" (I/R-1). "She was very careful not to put this person on five committees. It's equally shared" (I/R-3). The committees change. Like, if they are on a leadership committee, you	will get to the bottom of anything" (I/W-1). "She is very sensitive" (I/W-1). "Mrs. A communicates a strong vision" (I/W-1). "Mrs. A is a risk taker and she supports us in anything we do" (I/W-1). "The principal is centered on the education of children at this school" (I/W-1). "She helps with our scheduling or anything that we may be having	————	"We do a community breakfast and that kind of thing. We do a Secret Pal exchange and there are always little things like that" (I/R-3). ———— "On Tuesday, we have a Parent Resource center. Parents can come to the school and check out things. The center is busy until about 6:00P.M. We have the S.M.I.L.E.S. program. At 6:00 P.M., we send them home" (I/B-2). "We share responsibility equally. Everyone is	home" (I/W-2). "I don't feel there is a great deal of emphasis on education by our parents. I don't feel parents are supportive of our programs at night. I feel parents think education is important but that it is somebody else's job" (I/W-2). "Most of our parents are from single parent homes, not a good situation for our children" (I/W-3). "The majority of our parents have a high school education. A small percentage have a college

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	serve two years, but you always have a person or like half of them that rotate off each year. So, you'll have like three new ones and three old ones or four older ones" (I/R-3). "We have a close-knit faculty. The majority of us have been here many years together. Several of us have taught 25, 26, 27 years together. Oh my goodness. Yes, we're a family" (I/R-5). "We have a very positive school. A very positive attitude" (I/R-5).	difficulty with. Having scheduling conflicts, maybe it's not working as well as we would like. She's always open to looking for ways to help us do better" (I/R-2). "She has a very positive attitude. She provides a very comfortable working atmosphere. Not threatening, just you know, working together" (I/R-2). "She is very much receptive to others' ideas and suggestions" (I/R-2).	▬▬▬▬▬▬	willing to pitch in and help" (I/R-2). "The committees in the school stay the same for one year. Then responsibilities rotate" (I/R-2). ▬▬▬▬▬▬ "Culture, Christian environment in local area, values some strong morals and values" (I/T-3). "We try to get together at the beginning of the school year. We try to get together during the week of in-service and have lunch together. We have a Christmas party at someone's home. We have at the end of the year a	education. Most of these would be teachers living in the area" (I/W-3). "I think we have a strong parent support group. Through PTA and other programs we have parent education programs. We have tutorial programs. I think our parents support us pretty much. I know in third grade, the tutorial program we do after-school—a volunteer program for them to get the kids to stay and we are glad to work with them on their SOLs. It's very positive" (I/R-4).

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Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"Committees at our school change. If there is a conflict, she willingly makes changes" (I/W-1). "Our whole school is focused on the same goal. Our teachers work extremely well together. We are a close-knit faculty. We're working for the same outcome" (I/W-1). "The third grade teachers do lesson plans together. The planning together and cooperation we have is extremely important. We are trying extremely hard to meet the needs of our students" (I/W-1).	"She handles conflict great. Of course there is very little of it" (I/R-2). "She has a background in LD education, and working with students that have problems or difficulties, so she has a strong background since she has that" (I/R-2). "She has a vision for our school. With our programs and grants, etc. We started the preschool program. Again, we have the after-school S.M.I.L.E.S.. program" (I/R-2).	━━━━━━	special meal that recognizes any one that is retiring. Occasionally, we'll have people-just a reception for someone or something special going on. So, to a degree, we have these that involves all the staff" (I/T-4). "Spouses sometimes attend. They get loud. …get a bunch of teachers together—you think students are loud" (I/T-4). "I think everyone basically has an equal opportunity to participate or be involved in things. You know there are some that have been	"A lot of times I hear 'I didn't do so well, I want my child to do better.' I help them any way I can. I want all the help I can get for them" (I/R-4). "Most of our parents have a high school education. This is a rural community' (I/R-4). "They have reasonable expectations for their children" (I/R-4). "Homework. The cure or the kill? A lot of parents think their child has too much work. Our after school

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Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"There are times that our school has been treated as redheaded stepchildren because of our location. We've been the best kept secret in this county" (I/W-1). "We were pretty passive and Mrs. A. came in and is not passive. Change has been a constant part of this school since Mrs. A. has been here" (I/W-1). "The strength of our school is the close-knit faculty. It's more like a family" (I/W-1). "The support and encouragement we get from Mrs. A. is	"She has a very positive attitude. There is always recognition for students' work well done" (I/R-2). "Mrs. A. has great organizational skills. This is very important" (I/R-2). "I can't even think of one weakness the principal has" (I/R-2). "I'm going to say she is an instructional leader. Like I say, mostly organized skills and management skills, but also, how can I help" (I/R-2). She always asks if there is any area she	▬▬▬▬▬▬	teaching together for 30 years and you know they're closer and maybe you know seemingly have more interactive or interactions with each other or they might be a little more loyal as far as school-wide activities and functions, like duties and other things. They may feel and little more welcomed and a part of it" (I/T-5). (When asked to describe staff harmony, interviewee responded, "It's um, I think uh, you might want to turn that off." No	program, S.M.I.L.E.S. provides homework time. The students that participate in that program have definite help with homework. And I must say that this year my group of students has brought back work completed with a signature on it. So, it's a big help. I think they try" (I/R-4). "We have daily planner that they can take home every day that shows their assignments and show their homework so there's not 'did you have this page or the other page?'

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)	great. She says little things to teachers that make them feel so good about themselves" (I/W-1).	can be of help or can we find a way to work with this or that. She is most supportive" (I/R-2). "We care about our students. We try to help them. We try to figure out where they are, what they need and how can I best meet that need for them" (I/R-2). "We have student and teacher handbooks" (I/R-3).	▬▬▬▬▬	response was made.) ▬▬▬▬▬	They know the page. They know exactly. So good communications exist about what this child needs to be working on. We also put it in the newsletters the next week: 'We're going to be working on—"(I/R-4). "I think most view homework as important. Most folks assign some homework each week. We have like three nights and we put it in our newsletter. They have math on Monday, reading on Tuesday, and whatever on Thursday. I think most folks

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)			▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬	communicate" (I/R-5). "We are getting ready for parent conferences. We have good support for that" (I/B-2). ▬▬▬▬ "I receive comments on report cards. Sometimes, parents will write me a thank you note on it" (I/B-2). "I feel most parents value education. They want what is best for their child" (I/B-2). "Reading is most important. If you can't read, you can't do anything else. I mostly require my

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Third Grade Teacher (T3)			▬▬▬▬	▬▬▬▬	students to read each night" (I/B-2). "Grandparents are raising many students. Parents that work the way they do, they don't want to sit down for an hour or two of homework a night. I don't assign a lot of homework. Some students will have support at home, others will not" (I/B-2). "We have a county policy that addresses homework. If students work in class, they don't need a lot of homework" (I/B-2).
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"I think it's tailored to the needs of the students and taken	"I can't brag long enough. She understands us. She	"Sometimes materials is a weakness, especially		"Some years I have parents that are more available

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	into account, the community around our school and the type of its very country-type setting, everyone has the same opportunity to learn" (I/T-1). "Our principal is our leader" (I/T-1). "She's very organized, as far as getting us organized in the classroom" (I/T-1). "…we changed principals two years ago. I think this is Mrs. A's. third year" (I/T-1). "I think a big change is more communication.	is super! She is so appreciative of the work we do and she says so" (I/B-1). "She has this system and she gives us a token to use whenever we need to leave early. It becomes void after a certain time. Sometimes she will let us leave early. She'll say, 'There's been a clock adjustment'. She does little things that mean so much" (I/B-1). "She understands the pressures we're under" (I/B-1). "She's so supportive" (I/B-1).	in the science curriculum" (I/T-2). "As far as the curriculum, I know that the book we adopted a few years ago in fifth grade, it's extremely hard to use that book for more than one year. The next year you have to come up with other materials. We have the handbooks on phonics but even then sometimes, it becomes just having enough video disc players, it makes it harder to use that"" (I/T-2). "I'm primarily kind of a pragmatic you know I use what works. I like to use		maybe not as you know their willingness to help. I think once it gets to fifth grade level, it's been my experience, that not a lot of parent involvement in that grade is desired. I have had some good success with like parent conferences and parent-teacher conferences" (I/T-8). "Parents are willing to come and want to come and discuss their child's progress with you" (I/T-8). "During field trips we limited as to the number of parents that can participate,

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	There is more communication between principal and staff" (I/T-1). "Her expectations are more out and you know what she expects. The efficiency in which her expectations are carried out" (I/T-1). "I mean as far as efficiency is, and golly, it's like night and day. Not that it's the previous principal; it's totally a different style" (I/T-1). "The look of the building has changed too. I mean, we have had a lot of construction and reconstruction.	"She helps with discipline problems. She will take children to the office and make them complete their work. She says we all work together" (I/B-1). "She is very fair" (I/B-1). "She always smiles. She has a wonderful personality" (I/B-1). "She can be stern when she needs to be" (I/B-1). "She listens well" (I/B-1). "She handles conflict well. One time a parent called and said she could	a textbook and then have lots of other supplemental materials" (I/T-5). "I work in cooperative learning groups if possible in the classroom" (I/T-5). "I try to assess each student on his/her strengths to work with individual weaknesses as I can. It's hard you know, but I try to be fair. I work really really hard to be fair to students" (I/T-5). "I try not to let personal biases get in the way and sometimes you can no matter how hard you try. There are		and I know parents are disappointed because they feel like it's the last year of elementary and they don't want to miss anything in their children's elementary experience because they know as soon as they get to the middle school, their kids are starting to push them away" (I/T-8). "Parents readily call. Sometimes it's not my favorite phone call, but I don't like confrontation. I'm not a confrontational type person, so you know it's harder for me sometimes to deal with parents

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	It's just good for morale" (I/T-1). "Organization is good. It's all brought about by effective communication" (I/T-1). "We don't have people monitoring us on an uncomfortable level. I know that first year for non-tenured year teachers, you have people come down from central office and observe you teaching to help you become a better teacher; but the expectations in the county, we are very aware of the expectations in this county" (I/T-1).	not get her child up to come to school, and Mrs. A. told her she would come and get him up. The child came to school! She was willing to go get the child. That shows commitment" (I/B-1). "She has a vision. Our S.M.I.L.E.S. program and things we have gotten shows her vision" (I/B-1). "Our schedule gives us 11:15-11: 45 each day free because we have things during this time" (I/B-1). "She is bold. She is dedicated" (I/T-2).	certain biases that arise sometimes" (I/T-5). "I use chapter tests, unit tests, quizzes as assessment, in addition to some. I don't use student portfolio, that type assessment. Occasionally, I might use rubrics to see how they're doing" (I/T-5). "I feel free to use material that would be relevant to teach the objectives. I try to be creative within the curriculum as much as possible" (I/T-5). "I try to handle as much discipline or discipline problems		that are upset over grades or behavior. But I like to be made aware of it. But for the most part, thank goodness, I've had very few of those and yes they do call" (I/T-8). "…in the past I know there has been some problems, in some like not this year so far, but last year, the class that came up, that was one of the biggest concerns that they felt that the children had too much homework in the fourth grade" (I/T-8). "I think parents are so busy and children

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"Our dedication is a strength and that we work well together. The teachers, their dedication, their support is a real good thing. You know you get help if you need it. People are willing to help and support you" (I/T-1). "They care. We have a caring faculty. They are there for personal needs sometimes if they are asked. They do a lot for each other. They are good people to work with" (I/T-1). "She is very supportive of her staff" (I/T-2).	"A professional 100%. A hundred plus percent" (I/T-2). "When she has something she believes in, she is dogmatic about it" (I/T-2). "She is very supportive of her staff, meaning that if we have a problem with a student or a parent, she is always there for us and supports us in our decisions" (I/T-2). "She is very serious in every thing that she does"" (I/T-2). "She is a great manager" (I/T-2).	as possible. I think I have a little higher tolerance level than maybe some of the other staff members have. It depends upon the kids. Some days are worse than others, but I try to handle it in the classroom" (I/T-5). "It could take a lot of my time but I try not to let it. It could take all of my time if I had unrealistic expectations that each student was going to behave exactly by the book. We've got classroom rules and I try to abide by those" (I/T-6).		are so busy that it can be overwhelming to give two hours worth of homework or three hours of homework every night of the week" (I/T-8). "Parents I think feel like that our job is to teach in the classroom and to do it all in the classroom and not send it home. They don't have time to deal with it" (I/T-8). "Sometimes I wonder if parents have appropriate expectations for their children. I'd like to know" (I/T-8).

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"Our motto is 'Our Children, Our Future'" (I/B-1). "We have a BLT group. One person from each grade group meets with the principal. …we get input" (I/B-1). "Each hall has a designated teacher that teachers can go to for help" (I/B-1). "There is really good communication" (I/B-1). "We have a chart we get at the beginning of the year that tells your duties and responsibilities for	"She has a lot of energy" (I/T-2). "She is very concerned about this school, about decisions, about the students and about the success of this school" (I/T-2). "She is very knowledgeable as far as about what is expected of the students" (I/T-2). "She's amazing really. I mean, gosh, super. Super woman" (I/T-2). "I think we have clear policies" (I/T-2).	"Each grade has gotten together and created these classroom rules and consequences" (I/T-6). "Mrs. A. doesn't spend a lot of time with discipline from my classroom. She is available and she is willing and if I feel the need to send a student, she knows that I've exhausted my ideas" (I/T-6). "I think homework is important in math because I think kids need a little bit of practice after you go over it in class. It almost seems like its		"I look at students and look at their expectations and I have to wonder you know, they are not motivated" (I/T-9). "They're lackadaisical. They have so much, what's the word, empathy; excuse me, apathy-apathetic. …there are no expectations sometimes" (I/T-9). "I think parents value education but they don't recognize the correlation between education and success. They learn. They just assume it's going to happen but maybe

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	the year. Duties are distributed evenly" (I/B-1). "The principal does an excellent job of making us aware of things we need to know. She even covers everything when she is out period. She even calls back to check on things" (I/B-1). "The strength of our school is we're friendly and we help each other out" (I/B-1). "There is a lot of good communication. We have a good atmosphere. Our school is very	"She really wants us to make her aware of students' successes. She recognizes outstanding behavior, work, and effort in lots of different ways. Whether it's an announcement, saying their names over the intercom, or if it's a call or in a card sent home. (We've got cards that we send saying congratulations.) Anything to motivate the students" (I/T-2). "I know when she's pleased with me. You know if it's false praise, it's real You know when.	magic and then when they get home do they really understand it? Do they understand the steps? I think practice makes math more, I don't know, they just learn it better" (I/T-6). "I think science and things like that I try to do as much in the classroom as possible because it's so complex and I think discussing it and reasoning and giving examples and having the right materials there is more relevant than home" (I/T-6). "I'm not a big project person and		there is responsibility in the process and how it can make a difference. I don't think they realize" (I/T-9).

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	attractive. We have flags up in the halls. Our bulletin boards are the cutest things-they're great" (I/B-1). "Members of this group, BLT, meet to discuss grade level concerns, as well as to keep the principal informed of the individual grade level's focus" (I/B-1). "The principal does an excellent job of making us aware of things we need to know. She even covers everything when she is out. She even calls back to check on things" (I/B-1).	she's pleased" (I/T-2). "She's a very good listener" (I/T-2). "She handles conflict well" (I/T-2). "I think she has a vision for this school" (I/T-2). "We have a mission statement and our motto is on the newsletter and is known by everyone. I think we know the vision for our school" (I/T-3). "I think the success of the students is important to Mrs. A., and again, I think she wants	that might be because of personal experience as a parent but math definitely, I think three or four night a week. Not a whole lot of math practice sheets. One page, you know a few problems" (I/T-6). "My responsibility is to teach these children relevant material that will help them in life be more successful and to be real. …to make this education as real as possible, and necessary, and make them a part of it" (I/T-6). "…right now, that success is being able to pass the SOLs.		

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	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"The strength of our school is we're friendly and we help each other our" (I/B-1).	them to be as successful as they can be" (I/T-3). "I think for students to be successful, teachers have to be successful. I think if we don't have a high degree of success, I think you equate that with performance also. If they don't do well in the classroom, you have to redirect strategies to help us be more successful" (I/T-3). "I think she is open to ideas. She is careful before implementing anything" (I/T-3). "She's extremely dedicated" (I/T-3).	Because I want to think the SOLs are fair and that the material that they're being tested on is relevant to what they need to know to, you know, be able to function in our society. I want them to do well" (I/T-7). "We have in-service at the beginning of the year that focuses on different strategies. The past couple of years, it's been the SOL strategies or effective SOL strategies. Pacing, curriculum pacing this year was the big one. Throughout the year, we may have staff		

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)		(When asked to identify a weakness, interviewee just laughs.) "Mrs. A. primarily accepts to a degree some input from staff but ultimately I think the decisions are made primarily by her" (I/T-3). "She does ask for suggestions and you know if it's a good suggestion then she'll act on it. It's amazing, her overall scheme" (I/T-3). "I think the school promotes her ideas" (I/T-3). "I know during when we were going through school	development opportunities like technology that are offered in the school or on Saturdays that we can be a part of. We have staff development or half day workshops that we attend at the central office to work on different types of strategies. We also have staff development days that are counted staff development that we are encouraged to attend. I'll be attending a science conference, a VAST science conference this weekend, Friday and Saturday, and that's professional days. We're also given I think points		

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)		renewal last year and I met with stake-holders, it was hard to on a regular basis communicate with them. They're not available or not there maybe some lack of communication there simply because of availability on their part, maybe" (I/T-3). "Faculty meetings are usually at a certain time" (I/T-3). "There are routines. We're on a schedule. We're pretty much on schedule during the day. Your time is scheduled" (I/T-3).	or recertification type points" (I/T-7). "…so there's a month of staff development but it's of course required and every five years, we're required to recertify" (I/T-7).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)		"There are committees, the bulletin boards out in the hall that is delegated from this office. That was different from the previous administrations as far as persons but she is very fair" (I/T-3). "I don't think she overloads or expects anybody to do more than anybody else. She's very fair" (I/T-4). "I think she tries to put people where they're going to feel the most comfortable and that would be to know a strength that they have" (I/T-4).			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)		"There's a couple of people that people would go to if they had a problem or concern" (I/T-4). "…if I had a problem, I would go to Mrs. A. before I would go to the next level or outside the school. If I had a problem, I would go to her. Even if it was with her" (I/T-5). "We've had problems in the past (mentions students coming early) and again I would go to Mrs. A. and let her talk with the parents and let her address that" (I/T-5).			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)		"I think she's a manager in the sense of administrator. She's meticulous. She dots her i's and crosses her t's. Every one of them. And she's very good" (I/T-7).			
Parents (4) (Par)	"We have a parent resource center where we can go and get information" (I/P-1). "The computer lab is open to parents and children every Tuesday from 3:00 until 6:00 P.M." (I/P-1). "Everyone in the building is friendly. It's a super school" (I/P-1).	"Mrs. A. is very much organized" (I/P-1). "She has clear policies. Most follow these policies. They follow the rules because they respect her. She runs a tight ship" (I/P-1). "She shows concern for other and supports others" (I/P-1).	"She understands the instructional program" (I/P-1). "We have a very well structured school" (I/P-1). "Teachers coordinate the activities" (I/P-1). "Students have daily planners in grades 3-5. These have to be taken home and signed by the parents" (I/P-1).		"Every program my child has been in, I've been there" (I/P-2). "I am involved in PTA" (I/P-2). "My child knows school is their first priority" (I/P-2). "We go on field trips, help with parties, we volunteer. This work is important because my child get the reward" (I/P-2).

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	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Parents (4) (Par)	"We have had a lot of changes with our new principal. All changes have been good. These were needed changes" (I/P-1). "The strength of the school is the principal" (I/P-1).	"If you have a problem, it stays with her" (I/P-1). "She doesn't mind phone calls late at night. You can go to her with a problem" (I/P-1). "She stays late at school" (I/P-1). "She does anything that needs to be done" (I/P-1). "She acts and responds immediately to a situation" (I/P-1). "She is concerned for others' well being" (I/P-1).	"The SOLs are very important to the teachers" (I/P-1). "In grades 1and 2, we have Thursday folders. These folders require parents' signatures. Grades 3-5 have Thursday folders" (I/P-1). "All parents feel comfortable calling the school to ask questions. They know they aren't going to get a negative response from Mrs. A." " (I/P-1). "We feel comfortable making a suggestion to any		"I expect good grades from my child. If they are capable of A's, I expect A's. If their grades aren't good, you see that they work on it. My child has to practice handwriting every night whether he has homework or not" (I/P-2). "One teacher, her teaching was so different. After I came to talk with her, I understood, and my child did better" (I/P-2). "Children seem to have a lot more homework since the SOLs" (I/P-2).

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	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Parents (4) (Par)		"She is a very good listener to students and to parents" (I/P-1).

"She is always giving her stamp of approval" (I/P-1).

"She recognizes good grades. She tries to recognize every student for something" (I/P-1).

"She is receptive to ideas from others" (I/P-1).

"She is highly influential and persuasive" (I/P-1).

"She is inspires others, both students and teachers" (I/P-1). | of our children's teachers" (I/P-1).

"We have two parent/teacher conferences. Conferences are well attended. There are a few parents that don't come to meetings" (I/P-2).

"I feel I am encouraged to come to the school" (I/P-2).

"I am a Girl Scout leader" (I/P-2).

"I am a Boy Scout leader" (I/P-2).

"I am involved in church activities" (I/P-2). | | "Homework depends on the teacher" (I/P-2).

"I think they need it (homework)" (I/P-2).

"I don't think they need it" (I/P-2).

"They need homework within reason" (I/P-2).

"The division's policy is 15 minutes per grade level. Homework shouldn't be busy work" (I/P-2).

"Most parents support the school" (I/P-2). |

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Parents (4) (Par)		"She knows what the goals are and how to get there" (I/P-1). "She is in tune to all of her surroundings" (I/P-1). "She is concerned about students. She is student-centered" (I/P-1). "She spends as much time as needed with discipline" (I/P-1). "Students know the rules. If students go to the office once, they don't want to go back. Students know the consequences" (I/P-1).	"Each grade level has a structured program. They follow the texts. They don't have the freedom to teach the way they would like" (I/P-2). "They are free to a certain extent but limited also" (I/P-2). "Ought to make it fun" (I/P-2). "Most of the teachers have the confidence to teach children" (I/P-2).		"Most parents do call the school with a problem" (I/P-2). "PTA programs are well attended. Fall festival is well attended. Parents will come out for programs" (I/P-2). "The PTA has done a questionnaire to try to get more parents involved" (I/P-2). "Parents do support community affairs" (I/P-2). "Parents have realistic expectations for their children" (I/P-2).

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership practices**	**Instruction**	**Culture of the school**	**Parent support**
Parents (4) (Par)		"She has a compelling vision and she wants to go as far as she can go" (I/P-1). "She understands the instructional program" (I/P-1).			"Some parents, about 10%, feel everything is up to the teacher" (I/P-2). "If parents want to be involved, they can" (I/P-2). "Parents can eat lunch with their children" (I/P-2). "If they aren't involved at the middle school, that's when problems start" (I/P-2). "Most of our parents have a high school education" (I/P-2). (Of the parents interviewed, one went to the 12th grade, two were

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership practices	Instruction	Culture of the school	Parent support
Parents (4) (Par)					high school graduates, and one had one year of college.) "Most parents agree homework is necessary but within limits" (I/P-2). "I think homework teaches them responsibility" (I/P-2).

Appendix I

Raw Data Matrix: Interview with Site B Personnel

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"Based on grade level input. Emphasis is on working together as a team" (I/B-1). "Teachers know board policies and follow them" (I/B-1). "Instruction is first" (I/B-1). "We are use to change. Change is a stated factor of this school" (I/B-1). "Everyone knows each other's expectations" (I/B-1).	"I believe in motivation. I use positive reinforcement" (I/B-1). "I have failed to hit a few things head-on. I need to get more comfortable confronting potential problems" (I/B-1). "I am a good listener. Teachers never know when I'm joking or serious" (I/B-1).	"Six teachers on a SOL team" (I/B-2). "Teachers are the experts. Teachers are more involved in the instructional planning than they used to be" (I/B-2). "They don't spend a lot of time on discipline. Next year we'll try a detention program" (I/B-2). "Sometimes hard for teachers to discipline to kids" (I/B-2). "Discourage teachers from keeping kids out of	"I've learned a lot about it" (I/B-1). "The superintendent has an impossible job. I now have more respect for Central Office people. Mr. J. has left me alone. He is supportive" (I/B-1). "I'd like to be a little more involved in the elementary supervisor's role. Things are pretty much dictation" (I/B-1). "We have principal's instructional meetings" (I/B-1).	"Parents are part of the plan" (I/B-2). "Parents are very supportive of this school. Parents are cooperative. We could get more support—wish for more" (I/B-2). "Parents call the school with a problem or concern. I haven't had any complaints to the superintendent. When parents call, I take phone calls in a positive manner. I don't get gruff. I think that parents are listened to" (I/B-2).

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"They work well together as a team" (I/B-1). "We have an SOL team, an audit committee, a principal's advisory committee (I started that this year.), a reading improvement committee, a QUILT committee, a school crisis committee, a school health committee, a school safety committee, a transition committee (fifth grade teachers meeting with middle school teachers), and a Reading Success committee" (I/B-3). "Mrs. D. and I generally decide	"Mrs. D. thinks I'm organized. I know where to reach for everything" (I/B-1). "I try to make everyone feel good" (I/B-1).	physical education" (I/B-2).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	(how committees are formed)" (I/B-3). "The reading success team is a set team because of the training. We look at good fits for committees. She and I basically do it" (I/B-3). "Teachers select their first, second, or third choice. But we make the decision. We rotate the audit committee, the principal's advisory committee, the reading improvement committee, the SOL committee, the school crisis committee, and the safety committee" (I/B-3).				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	"Parents, the secretary, the custodian, head cook, and the school nurse serve on committees" (I/B-3). "The grade level meetings are conducted at least once a month. There are no set patterns for the other meetings. The principal advisory meeting is conducted twice a year" (I/B-3). "These committees have considered several things. The reading improvement committee sets up the reading program at our school. The SOL committee				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	meets once a month and directs the school visits each year. They also discuss the use of money we receive for piloting tests. Last year we piloted the ITBS test" (I/B-3). "Teachers by grades gather as a grade group. Our new building has helped with the interaction among teachers and staff members. There is still some isolation. We now have multi-grade level meetings. This gives teachers an opportunity to share with one another so that the primary teachers know what the upper grade teachers are doing				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Principal (P)	and vice versa. We have a time at each faculty meeting for grade level teachers to share with the entire faculty" (I/B-3).				
Assistant Principal (AP)	"We have committees. Committees rotate. Everyone is on a committee" (I/D-1). "Policies are used in decision making. Teachers have a handbook. Students have a Code of Conduct booklet" (I/D-1).		"We've done Q.U.I.L.T. for staff development" (I/B-1). "Teachers partner and give each other support" (I/B-2). "I observe a variety of instructional techniques. Most activities involve a group. Group instruction" (I/B-2). "We visit other schools to help us improve with SOLs" (I/B-2).		"Teachers in primary grades frequently call parents" (I/B-2). "I feel parents view education as important. We do have parents that do not have high expectations for their children. They want them to be happy and have a good time. They want them to learn what they can" (I/B-2).

(table continues)

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	Leadership skills	Instruction	Culture	Parent support
Assistant Principal (AP)			"Teachers spend most of their time on instruction" (I/B-2). "We have grade group meetings on Wednesday" (I/B-2). "No bus duty on 'Wonderful Wednesdays" (I/B-3). "Teachers must take minutes of meetings. They list things discussed" (I/B-3). "Homework is not done to introduce a lesson. Used to reinforce" (I/B-3). "Principal usually handles discipline because I come and go" (I/B-3).		"Parents need their kids to be academically sound" (I/B-2). "Most of our parents have a high school education" (I/B-2).

(table continues)

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Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Assistant Principal (AP)			"…we're pretty much self-contained as far as instruction. Except for maybe reading and of course math, we do rotation. This is mainly the primary grades for reading. In science, for third and fifth grade, we'll combine a lot. We take turns teaching and move around the room a lot for instruction. We have found it to be most effective when one person teaches the lesson. We don't do it for every lesson, but we do it for review" (I/B-3).		
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"Pretty much, really structured. I know in fifth grade we are. Our schedules are back to back. We are real structured	"Mr. B. is very hard working, tries very hard to make everyone feel comfortable. Comfortable with	"It seems like we spend a lot of time this year for discipline for some reason. Usually it is a child from the	"It is very supportive as far as disciplinary situations. When there are problems with students'	"Volunteers! We have good participation from parents serving as volunteers. Parents are always here for

(table continues)

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	with them and maintain a tight schedule with all our classes" (I/K-1).

"I think all our organization is good for our school because it seems like it flows real well as far as how it is organized" (I/K-1).

"Mr. B. works real hard all summer to get a good schedule as far as classes and with our input and how we think it might work better" (I/K-1).

"…Mr. B. pretty much makes the decisions but he is always coming around asking if we have an idea and if we do, he'll discuss | trying new ideas for students and teachers. All those are positive attitudes for us" (I/K-3).

"He'll thank us in his announcements— he'll thank us for doing a good job. He comes up with new ideas like citizenship. That's our daily thing, citizenship" (I/K-3).

"Being a new principal, he'll try new things to see what works best. He always has a positive attitude with teachers and students" (I/K-3).

"The principal emphasizes to do the best you can and | upper grades" (I/K-7).

"We have started a new thing this year with a homework folder. At the first of the year, Mr. B. gave each student a folder. The teachers give them a strip of paper that covers the schedule for Monday through Friday. Each student has to take this home every night whether he or she has homework or not. Parents are to sign it every night so they will know what is expected of the student each day. Teachers check it every day to see if parents signed it. We feel this is especially important | behavior or their work, it's very supportive. Most teachers feel very comfortable going back to a previous teacher, talking with them about situations they have had in the past. If a teacher on bus duty had a problem, they feel very comfortable going back to the teacher of the student and inform them of the behavior problems and count on them to take care of it" (I/L-3).

"Decisions are made by a democratic vote. Unless it is something mandated by the central office. Mr. B. does a survey and gives us | workshops. Once a year we have an SOL activity. The parents bring their children and participate in the activity with the children" (I/K-8).

"Parent support is very strong. There are a lot of parents that are volunteers here. There have been a lot of lay-offs and some parents have chosen to be more active in school since they were laid off from some of the factories around that had lay-offs.
…were people in my class last year and this year that have taken a more active role too in working at the |

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	it with us and see how he thinks it might work with the students we have" (I/K-1). "So he lets us have input and he goes by that and organizes what we need from those discussions. He always asks for our opinions for what we think will work. So he has mainly as far as organization, scheduling. Mrs. D. helps him with that too, the Librarian and Mrs. D. the assistant principal. She says I have a part in it but he gives us the finalized version of it I guess I should say" (I/K-1).	whatever the situation you are in, to have a positive attitude. Look to the concerns of the students and what they have been through and the position they are in. Just doing the best we can and working hard" (I/K-3). "He is always working on things to benefit us. Concerns for our well-being as a school and for students" (I/K-3). "He sometimes helps with instruction and shows us how it would be easier to teach certain things and make it more enjoyable as we	for those in the upper grades. I feel the folder has been a big help because the students can look at it and know what is expected of them. We also use the folder to send home graded papers for signing by the parents" (I/K-7). "We do not have a homework policy. It varies from teacher to teacher" (I/K-7). "We go back over it (test) when students do not do well on a test. When we have a social studies or a science test they have a guide to do a complete review because lots of them do not study. It is	top choices like a work night to be scheduled or some kind of situation he is going to change. Top vote is announced by memo or over the PA system" (I/L-3).	school and PTO" (I/L-6). "The PTO is a wonderful organization. …they were motivated to raise money for something beneficial for the kids. There's not that good attendance at the organized meetings unless of course there's some activity going on with the kids. But the officers we had last year and this year are really concerned about what they can do to help the school" (I/L-6). "They raise a lot of money. Last year they raised between

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"We are trying new things this year that have made a difference. We try things this year and then we know if it works whether we'll try it next year" (I/K-1). "We have a math and science teacher (lead teachers) and we have had them several years. It started with an Eisenhower grant" (I/K-1). "…with the Standards of Learning, we are looking at more things this year than we have the last couple of years, really since we started. We have	teach. I guess his concern is to work on plans for us to better ourselves as teachers and to help us make the students feel more comfortable in the classroom" (I/K-3). "…the change over the past years is that we work harder. Everybody stays on task all day working as hard as we can. There hasn't been a change as far as teacher turnover. We had a few changes as far as classrooms. We have a new resource teacher; it's a male teacher. You know there might be a difference in how the students react to	important for them to develop good study habits. If we have a lot of students to fail a test, we review again and retake the test" (I/K-7). "The SOL test is here and we have to work on it. Last year was probably more stressful. I think as years go by, we become more familiar with the material and we know what we should spend the same amount of time on each area because when we let down on a certain area, we tend to fall down there" (I/K-8).		sales, box tops, and of course the recycling program, I think they raised nearly $15,000. Enough to pay for the initial parts of our playground last year" (I/L-6). "Oh yes, parents feel they can contact the school when they have a concern or problem. Maybe not in a positive tone but they will definitely call and express their opinion" (I/L-6). "There had to be some changes made because at one time parents felt like they could just come anytime; be in the hallways and there

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	picked up on things other schools have used. We have an SOL team or committee. When you get materials for the SOLs, their purpose is to share with others and we meet once a month. If we have received new materials pertaining to the SOLs we meet and share these materials with our grade level. Each grade level has a person on this committee. Last year we visited two schools just to see what they were doing to improve their SOL scores. One school was using "Blast Off so that's what we're using this year. That has helped a	having a man teacher" (I/K-4). "Mr. B. wants to stress the SOLs and to improve our scores. He has stressed that for the last couple of years. It's been an improvement on education as far as scores and seeing what works and what doesn't" (I/K-4). "…if a problem with a student is serious, we take it to Mr. B. He'll talk to them and try to get them turned around as far as their attitude. We don't really have anything like detention or anything like that. We've done more	"Volunteers" (I/K-8). We have good participation from parents serving as volunteers. Parents are always here for workshops. Once a year, we have an SOL activity for parents. The parents bring their children and participate in the activity with the children" (I/K-8). "The teacher handles most discipline in the school through the classroom. Mr. B. is usually always the last resort for the younger teachers. It has to be an intolerable situation such as harassment or physical violence" (I/L-3).		was a safety issue. We had to do a lot of changes. Sometimes there would be an awkward situation because they would be here a little too much. They would come in a little early to pick up their child and well can I talk to my child's teacher just for a few minutes. She won't mind if I pull her out of class. I guess they felt really comfortable" (I/L-6). "I would say 70% really feel there is something they have to do with their children. They have to push them and encourage them. Now we have some

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	lot. In the whole school this year, our best teachers, not the same two will get to visit two other schools that have done well on their scores. He is going to let everyone have a chance to visit another school and look at what that they have done to improve test scores" (I/K-2).

"Mr. B. gets on the computer and got on a web site that showed test scores for schools in this part of the state. He looked at the size of the school, the location and I guess he considered economics. He went to one in the | with rewarding them more for certain things and I think that has helped cut down on discipline problems" (I/K-4).

"He'll call in the parents for a conference if it's someone who has had problems and continues to do so. …has taken the child home to talk with parents. He always brings the parents in right away to make them aware of what's going on. Parents are impressed with that too" (I/K-4).

"You know there are always little conflicts. Mr. B. always tells us that we are not going to | "About 5% of the day is spent on discipline or conflict resolution in the average classroom whether it is your or someone else's. Mine is about 10% since I am in fifth grade. I am on the Conflict Resolution Team and I handle discipline for other teachers also" (I/L-3).

"No, I don't think so (principal spends a lot of time on discipline). I don't think it is an issue with him" (I/L-3).

"I think we have a strong instructional program. Our focus is on instruction during the day. The materials overall are | | that 30% that I would worry about the children because the parents aren't going to be the answer. They listen to you, and yes they agree my child has problems but you don't see that support there. But the 70% that do, really really emphasize it" (I/L-7)

". . .with this new homework folder I think the overall response has been real positive. In the fifth grade especially, we had to really emphasize teaching the kids responsibility, getting ready for middle school. This year we've had a lot |

(table continues)

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	Roanoke area, a fairly large school. He looked at a school in Buchanan County, down in a coal mining area. Both of these schools had high scores. He also looked at how much improvement they had made over the previous year. We wanted to go and see what they were doing to improve their scores" (I/K-2). "The rotation is new thing we have done this year to improve our SOL scores" (I/K-2). "…everything is oriented to the SOLs, so we are all gearing toward that.	have this in our classrooms. He stresses the importance of working together and working to overcome our differences. He tells us we must learn to get along with each other just as we teach our students to get along with each other. We have to live in that classroom all year and we must learn to look over the small, petty things we sometimes disagree about" (I/K-4). "I can't think of a change other than our new principal. He gives us a lot of motivation as far as trying new things to	good materials. Our science isn't that good. Our reading is a good series. Math, they just adopted an excellent math book. The grade level meetings, we have support. Overall, it's a sound program" (I/L-5). "I think one of the strengths is trying to make myself be more hands-on, more physical, and more visual because I feel I've got a lot of students that haven't reached their reading level and I have to try to give more visual, more tactile things…." (I/L-5).		of success with it. I might have two kids out of twenty that don" get their notebooks signed or at least reviewed" (I/L-7). "Overall I think with the economic situation in the area most parents realize children have to do well in order to go somewhere else and have a decent life for themselves" (I/L-7).

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	We have a reading person that comes in, I don't know exactly what the title is but we have one person that just pulls students just for reading. He's working on the primary grades now. Then we have a county person that helps with reading and science. …having new people come in just for SOL material helps" (I/K-2). "…he usually interviews (personnel) and discusses it with Mr. J. Sometimes he'll have another teacher sit in on the initial interview, for input again. His (Mr. J.)	see if they will work to improve education. I think his attitude toward his employees is also a strength. His motivation and drive is very positive, and he's always available" (I/K-5). "He is a new principal and having to learn how to deal with certain situations would be considered a weakness but not in a negative way. …he was a high school teacher and I think it's probably harder on him to get on our level when it comes to dealing with the younger students" (I/K-5).	"I go back over the test and I look to see if there was a particular error that more children missed an item on to find out a particular area that I didn't focus on as well, and maybe I thought that I had touched on it well enough. I look through the test for the weak spot, and then I go back after the test. I always try to get the students' feedback on it too. If there is a particular area that I don't think I covered well, we'll talk about it because I don't want to go on. If it is a large area, I'll even reteach" (I/L-5-6).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	input makes a big difference" (I/K-2). "All the people getting along well together make this a good organization. Our community works well together. We are losing a lot of industry but what we have left really is supportive as far as donations and materials given to use. Our students really seem to care about our town and our community" (I/K-2). "A strength of our school is our teachers and how seriously they take their jobs. These teachers care about their students; when you have that, you	"…It's a comfortable atmosphere here with our students. Everyone seems to feel at home here" (I/K-5). Mr. B. always asks us how we feel about things. We are included in his decision making process" (I/K-5). "He told us what committees would be set up and informed us to apply for what we were interested in. He informed us that we could serve either on a committee or serve on a reading improvement team. He always gives us a choice" (I/K-5).	"The homework policy is simple. I try to plan out my lessons where they do not have more than two major homework assignments a night. Parents are aware of it, so when the homework sheet comes home in the school homework folder. I have initialed it. I know that the students have written down from the board or from class. Parents do sign it to indicate they have seen it and that the kids understand it. Grandparents or babysitters can sign it. Sometimes when they finish homework at school, I'll sign the		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	can do a lot of things. We want our scores to improve and for all of us to work together to achieve this goal" (I/K-3). "We have good students but there are a lot of students that need that extra help" (I/K-3). "I think we have a close relationship here. Most of us have gone to the same schools and grew up right here in this county. We have had the opportunity to be around each other most of our lives. We care about personal things that happen to each other. We feel we	"He sends us memos once a week to tell us what's going on that week and even down to who's on bus duty that week. His announcement each morning starts at exactly the same time to prevent us from being interrupted in the classroom after we get started. Our faculty has Wednesday afternoons for either grade level meetings or faculty meetings. He kind of guides us through what topics we need to be discussing there" (I/K-6). "Most of us serve on one committee" (I/K-6).	bottom of the sheet" (I/L-6). "Overall this school has a positive attitude. There are some weak areas, especially in identifying children with needs. . . .we also don't think we serve the kids identified gifted but read or do well at an accelerated rate. We don't have the facilities to or the personnel to meet those kinds of needs. I think that's a weak area because those are the kids that probably could carry us as far as the SOL tests are concerned. Of course limited budget, I see with science, with math,		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	can talk to Mr. B. about things that are bothering us. Our faculty has a real closeness here" (I/K-4). "We enjoy each other's company a lot here. We enjoy having a cup of coffee together the first thing in the morning and talking about things that are going on with our classes. Occasionally, we will have a breakfast, especially on workdays" (I/K-6). "Essentially, we have a principal who is the designee to oversee our SOL improvement. We have an SOL	"We have people we can contact if we need them. …people inform us as far as what classes we need to take dealing with our recertification. Our supervisor visits our school a couple times a month. She is a lot of help when needed" (I/K-6). "We can always count on the guidance counselor. Faculty members feel very comfortable with this person. Our assistant principal is always available and we feel confident that she can handle problems we encounter when Mr. B. isn't present" (I/K-6).	with social studies we could be doing a little bit better but we're limited with what we can do with what we have, but we can scrounge around. If we address that in some way, I feel that our scores would drastically improve" (I/L-7). "We have an instructional allotment and this year mine went strictly for manipulatives" (I/L-7). "We teachers have to sit down and they give us an amount by grade and the teachers have to sit down and decide what this can be used for. That way		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	Improvement team in different curriculum areas"" (I/L-1). "He meets with them once a month or every other month. They come up with strategies and reviews for the teachers" (I/L-1). "In grade level meetings we discuss suggestions by the SOL Improvement team, areas that we are having problems with in our classrooms, or certain key curriculum. We discuss what strategies are working with the SOL and then that goes into the classroom." (I/L-1).	"He's still a new principal who has quite a few things that he still needs to work with as far as keeping staff together, keeping staff motivated and dealing with parents and their concerns" (I/L-2). "He let's us be very creative in the classroom. He encourages new techniques and likes to come and watch them. Sometimes there is a little too much observation" (I/L-2). "He still is learning the ropes with parents and teachers and making this school environment mesh well" (I/L-2).	we don't have two teachers buying the same thing. . …. that's where a lot of cooperation has to come in or else you try to find another source" (I/L-7).		

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	Mr. B. and Mrs. D. come in and observe the classrooms periodically. They look for SOL strategies. When they see something that is positive, they suggest that the teacher bring it to the next SOL Improvement team meeting, to the next grade level meeting, or to the next faculty meeting. I have done that for fifth grade at a grade level meeting and a faculty meeting" (I/L-1).

"We have a curriculum guide that our county put together that we try to go by. We now have the resource guides that we use. | "He is supportive and we are trying to do something new for the kids. He tries to come up with ideas himself to help us" (I/L-2).

"…he emphasizes SOL improvement" (I/L-2).

"The principal spends most of his time observing and working with parents. He is very visible to the kids" (I/L-2).

"This is my third year here. Since I started, there has been a change in administration, assistant principal and principal. There's not a lot of turnover. We have | | | |

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	They are broader to plan our lessons with" (I/L-1). "…other fifth grade teachers have come and observed me. It has spread through our school system. The curriculum guide is a county effort. The resource guide is the one through the state" (I/L-1). "The grade level organization is top notch. I think that each grade has a good compliment of teachers, each group works well together. I can speak mostly for the fourth and fifth grade teachers. They do a lot of transitional work.	two retirees and there have been three new additions to the staff" (I/L-2). "He (principal) wants it basically to be a strong school. We are one of the weakest in the county as far as scores. I know that is foremost in his mind to improve the SOL. He has made that very plain. It's his mission" (I/L-2). "It is a very very professional relationship (relationship that the principal has with the faculty and staff). He is accessible but he maintains the supervisory			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	Mr. B. encourages that. We don't have to wait for a grade level meeting with fourth and fifth grade. When someone has a good idea in fourth grade they bring it up" (I/L-1). "We have done quite a bit of rotation. Mr. B. (teacher) is a strong social studies person and he has come into the classroom with ideas and has taught. In science they have observed me for fourth grade ideas. Mr. B. and Mrs. D. support that quite a bit—the exchange of ideas and rotating" (I/L-1).	atmosphere. He doesn't pal around or things like that. When he comes into the classroom to observe you, you know why he is there" (I/L-3). "He maintains pretty good control over it, but he gets very stressed (how principal handles stress). He still has a learning process just like most teachers do—more so with parents than with children. If there is a staff conflict, he takes the supervisory role and goes on with it and we go on. With parents or repeat offenders, he gets very stressed" (I/L-3).			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5	"Mrs. D., our media specialist, is a strong organization person as far as getting materials that the whole school can use" (I/L-1). "Our lead teacher in math and science has come up with some very good reinforcement activities if we get with them and ask them for information. Our reading intervention person we have supports the whole group in bringing information and materials that we might be able to suggest" (I/L-1-2). "The strength of the school is cooperation—	"…when there was a conflict, he handled it like a conflict resolution meeting. He had all parties sit down with him and Mrs. D. at different points and state their grievances. He did try to work out a compromise. It was a case of a decision between two grades. When everyone had a chance to air their opinions, they saw there wasn't anything else to be done. It smoothed itself out, but everyone had to have a chance to air his or her feelings" (I/L-3).			

Position	Research Domains				
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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	sharing materials, sharing ideas" (I/L-2). "The weakness is there is not enough communication between the primary level and the intermediate level. Strong primary groups K-2 work real well together. Third grade is a little bit by their selves and then intermediate is sometimes out in left field as far as doing a cumulative effort. There's no communication from this side to that" (I/L-2). "Parents have a big influence on this school's				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	organizational structure" (I/L-2). "There is a lot of management from central office. Our central office elementary supervisor is here quite frequently. She comes and does the personnel evaluations herself especially those requiring re-evaluation or recertification. I am on my third year here as far as tenure and she has been here twice to sit in my room. Ms. Blue (supervisor) and Mr. J., superintendent, come. They are very visible in the school" (I/L-4).				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"We have our Superintendent's Advisory Committee that's made up of one teacher from each school (elementary and high school). Mr. J. invites them to the school board meeting or his special meetings with the principals. He identifies a situation and we go back to schools and get feedback. They are pretty good at taking suggestions not only from teachers, but also from custodians and other employees, all the way down. As far as policy, I think the Central Office as a whole, whether it's Mr. J. or Mr. A., the assistant				

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	superintendent, they try to listen before they make final decisions before they present it to the board" (I/L-4). "You can count on Mrs. D. (librarian)—she's a go-getter type of person. If it's a policy issue, she knows the school board policy. She is a good person for community resources—very active in the community" (I/L-4). "We have some activities as far as traditions. We have the safety patrol (fifth graders do this). The other kids love our fifth graders. They are				

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Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	our top students. Those top students also get to be the first ones who participate in our faculty basketball game before Christmas. Our traditions as far as our work nights, our PTA nights, those are very strong get-to gather nights for staff members. …when we can get babysitters, we go out to eat. There are a lot of interactions outside the school by several staff members. Kids Against Trash is becoming a tradition. All the children are proud about that" (I/L-4).				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"We have an end of the year party. It's a time to kick back and breathe that we made it through another year. We always do that. Sometimes we combine it as a retiree party by inviting retirees to come back and attend, just to say thanks" (I/L-5). "People are friendly at this school. Last year we had a lot of changes, and I was going to end up in first grade last year. Then I was going to Title. …people are real positive" (I/L-5). "Teachers are given some opportunity for input on				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	decisions made for the school. …when it involves scheduling or work night, or Q.U.I.L.T. training, we do have. We are given at least a choice, or if we're not given a choice, or he determines what their particular need is" (I/L-5). "I am on the transition committee that works with the middle school. I am a permanent member of the Child Study Committee and the Conflict Resolution Committee, that's from last year. Then I was on the School Improvement from last year" (I/L-5).				

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Fifth Grade Teacher (T5)	"We are given a sign-up sheet of each committee we would feel comfortable serving on. …no one wanted to be on the Audit committee. Sometimes we meet with the principal during the summer and he asks us if we would serve on a certain committee" (I/L-5).				
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	"Organization is part of the county structure. The curriculum is the SOLs. They expect us to teach the Standards of Learning and we have the freedom to approach them. We have a good community and a good sharing	"This is his first year. He is really getting the feel for elementary education. He has lots of new and exciting ideas. We see him all the time in the building. He encourages us to work together" (I/J-1).	"I worry about SOL results" (I/J-2). "Our focus is on the SOLs. We don't do anything not related to the standards of learning. Textbooks are only a resource. The Title One program does the same thing we do" (I/J-1).		"Parents are generally supportive of our school. They come out for PTO. Math and science fair night, they come out. Most parents agree with our decisions. Parent-teacher conference they come out" (I/J-2).

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	process. We try to meet each child's needs" (I/J-1). "Power is evenly distributed at this school. We serve on different committees. We rotate committee assignments" (I/J-1). "It is a good school. Decisions are democratic. Decisions are made after input from everyone on faculty. He recognizes experience of teachers" (I/J-1). "Nothing is rigid. The school is personal. We have a family like atmosphere. We feel we can come here (office) and	"Mr. B. is flexible and open to new ideas. He has a good relationship with students. He wants them to do their best and expects us to be our best" (I/J-1). "He never does anything halfway. If he is supposed to observe us five times one hour each time, he does that" (I/J-1). "He recognizes achievements of students. He recognizes teachers. He appreciates us" (I/J-1). "Mr. B. handles conflicts well. He is a good listener.	"I devote little time to discipline. Mr. B. doesn't spend a lot of time with discipline. If kids are actively involved in learning, I don't think you have a lot of discipline problems" (I/J-1). "We have changes at this school. I like to try new things— about half and half. I don't like to change everything at once. Gradual change is best" (I/J-1). "I don't believe it is the most important thing to follow rules and regulations, but I believe it is important to get these children the best education		"Usually I see the parents I need to see. Some parents are more active than others. Some parents expose their children to good books and theatres. If they don't its' probably because they can't, don't know how, or that they should" (I/J-2). "Parents readily call the school if there is a problem; more likely, they will come to school if there is a problem" (I/J-2). "We have a lot of single parent families" (I/J-2). "Parents view education as very important. They

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)	discuss things and feel we will be backed. We know the kids and parents" (I/J-1). "We have a handbook and policy manual in place" (I/J-1). "We've tried new routines. We have shaken things up a little. Some things have been changed back to the way they were" (I/J-1). "Duties and responsibilities are shared equally" (I/J-1). "We work together at grade levels. We have grade level meetings once a month. We share information. We	Generally he is sensitive. He is focused on getting everyone's best" (I/J-1). "I thing Mr. B. is viewed by most teachers as the instructional leader. He's interested in what we're doing" (I/J-2). "Mr. B. is willing to listen. He is willing to help. He is in classes quite often. He likes being a part of the students' daily routine. He is very interested in students and teachers" (I/R-1). "He is very organized. He carries around a pad and when you	possible. It is important that we help kids to develop their talents" (I/J-2). "There is not a lot of time spent on non-academic demands" (I/J-2). "When students do poorly on a test first, I ask, 'Did you study?' Then I look at myself" (I/J-2). "Homework is an important part of the instructional program. A big part is parents—they see what we are doing and how their child is doing. Generally, most parents view homework as important. Some, more than others" (I/J-2).		want their child to do his or her very best. I feel parents have high expectations for their children. Most want them to go on to college" (I/J-2). "Most of our parents are not well educated. Most are high school graduates" (I/J-2). "Mr. B. does a good job with parents" (I/J-2). "We don't see as many parents in fourth and fifth grade hall as we would like. It's not like the primary wing. I feel that's because students don't want their

(table continues)

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)	still have faculty meetings but not weekly. We can get together and share our problems" (I/R-1). "We have had several changes. This is Mr. B.'s first year. He has made lots of changes. He is interested in attendance. We have Kids Against Trash organization, which he helped to organize" (I/R-1). "He doesn't change things that appear to be working" (I/R-1). "We have several committees at this school. I am on the child study committee. I am also on the reading	approach him with something, he writes it down. He will always get back with you" (I/R-1). "He has clear policies and procedures for the operation of the school. He has told us what he expected of us. He is always the first one here and the last one to leave the building. He works harder than we do because he is pressured more" (I/R-1). "Mr. B. seeks ideas from others unless it interferes with key instructional time. We have passed off a lot because of SOL testing. He has done a	"Discipline is pretty much individual. Most of the teachers have their own way of dealing with discipline. I don't think that Mr. B. spends a lot of time on discipline. We don't have a lot of problems, especially when compared to other schools in the county. (I have a friend at another school)" (I/R-2). "We don't have a canned curriculum. I think that's left up to the individual teacher. It is left up to us and I appreciate that" (I/R-2). "Mr. B. is very instructional. I feel he is viewed as an		parents at school at that age" (I/R-2). "I feel parents would readily call the school if they had a problem or concern. I encourage parents to come see me" (I/R-3). "I feel most of our students are from single-parent families" (I/R-3). "Parents view homework as a necessary part of the school's program. I haven't had complaints of excessive homework" (I/R-3). "I feel parents' attitude of education is that they feel it is

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3	improvement committee for the county. Everyone does their part. People attend meetings. People are willing to meet on Saturdays" (I/R-1). "The strength of our school is its teachers along with Mr. B.'s. guidance. Everyone is willing to help and support each other" (I/R-1). "We have a routine in place here. Routine works best for students. We have very few changes in the schedule" (I/R-2). "We have several committees here. Committees change	wonderful job keeping us on task" (I/R-1). "He has a vision for this school. He wants our SOL scores up" (I/R-1). "Other schools are to come here and see how we teach and offer suggestions. We have opportunities to visit out of the county and see what other schools are doing with SOLs" (I/R-1). "Mr. B. is creative and imaginative. He gave us an SOL pep rally. We had popsicles. Our theme was 'I Can Do It'. We have let students have a	instructional leader. He puts things in perspective" (I/R-2). "We solicit the help of parents. Parents are one of our strengths. We know what parents to call. Teachers call parents when they need" (I/R-2). "We don't have a homework policy. It's up to the individual teacher. I think we have more homework in the middle school. Students tell us our homework doesn't compare to what they have at the middle school" (I/R-2).		important. Some parents are limited. Many of our parents have a high school education. One or two cases each year, I may have a parent that is a college graduate. However, high school is maybe stretching it in some cases" (I/R-3). "Parents are interested in their children being mannerly. Parents feel that it is important that their children are behaving" (I/R-3). "Parents volunteer. We have a list of volunteers. Teachers use this list if they need someone to assist them. They pretty

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)	except for one- the child-study committee. There is a good reason for that. Persons learn discourse for placement. There is a lot of information for that committee" (I/R-2). "I believe the strength of the school is the dedication of students, teachers and parents" (I/R-2).	dance. Mr. B. was involved in Dr. Seuss Day. We had lots of people here that day. He is centered on students" (I/R-1). "Mr. B. says next year. He is always thinking about what to do next year" (I/R-1). "As far as staff development he has pushed us to get involved with computers. He has pushed both students and teachers. We have had ten hours of staff development on computers. He gets others to come in and do staff			much know who to call" (I/R-3). "People are happy here. Most people are happy" (I/R-3).

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)		development activities. Mrs. D. has done some" (I/R-1). "He keeps us informed of things ahead of time. We know what's happening a week in advance. Mr. B. put this information in our mailbox. We usually get just one memo a week" (I/R-1). "As teachers we get involved in decision making. We are asked our thoughts about certain things. He says 'You may agree or disagree but let me know.' He gives us a chance to respond" (I/R-2).			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)		"Communication is the best. Our relationship with the community and parents is the best in the county" (I/R-2). "Our Kids Against Trash is a wonderful program. We have the newspaper involved, parents and TV. Everyone knows about our organization Kids Against Trash. This program has got everyone working together. That has been real good" (I/R-2). "I always see different business men here everyday to see Mr. B. We have parents here everyday volunteering. We			

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)		have a wonderful parent-teacher organization. Some of our teachers are involved as officers in the PTO. I have been roped into getting involved but that's good" (I/R-2). "Our previous principal believed in getting parents involved. Mr. B. sees how important that was" (I/R-2). "We have a student handbook that was sent out to students. Teachers have a school guide. It is updated each year. Policies for the school division are included and updated yearly" (I/R-2).			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)		"Our evaluation is fair. We have three unannounced visits. We have three planned visits. The process is very comfortable. The next day we conference after being observed" (I/R-2). "I think he's done a real good job. He interacts with the kids. He's not just in here in his office. He's out doing things with them. for them, with the parents" (I/P-2). "He'll call with a concern" (I/P-2). "If you've got a problem, come talk to him" (I/P-2).			

Position	Research Domains				
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Third Grade Teacher (T3)		"My husband visited him. It was a misunderstanding. But it got straightened out" (I/P-2). "The students love him" (I/P-2). "The discipline policy, I think is good" (I/P-2). "…I don't see where you could get any more stricter without taking it back to paddling and I think that needs to be a home delivery with you there" (I/P-2). "Teachers deal with discipline. When it gets to the point			

Position	Research Domains				
	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Third Grade Teacher (T3)		they can't, it's Mr. B. or Mrs. D." (I/P-2). "…I guess he wants the kids to achieve, to do well" (I/P-2). "I think Mr. B. would be a good teacher. Yeah, I do because he really interacts with the kids because like I said, he's not in his office all the time. He's out and about" (I/P-2). "I feel the teachers have a good relationship with him, as far as I know" (I/P-2).			
Parents (4) (Par)	"It's a good school. It's smaller than most of the other schools" (I/P-1).		"They brought booklets (SOL) home and I looked over them" (I/P-1).		

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	Organization	**Leadership skills**	**Instruction**	**Culture**	**Parent support**
Parents (4) **(Par)**	"I think the teachers can spend more time with each child. Like when my first one went to school, they knew my second one by the time he got there" (I/P-1). "It's awful close knit (school). Everybody knows every body" (I/P-2). "We've had three principals. Let's see. I know, I think my oldest one was in kindergarten or first grade when we lost our first principal. And then we had Mr. M. Then two years ago we got Mr. B." (I/P-1).		"They talk about the SOLs all the time. It's the big thing now. It's we've got to pass them. We have to pass them. And my one in second grade, he's got to take something. No. He's already taken something. I'm not sure what it was. My one in fifth grade will be taking the ITBS this week. My one in second grade, he took something" (I/P-1). "They do a lot of review, I know, over the year. My one in fifth grade, they'll have their SOLs in May. They've already started having review on stuff		

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Parents (4) (Par)	"Teachers get along pretty good" (I/P-2).		they'll be doing" (I/P-1). "They communicate with parents, teachers, and family" (I/P-1).		

VITA

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DEGREES

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EXPERIENCE

2000-Present   Assistant Superintendent
                   Tazewell County Public Schools, Tazewell, Virginia

1999-2000   Assistant Principal, Richlands High School
                   Tazewell County Public Schools, Tazewell, Virginia

1998-1999   Principal, Abb's Valley-Boissevain Elementary
                   Tazewell County Public Schools, Tazewell, Virginia

1993-1998   Elementary Teacher, Cedar Bluff Elementary
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1991-1993   Principal, Richlands High School
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1987-1991   Principal, Dudley Primary
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1976-1985	Supervisor of Special Education
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1972-1976	Special Education Teacher (Grades 7-8)
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