

A Female in the Elementary School Principal's Office:

A Beacon for Women

by

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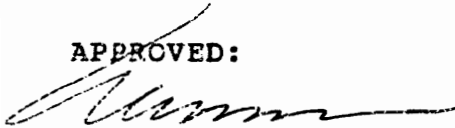
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**Committee Co-Chairmen: Wayne Worner and Jerry Niles**

**Educational Administration**

**(Abstract)**

The elementary principal is a key person in public schools. Few studies have examined women in this position in depth and detail. This study tells the story of one female elementary principal, Peggy Moles. Using interviews, surveys, observations, contact logs, and reviews of relevant documents, this qualitative study provides a detailed description of her professional life and her personal life as it relates to her job.

Data were collected over a two-month period, and analysis was continuous throughout the study. The transcripts, surveys, fieldnotes, and written documents were examined for themes which describe the subject's professional life and leadership style. Five characteristics of leadership were extracted from the data which describe this principal as a transformational leader: she (1) encourages the participation of others by creating a professional atmosphere and attitude in the school that provide

incentive and willingness for the teachers, parents, and community to become involved; (2) shares the decision-making with faculty and parents; (3) enhances the self-worth of others through her acceptance of teachers as individuals who are professionals, but who also have lives away from the school; (4) creates a nourishing environment by being respectful, caring, inviting, friendly, accepting, and supportive; and (5) facilitates the faculty and the parents at her school through professionalism and modeling.

The study offers a practical example of transformational leadership. It also provides descriptions of this principal's leadership to which most males or females should be able to relate. The impressions of those around her are included to render a more vivid description of this female's leadership and the environment in which she works.

The study provides the reader an opportunity to examine the life of one female in school administration and, at the same time, gives the reader a feeling for the subject as an individual. A description of a "day in her life" ties the transformational leadership characteristics to the actual day-to-day events in the principalship of Peggy Moles.



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**Dedication**

To my husband, Brud, and my son, Finley, who are the pillars of my life; and to Henry Howard, a very dear and special friend, who supervises the technology in my life -- who saved my sanity numerous times when no one else could.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

"A wild patience has taken me this far. . . ." is a good description of how some women who have become school administrators feel about their experiences (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 9). Many have faced barriers that have hindered their advancement in school administration. However, some women have overcome these barriers, or have succeeded in spite of them, and have obtained administrative positions in public schools.

Much of the literature in the field of school administration has ignored gender as an issue in school administration. This literature is of little value when it comes to telling about women who are in school administration today.

Because of the need to know more about female administrators, it is important to conduct research on women in school administration by actually telling their stories. Gilligan (1993) suggested that "the way people talk about their lives is of significance" (p.2). Through telling their stories we document the experiences of female administrators and thus expand the literature in the field.

This study will tell such a story. It will tell the story of Margaret (Peggy) Moles, the principal of Oak Grove Elementary School in Roanoke County, Virginia.

### **Justification for the Study**

Even though there have been significant changes in the status of women, there have been few studies of the women leaders who have made this happen. Astin and Leland (1991) asserted that existing research tends to deal mainly with the spokeswomen and that little is known about the leadership approaches of other women.

The need for research in the area of women in school administration has been documented adequately. It is important that the realization exists that men and women are different and thus lead differently. Shakeshaft (1989) indicated that "the effective woman does not copy the effective man, nor does she find that what works for him necessarily works for her" (p. 12). Helgesen (1990) suggested that studies need to address how women lead; few studies have done so.

Regan and Brooks (1992) asserted that there is no real problem in women learning school leadership through the male perspective. The real problem is when women are told that it is the "male" way or no way; that is, that there is no other knowledge. Shakeshaft

(1987) stated that research is needed which reports women's experiences in the field of education.

Such information is relevant and of great interest on its own merits. Mertz and McNeeley (1990) indicated that these stories need to be told because "the things that people say about themselves and other people should be taken seriously as reports of data relevant to the explanation of behavior" (April, p. 3). Regan and Brooks (1992) supported the need for such research by asserting that by analyzing women's experiences, new knowledge is created about women as leaders.

Wolcott (1984) in his preface to The Man in the Principal's Office indicated that he believes that a need exists for a study of a woman in the principal's office. Shakeshaft (1989) observed that the strongest data on female administrators have been obtained through direct contact with females through interviews and observations.

Regan and Brooks (1992) asserted that reporting the journey that women embark upon as well as their destination is of interest and value to those interested in school administration. They also concluded that the professional lives of the women they studied could not be separated from their personal lives. "We have come to realize that women interpret

the world through quite different lenses than men; affected by generations of women's experiences which even the most feminist of men cannot experience or interpret" (p. 51). That is, "feminine leadership reflects the feminine experience" (p.5). Regan and Brook described the feminine attributes they found as follows: collaborative, caring, courageous, intuitive, and visionary.

Astin & Leland (1991) noted that even though there have been few women in public positions of power, women have been instrumental in various change efforts in society. One might ask why so little attention has been given to women as leaders. Much time and space in print have been devoted to the study of the effectiveness of transformational leaders without much being said about women in those roles.

There is a need for literature that describes how women lead from the perspective of first-hand observations and from the opinions of those closest to them. Women's stories need to be told and read by both men and women to further an appreciation and an awareness of the contributions women have made in the field of school administration.



### Subject Selection

As I began to consider this study, I thought about the processes that I might use to select a subject for the study. As I continued to examine what I wanted to do, I realized that what I really needed were recommendations from professionals who are experts in the field of education and who knew and had worked with a female who was generally accepted as being an effective elementary principal. I sought recommendations from other principals and from professors at Virginia Tech. One name was mentioned time after time -- Peggy Moles. The appropriateness of this selection was confirmed by the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals when Peggy was awarded the recognition of being named Virginia's National Distinguished Principal.

I contacted Peggy and explained the proposed study and what her role would be in it. She agreed enthusiastically to participate.

Therefore, this is a study of a female elementary principal who has already been deemed an effective principal. The study reports the story of how Peggy leads, the impressions others have of her and her leadership, how she spends her time, her career path,

her background, and how she feels about her job. The primary intention is to report what was observed and recorded.

### **Personal Interest in the Study**

I admit that I have a vested interest in female administrators. I am female and have been an elementary principal for the past ten years. I am very interested in effective administration and in the leadership styles of females. For this study I have set aside my personal opinions and have reported that which I observed and recorded. This is a story about a woman in school administration as reported by a female colleague.

## Chapter 2

### What the Literature Offers

#### Leadership

When describing leadership, there has been a definite need to break down the mindset which labels traits of leadership as male or female. Often when a trait has been labeled as feminine, it has been stigmatized as being weak or less desirable than real leadership. Astin and Leland (1991) suggested that this has been true particularly in the highest echelons of patriarchal power, yet this is exactly where the patterns of dominance that have become so destructive need to change. In the world today the dominance model is no longer effective. A more cooperative, partnership approach to relations between the sexes must exist to allow for any change in views toward females as leaders. Astin and Leland suggested that leadership is needed that is based on a model such as that of transformational leadership.

Burns (1978) viewed leadership as a process as opposed to a set of concrete acts. He described leadership as a "stream of evolving interrelationships in which leaders are continuously evoking motivational responses from followers and modifying their behavior

as they meet responsiveness or resistance, in a ceaseless process of flow and counterflow" (p. 440).

Burns reported that leadership exists when people with certain motives and purposes mobilize all their resources so that they can arouse and satisfy the motives of the followers. From this definition of leadership Burns identified two types of leadership -- transformational and transactional.

Burns described transformational leadership as a process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. . . . Transformational leaders seek to raise the consciousness of followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values such as liberty, justice, equality, peace, and humanitarianism" (p. 20). Burns felt that transformational leadership can be exhibited by any individual in any position in an organization.

Speaking of the leaders and the followers, Burns stated further that "their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related . . . become fused. . . . But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the levels of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (p. 20).

Gibbons (1986) saw transformational leaders as those who have the ability to shape, alter, and elevate the motives and values of those whom they intend to lead. Gibbons went further and studied how people who become leaders develop their leadership ability. The study determined that parental expectations and values and innate skills that are reinforced early in life have more influence on the development of transformational leadership than do formal education, mentoring, and other such activities that occur in adulthood.

Even though the results of the Gibbons' study seemed to indicate that leaders are predisposed, this study also found that transformational leaders place a great deal of emphasis on their own self-development. Kouzes and Posner (1987) took issue with Gibbons' findings that formal training has limited payoff. They believe that leadership of any type can be learned.

In discussing leadership Kouzes and Posner made an interesting comparison using a quote from Jim Whittaker, the first person to climb Mount Everest. Whittaker stated: "You never conquer the mountain. You conquer yourself -- your doubt and your fears" (p.298). Kouzes and Posner applied this statement to leadership: "You do not conquer your organization. You do not

conquer leadership. You conquer your own doubts and fears about leading" (p. 298).

Bass (1985) defined transformational leadership in terms of the effect the leader has on the followers. Bass felt that transformational leaders influence their followers by arousing strong emotions, as well as by encouraging a firm identification with the leader. He described the leader as being a coach or a mentor.

Yukl (1989) described the differences between Burns' and Bass's conceptions of transformational leadership. Burns "limits transformational leadership to enlightened leaders who appeal to positive moral values and higher-order needs of the followers" (p. 211). Bass, on the other hand, views a transformational leader as one "who activates motivation and increases follower commitment, regardless of whether the effects benefit the followers" (p. 211). Bass did not exclude leaders who appeal to the lower-level needs such as safety and economic needs.

Sergiovanni (1991) suggested that transformational leadership can be broken down into two stages. One stage is concerned with higher-order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization.

The other stage deals with the moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty, and obligation.

In transformational leadership the leaders and the followers are on more common ground in pursuit of higher-level goals. Purposes of the leader and the follower become fused. Burns (1978) asserted that transformational leadership takes the form of "leadership by building". The leader seeks to arouse the human potential in the followers to satisfy higher-order needs and to raise the expectations of both the leadership and the followers. Sergiovanni (1991) suggested that leadership by building tends to respond to esteem, achievement, competence, autonomy, and self-actualizing needs.

Burns (1978) noted that when transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration, it takes on a form of "leadership by bonding". Here the leader seeks to arouse the awareness and consciousness that elevate the goals and purposes of the followers to a level of shared covenant that bonds the leader and the followers. This leadership leads to responding to the intrinsic needs such as the desire for purpose, meaning, and significance in one's job. Sergiovanni (1991) described the key concepts of transformational

leadership by bonding as being cultural and moral leadership.

Burns (1978) also examined transactional leadership. Transactional leadership focuses on extrinsic motives and needs. In transactional leadership the leader and the followers exchange needs and services in an effort to accomplish the independent goals of each. It is assumed that the leader and the followers have different goals, and thus they must bargain. The bartering process is called "leadership by bartering". Wants and needs of each group are traded and a bargain is struck between them. Leadership by bartering tends to respond to the physical, security, social, and ego needs of all involved in the process.

Transactional leadership motivates followers by appealing to their self-interest. For example, political leaders exchange jobs, contracts, and work status for votes. Yukl (1989) claimed that transactional leadership involves values, "but they are values relevant to the exchange process such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and reciprocity" (p. 210).

Yukl (1989) compared and contrasted Burns' and Bass's views of transactional leadership. According to



Yukl, both viewed transactional leadership as an exchange of rewards for compliance, but Bass went further. Bass not only included the use of incentives in the process, but also the clarification of work required to receive these incentives.

The leadership roles of women that are becoming more apparent in the 1990's are not new. They are just perceived as being new because they have never been acknowledged. Astin and Leland (1991) asserted that the women's movement of the 1990's has lifted the awareness both in policies and in areas such as the general knowledge of women's status.

### **Female Administrators**

Hylar (1992) asserted that "the principalship is the prime architect of the plan by which student learning is to occur in the classroom" (p. 68). Such planning leads to good schools, and good schools tend to have good principals, some of which are women.

Shakeshaft (1989) compiled the following list of things that are likely to occur in a school with a female principal:

1. Relationships become an intricate part of the school. Students and teachers tend to have higher morale. Parents show higher support for the school.

Women spend more time with people, thus communicate more.

2. Teaching and learning are the major interests of female principals. Instruction is the major focus of the school. Female principals emphasize achievement, coordinate instructional programs, and monitor student achievement. Women create a school climate that is more conducive to learning. Overall, academic achievement is higher in schools that have female principals.
3. Female principals create a more powerful sense of community. They have a more democratic, participatory leadership style that encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.

Fauth (1984) found that some female principals:

- (1) tend to initiate more activities within the school;
- (2) are more willing to apply new ideas, methods, and procedures;
- (3) use external resources more frequently in efforts to improve instructional quality;
- (4) exhibit greater flexibility;
- (5) are less likely to be

influenced by arbitrary rules; and (6) are more willing to break with tradition.

As the leadership of the female principal is examined, it is important to look at the whole school setting and work situation. Chen and Addi (1992) asserted that schools are complex organizations whose operation and performance are influenced to a great extent by the relations between the principal, the teachers, and the students. They explored the views of 415 male and female secondary teachers (84% females and 16% males) in a small industrial town in Israel concerning their principals and their workplaces. They sought to better understand how their views are affected by the principal's gender. Their findings indicated that differences in opinions about "school climate and leadership styles depend more on the principal's gender than on that of the teachers" (p. 8).

How teachers felt about the principal had significant impact on their attitudes toward their job performance and how they view the principal as a leader. If teachers viewed the principal as a positive factor in their school, this contributed to their sense of satisfaction and willingness to work hard. Charters

and Jovick (1981) found that the principal's gender has a noticeable impact on teacher attitude and behavior.

Chen and Addi (1992) reported that male and female secondary teachers feel that they have different levels of empowerment depending on the gender of the principal. Men felt less empowered when working for a woman. Other studies have had different results. Fairhurst and Snavely (1983) and Wharton and Baron (1987) found that males report higher levels of job satisfaction when working in a female-dominated workplace.

Sadker, Sadker, and Klein (1991) reported that attributes that are considered to be valuable in female administrators include (1) concern for others; (2) a great focus on teaching and learning; (3) a more democratic and participatory style; (4) greater effectiveness in representing the school; and (5) working with the community. Hyler (1992) claimed that women (1) have more experience in education; (2) work longer hours; (3) are more innovative; and (4) are more likely to be democratic leaders.

Hansot and Tyack (1981) suggested that elementary principalships offer the best opportunity for women -- the best chance for autonomy and instructional leadership which are areas women emphasize quite

naturally. Kalvelage (1978) asserted that more information is available concerning the leadership of female elementary principals than about women in other positions in school administration.

Grobman and Wiles (1955) and Grobman and Hines (1956) found that female principals are more democratic leaders than their male counterparts. Hoyle and Randall (1967) found that women are more sensitive and more sympathetic to the problems of other women and the female point of view than are males. Gross and Trask (1964) found that female principals associate more with their teachers than do males. Hoyle and Randall (1967) indicated that parents and students prefer female principals.

Milanovich (1966) reported that male principals do not supervise as much, are more passive, and do not give teachers sufficient directions. Mickish (1971) asserted that women tend to have more teaching experience and have taken more education classes and indicated that she felt that they are more prepared to supervise the educational process.

Grobman and Hines (1956) found that women are more approachable and are easier to influence in areas of curriculum than are males. Hoyle and Randall (1967) reported that female principals recognize potential

problems and evaluate the results of their actions more often than males.

Prolman (1982) reported the following differences in behavior between male and female elementary principals: women (1) are more likely to be involved in instructional supervision; (2) tend to have a more democratic style; (3) are more concerned with students; and (4) seek community involvement more often. Gross and Trask (1976) found that women have a higher level of commitment to education than the males. They demonstrate a higher priority for student achievement, student discipline, and the teaching skills of teachers.

Goerss (1975) reported that female principals: (1) are more future-oriented; (2) are more independent; (3) are more willing to seek advice of others; (4) are more willing to accept their own weaknesses; (5) do not fear failure; (6) have strong self-concepts; (7) are imaginative and creative; (8) are more intelligent; (9) have a higher regard for the welfare of others; and (10) tend to take the initiative as necessary. Gross and Trask (1976) found that female administrators have more teaching experience, are more prepared academically, and do a better job supervising instruction.

Fauth (1984) concluded that female principals are viewed by their superiors and subordinates to be equal to or better than male principals in terms of overall leadership and administrative abilities. The females create a more supportive environment and are inclined to be problem solvers.

Hylar (1992) found no difference in the overall leadership style of males and females, thus dispelling the myth that males are better leaders. Hylar suggested that within the next thirty years there may be an obvious difference between male and female principals. In the past women have had to adopt male leadership traits to get an administrative position. As female numbers increase, women will feel freer to develop their own leadership styles more fully.

Gross and Trask (1964) studied the differences in male and female elementary principals through personal interviews, supplemented by questionnaires answered by teachers. They examined the effect that these principals had on their schools. Gross and Trask found that women have more teaching experience at the elementary level, as well as more total teaching experience. They found that men, more than their female counterparts, express more interest in seeking higher administrative positions. Women are more

interested in the instructional program. Women, more so than men, view administrative functions such as keeping school records, checking student attendance, taking inventories, checking report cards, dealing with correspondence, managing the school office, and supervising custodial staff as being important.

Gross and Trask (1964) found that women rate themselves higher on their ability to direct instruction than men do. Women have greater job satisfaction in work which is related to instruction, whereas men find greater satisfaction in the administrative components of the principalship. Gross and Trask also found that female principals are more likely to exercise control over their teachers than men in the following areas: in closely directing the work of teachers who are likely to experience difficulty; in requiring teachers to discuss their major classroom problems with them; in having teachers inform the principal about 'problem' children in their rooms; and in determining the objectives of the school's guidance program. More female principals than male principals exercise a greater control over the professional activities of their teachers.

Gross and Trask (1964) reported further that females and males differ in other areas as well.



Female principals make the decision to become teachers at an earlier age, and males make the decision to aspire to school administration earlier. They found that female principals are more willing to acknowledge the importance of the school's recognition of individual differences among the students, as well as an interest in the social and emotional development of the child. Two other major differences between the male and female principals were uncovered -- women exert more control over teachers' professional activities and associate more frequently with teachers outside the school.

Therefore, Gross and Trask's conclusion was that there is an "association between the sex of principals and the characteristics of their schools" and "revealed that the professional performance of teachers and pupils' learning are higher on the average in schools administered by women" (p. 13-5). (For additional relevant literature, see Appendix C.)

### Chapter 3

#### Methodology

The methodology for this study is modeled after Harry Wolcott's research in the 1960's. Wolcott (1973) studied a male principal using ethnographic procedures. The study described and analyzed the principal and his work. The study focused on human processes in which the principal engaged that were related to his role as an elementary principal. Such studies emphasize the context and the complex relationships in human lives. The story of Peggy Moles is told from a similar perspective.

This study uses triangulation in an effort to increase the validity of the research. Triangulation is the use of various methods and/or various sources to verify the data across methods and sources. The study uses methodological triangulation (the use of multiple methods to study a single problem) and data triangulation (the use of a variety of sources in a study).

The specific methods used are as follows:

Interviews of relevant persons

Open-ended survey of the faculty

Teacher logs of contacts with the subject

Observations of the subject

Review of relevant documents

Subject's reactions to study's results

The study's subject was selected on the recommendations of experts in the field of education. She was selected due to her reputation as an effective female elementary principal.

During fieldwork, the time the researcher spends in the setting under study, the researcher observed the subject in as many situations as possible over a two month period, March and April 1995. She made first-hand observations of the activities and interactions of the subject. Extensive fieldnotes were collected throughout the fieldwork. The data were then organized into a narrative description using major themes and illustrative case examples. Data obtained through the observations allowed the researcher to understand the situation to an extent not possible by merely interpreting the thoughts of others that were obtained from the surveys, interviews, and teacher logs.

The major purpose of the observations was to take the researcher into the actual setting, thus producing data that have more depth and detail. Using these data the researcher is able to help the reader understand what and how something occurred. The researcher's notes that have been used to produce the narrative

description become the eyes and ears of the reader. The researcher has exercised caution in order to present the facts as accurately as possible.

During the observations the researcher used her observer skills to read as many non-verbal messages as possible. She was sensitive to the interactions and relationships between herself and the subject, as well as with others at the school.

The researcher's observations of the subject included occasions such as: the subject working with building personnel and students; a faculty meeting; special programs at the school; the subject working with outside resource people; a division-wide professional meeting of administrators; casual contact with building personnel, students, and parents; involvement in curriculum work; and the direction of instruction. Extensive notes were taken during each of these observations and were extended later.

The researcher conducted and transcribed 20 interviews which included: the subject, the subject's husband, the subject's daughter-in-law, the subject's best friend, two parents, two administrative interns, the school system's superintendent, three other central office personnel, the school secretary, the assistant principal, and six teachers. The interviews began with

an open-ended question and follow-up questions were used as necessary (See Appendix D for interview questions).

Direct quotations are a basic source of the raw data. They were used to reveal the respondents' depth of feeling and emotions, as well as their experiences and perceptions. The researcher was sensitive to the interactions and relationships between the interviewee and the interviewer. The interviews were conducted at a site chosen by the interviewee. Three teachers -- one at grades one, three, and five -- were selected at random for the interviews. Three other teachers volunteered to be a part of the interview process.

Eight teachers, who were selected at random, kept logs of their contacts with the subject over a specified two-week period. Both the contact and the purpose for the contact were recorded (See Appendix F for Log Form). Expectations and guidelines for keeping the logs were provided for the teachers by the researcher during a meeting which was held prior to the designated two-week period.

An anonymous survey was completed by the teachers at the school (See Appendix E for copy of survey). The surveys were distributed by the researcher at a meeting of the teachers. Participation was voluntary.

At this time the researcher explained the purpose of the study and how the survey would be used. Twenty-eight teachers participated which accounted for approximately 90% of the faculty. An envelope was provided for the return of the survey to the researcher.

Relevant documents were analyzed to obtain demographic data as well as to obtain information to be used to paint a picture of the setting in which the subject works (See Appendix G for copy of document review form). The researcher examined handbooks, general test score data, ethnic background information, administrative surveys, principal's communication -- such as newsletters, thank-you notes, presentation notes, professional notes -- the school's yearbook, notes and presentations for nominations for awards, and other relevant documents. These data were used to describe Oak Grove Elementary School and its community.

With the exception of the subject and her husband, all names used in the study are pseudonyms. Appendices H and I offer copies of relevant documents and letters. Also included in the appendices are "Data Collection" (Appendix A) and "Data Analysis" (Appendix B).

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson

#### Chapter 4

##### Peggy Moles: A Person Worth Knowing

Peggy Moles is a person of many facets. As her story was told by family, friends, faculty, staff, administrative interns, superiors, and peers, it became obvious that her family is the most significant part of her life.

Peggy's love of family began with her own parents and siblings in Bedford County, Virginia. Peggy was born in 1935, into a hard-working, farm family. She has one older brother and one younger sister. Her early life revolved around this family unit.

Entertainment for her and her siblings was provided at home. They would amuse themselves by doing such things as building tree houses and sailing homemade boats. One such boat was christened The Mary Jane. The night after the little boat set sail a flood came, and it washed away. Peggy still wonders what happened to that little boat. She cherishes these

memories of her life on the farm with her family in her meager, but rich, loving environment.

Peggy was influenced by what she observed and experienced. Her mother served as a role model in developing Peggy's devotion to reading. Reading was considered to be a delightful and productive form of entertainment, as well as a time for learning and sharing. Her mother read to the children each evening. Peggy acknowledges her mother's role in nurturing her love of reading.

Being involved seems to be a necessary and required part of Peggy's life. In high school she served in various leadership roles such as class president for several years and editor of the yearbook. She was named captain of her cheerleading squad, but relinquished cheerleading to become a basketball player. Peggy was also an exceptional academic student who graduated as valedictorian of her class.

Peggy's family instilled in her a very strong work ethic. The significance given to work and doing it well carried over into Peggy's schooling and career. As a student she was very active in the local 4-H clubs where she was involved in numerous competitions such as showing cattle, presenting demonstrations, and giving speeches.



She cites her work in 4-H and her participation in the high school Future Homemakers of America (FHA) Club as the foundation for her leadership skills. The offices she held in 4-H and FHA gave her chances to provide leadership and provided her opportunities for travel. While a 4-H member, she was selected as one of four leaders from Virginia to go to the White House to meet President Eisenhower.

Traveling became a significant part of Peggy's life as she participated in events such as an international student exchange program. As a participant in this program, she lived in Brazil for eight months and traveled over much of the country. She lived with nine different families whom she considered to be true family.

Peggy's parents instilled in her the will to be the very best that she could be. For Peggy that meant seeking the profession of her dreams. She wanted to be a medical doctor; however, she was discouraged by her brother and others from pursuing that dream. They told her that she would be taking the place of a man in medical school. Her other strong preference was education. According to Peggy, this is the field she entered wholeheartedly.

After graduation from Stewartsville High School in Stewartsville, Peggy enrolled in Radford College in 1953, majoring in elementary education and home economics. She graduated from Radford three years later.

While at Radford Peggy held leadership positions such as president of the student government and the honor society during summer school sessions and president of the home economics clubs at the college, regional, and state levels. She was named "outstanding freshman" for Radford College and "outstanding graduate in the field of education" which she cites as tremendous boosts to her morale. She was a member of Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority which broadened her experiences even further.

After graduation from college Peggy worked as an extension agent in Pittsylvania County for one year before marrying her high school sweetheart, James. This year, 1996, Peggy and James will celebrate their 38th wedding anniversary. Peggy gives James a great deal of credit for her professional and personal successes. She explains, "He's been my support and my best friend down through the years." When speaking about her successes, Peggy almost always names James as a major factor in those successes.

Peggy and James have two sons. She speaks highly and proudly of them. Both boys were outstanding academic students and good athletes. Both graduated from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, and The University of Virginia Medical School in Charlottesville.

Peggy is pleased with the professions and lives they have chosen. Both are successful medical doctors with families. James gives Peggy much credit for the boys' choice of medicine as careers and for her constant surveillance of their academic lives.

When the boys were young, Peggy chose not to work outside the home for several years. In 1964, she was offered and accepted a job in a private kindergarten in Roanoke. At about the same time she began to take classes in early childhood education to improve her ability to work in elementary education.

As Peggy became more intrigued with the field of education, she began to search for a progressive public school for her children. In 1968, she found such a school at Mount Vernon Elementary and enrolled her older son there. She accepted a teaching position at Mount Vernon that same year and pursued her Masters in Supervision and Administration at the University of Virginia.

In 1970, Peggy was promoted to the position of assistant principal at Mount Vernon. She was not offered the opportunity to make the decision to accept or reject this position. Peggy indicates that her principal said, "It's not one of your choices. You're going to be the assistant principal next year." Therefore, Peggy became an administrator, not by choice, but by assignment. Peggy was somewhat apprehensive about this assignment, but accepted it as a challenge.

Peggy remained in the position of assistant principal for one year. In 1972, a new school opened and the principal of Mount Vernon transferred to the new school. Peggy was promoted to the principalship at Mount Vernon. Peggy describes her promotion to her first principalship:

We all knew our principal was leaving, and we knew that no one had been placed in this position. We were in a meeting in the school's library with our superintendent. He asked us what we thought children should be doing in school. I presented by ideas. He turned around and looked at me. At that moment I knew from the light in his eyes that he was going to offer me the principalship. After the meeting he went right to the principal's office and stated, 'I'm going to name your girl principal'.

Serving as the principal of Mount Vernon meant supervising the peers with whom she had been teaching.

"They rallied behind me," Peggy states, and "we developed a wonderful school climate."

Her first experience as a school principal was a real challenge. She had no administrative training other than her one year's experience as an assistant principal and her Masters degree. To increase her challenge she had all new teachers in the primary grades, a new custodian, a new secretary, and no assistant principal. Peggy had to learn by doing what she thought was best. Peggy had been in the right place at the right time to gain an administrative position, and she made the most of this opportunity.

Her principalship at Mount Vernon Elementary School lasted nine years. In 1981, the principalship at Oak Grove Elementary School became available. Peggy sought this position and received the assignment. Peggy has been the principal of Oak Grove Elementary for fifteen years.

In 1995, Peggy was named Virginia's National Distinguished Principal. She received this award from the Honorable Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, during an awards banquet in Washington, D.C.

She is presently on medical leave for the 1995-96 school year and plans to return to her principalship at

Oak Grove Elementary School for the 1996-97 school year.

Peggy is a vibrant person who is constantly challenging herself to do more. "I don't think she ever does anything for her own personal satisfaction. She always puts others before herself," her best friend suggests. Peggy Moles is a person worth knowing.

**Vignettes: Personal Impressions of Family and Friend**

Peggy's many personal experiences and qualities are appreciated by her family and her friends. Her husband, her daughter-in-law, and her best friend speak freely about their feelings and opinions of Peggy.

**Husband**

Peggy's husband, James, is a man that is obviously proud of his wife and her accomplishments. He has made Peggy's success and happiness priorities in his life. James spoke about his first impressions of Peggy.

They dated during their high school and college years. James viewed her as an exceptional student who was very competitive. James states, "Now she will never admit this, but she's probably the most competitive person that I know of. . . . Her main objectives were always to excel in grades and contests, performance and work."

James considers Peggy to be an exceptionally strong person. She has "the ability to take a subject and look at both sides of the subject matter, the pros and the cons, and then be able to put together a plan that she can make work." He also believes that Peggy can make difficult decisions.

However, James also suggests that Peggy's concentration and thought processes during such times

take their toll. He is concerned about her inability to sleep during stressful times. He watches her struggle to make the right decision for everyone involved. He feels that she just cannot "let go". James describes the two weeks before the opening of school each year as the "worst two weeks of her life".

Obviously, these times create personal difficulties for Peggy. Her concentration is almost solely on her professional life. Her family has learned to accept this as a natural part of Peggy's life and has made adjustments to make these times as smooth as possible for everyone.

James indicates that he feels that Peggy has successfully blended family and work. Peggy's family comes first, her career second. James admits that Peggy is not a housewife. "She doesn't like to cook and stuff of that nature," he explains.

Home for Peggy is a place to relax, to enjoy quiet times, and to have conversations. James has always served as a sounding board for Peggy. He listens as she talks through her decision-making and gives input when he feels he can be of assistance.

When James talks about Peggy, his voice is filled with emotion. The pride, the appreciation, the love, and the acceptance are expressed on his smiling face.



He suggests, "If we were talking on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest, I would have to rate Peggy a nine or a ten in just about every category -- wife, family, and career."

James cherishes the fun that he has with Peggy and the family. He quickly indicates that she always manages to create time to have fun. Peggy loves to travel and to spend time at the beach. Her favorite times are spent with her entire family around her.

James says that what he likes best about Peggy is "her attitude toward family life and her attitude toward other people". According to James, she has a "fantastic ability to look at other people and see good things about them".

Peggy's constant involvement in her career leads to stress in her personal life. James worries that Peggy does not have a natural ability to relax. This concerns him not only now, but in the years to come as Peggy faces retirement. He is concerned about Peggy's having too much free time. "She does not handle being at home alone, especially if it's a lot of time," he states worriedly. When Peggy retires, James hopes that she will put her energies into other pursuits such as writing a book about her experiences and thoughts about schooling and education.

James implies that he does not feel that Peggy's being a female has been a barrier in her career. However, he does think that Peggy feels that being a female does make a difference in her role as an administrator. He indicates that Peggy has made comments about working in a man's world, but that she personally has not allowed this to become a problem.

Relationships are very significant for Peggy. She cherishes the time spent with her best friend, Meg. James describes this relationship as one of "mutual understanding and mutual respect". They do many things together -- travel, do presentations, talk over professional and personal problems, and enjoy the company of each other.

James speaks without hesitation about Peggy's personal desires and preferences. "She desires most of all . . . to have a well educated family, good health, and to be able to have good communications with all of the people she works with and those within her family." She loves to shop, read history -- especially Virginia history, listen to Neil Diamond, travel, and play with her grandchildren. Her favorite movie is The Sound of Music, and she enjoys singing and dancing.

James indicates that he feels that Peggy is most relaxed when she is with her granddaughter, Kelly. He

thinks that Peggy gets much satisfaction from reading to Kelly. "Our granddaughter is probably going to be the best educated child that ever comes to kindergarten because of Peggy's influence," James states.

James is obviously a support system for Peggy. He is the firm foundation from which Peggy has built a family and a career.

#### Daughter-In-Law

Another family member, Peggy's daughter-in-law, Molly, shared her feelings about Peggy. "At first I was kind of scared of her because I thought she was kind of tough," Molly indicates. However, this feeling did not linger. Molly describes her relationship with Peggy as one that is "more like sisters -- a relationship that has developed over time".

Molly describes Peggy as a well-rounded person who is respected by all who come in contact with her. She sees Peggy as a person who takes her work and career very seriously and as someone who is very task-oriented.

One of the things that Molly likes best about Peggy is that she is nonjudgmental. This is very beneficial in their relationship within the family unit. Peggy allows her sons and their families to have

their own space and does not interfere in their personal lives.

Molly views her own daughter, Kelly, as the highlight in Peggy's life. She feels that Kelly "brings out the best of Peggy". With Kelly, Peggy forgets about all the aggravations and problems from her job. When Peggy sees Kelly, "she lights up and almost a whole new side of her appears," Molly explains.

Molly also worries about the amount of stress that Peggy places on herself. She states that she thinks that this is internal stress and not stress placed on Peggy by someone in the school system. She would like to see Peggy relax more and put less pressure on herself.

According to Molly, Peggy does an exceptional job at prioritizing the areas of her life. She puts family first, career second, and friends third. Peggy integrates her family and her work as much as possible. She often takes Kelly to school where everyone sees her as a grandmother.

Molly indicates that she feels that Peggy would have liked to have received a doctoral degree. However, at the time in her life when she most likely

would have pursued such a degree, Peggy chose not to take any more time away from her family.

Molly claims that occasionally, when Peggy talks about administration, she will state that "she believes there's a difference between men and women. Peggy thinks that women have a greater sensitivity, may be more intuitive, and can perhaps see the viewpoint of mothers and children more."

Molly indicates that Peggy discusses her job with her family -- both the positives and the negatives. The students are the highlight of her job, but Molly feels that the negatives sometimes outweigh the positives when Peggy talks about school. The endless details and paperwork take too many hours away from the time Peggy would prefer to be spending on things that directly affect students' learning and happiness at school.

Peggy has a strong relationship with her husband and family. Molly sees some role reversals in the husband-wife relationship. James does more of the housekeeping duties, and Peggy shares decision-making for the family. James manages an insurance and investment agency, so his time is more flexible. This allows him to set his schedule to fit their needs as a

family. Family remains the most significant part of both their lives.

### Best Friend

Friends are important to Peggy. She and her best friend, Meg, have been confidants for over twenty-nine years. They became friends when their own children were in first grade together. Their interest in early childhood education created a bond that has blossomed throughout the years.

Meg indicates that Peggy "was interested in learning more and bettering the conditions for children" from the very beginning of her professional career. This was one of the attributes that attracted her to Peggy in the early years of their relationship.

Meg also notes that Peggy's personal relationships with her family are the center of her life. Meg speaks fondly of Peggy and her husband. "They were childhood sweethearts . . . it's only been James . . . and her devotion to him is just deep, deep, deep, and it's obvious his devotion to her is the same." James has "that innate ability to know how to support her," Meg suggests. James likes to cook and often has dinner ready when she gets home from work. He's always cheerful, has a sense of humor, and is a kind person.

Between the two of them "the important thing seems to be family and a cohesiveness".

For Peggy home is "peace and serenity". Being at home allows her to unwind and find "solace and comfort" with her family. Peggy is an early riser which allows her to have some quality time to chat with James as she begins her day. "There's a point at which she is able to turn off the rigors of administration and go into the world of family that is so supportive," Meg explains.

Meg views the support and encouragement that Peggy provides for her sons as indicators of her cherished family values. "There's something about the Moles' family and liking to work -- working with people to help in their professional or their personal lives," Meg suggests. Peggy has set an example for her sons as they develop in their own professions and family lives.

Meg believes that Peggy "wants to make the world a better place". She sees opportunities for improvement and seeks them. Meg also believes that these characteristics affect Peggy's professional life as she works with her teachers and peers. Meg was a fellow elementary principal. Therefore, she sees Peggy from two perspectives -- personal and professional.

When asked to describe Peggy, Meg's face brightens. She responds, "Well, she's just true blue. I can tell her anything, and I know it won't go any further." She has "an incredible sense of humor through which she views the world . . . and she can tell jokes". Peggy appears to know just the right joke to tell at any particular time to lighten up a room. She seems to know how to nurture relationships even with her time-consuming job.

Peggy has the ability "to bring out the goodness" in people and has what her friend describes as a "selfless kind of pride". Sharing with others is an exceptional talent those around her appreciate. Peggy is willing to take the time to share with others even though "her world just keeps getting bigger", and her friend views this as an example of her unselfishness and kindness.

Meg states that she is envious of the manner in which Peggy seems to be able to put things in perspective. She is able "to look at the big picture" and thus see beyond the stumbling blocks. Meg offers an example using two things that happened to Peggy in 1995. During the same week Peggy faced the death of her father and her husband's major surgery. At this time she and Meg talked about "life and its meaning" as



Peggy worked through these experiences. Peggy always looks to the future and does not allow such difficult situations to consume her.

When talking about Peggy's professional life as it affects her personal life, Meg acknowledges that Peggy talks about the "ups and downs . . . the real awesome kinds of situations" that she is facing in her job. Speaking of the 1994-95 school year, Meg mentions that there are a lot of very new things occurring on the job that Peggy has not had to deal with previously. Meg watches as Peggy works through these situations and notes that Peggy tends to view each situation as a challenge. Peggy works hard at her decisions and accomplishments. "What people tend to see is the successes, but what people don't see is all that she does to cause things to happen," Meg explains.

Meg speaks of the reflective side of Peggy -- how she likes to sit, to think, and to discuss what has happened in certain situations. Peggy likes to think about what she could have done to have made some situation better for everyone involved. She spends time planning, thinking, re-thinking, and refocusing as she examines her life.

Retirement is something that Peggy faces in the near future. Meg indicates that she feels that Peggy

is not ready to retire, but also wonders what she has left to achieve. Meg states, "In terms of what Peggy has accomplished . . . I don't see how she can accomplish any more. With her most recent honor being named Virginia's National Distinguished Principal . . . she's going to shake the hand of the President. What is left?" However, the fact that Peggy wishes to continue in her endeavors as an elementary principal is an inspiration to Meg. She explains, "The fact that Peggy still feels that she has more to give to education perhaps says it all. She'll know when it's the right time to go."

"Peggy puts herself last," Meg suggests. "We've known each other for close to thirty years, and we never run out of things to talk about. That's really energizing. Peggy is an energizing kind of person." The relationship that Peggy and Meg have has helped them through difficult times in their lives. "Every person needs to have a confidant," Meg explains. "Peggy has been mine. . . . She's really been my anchor."

A thought went up my mind today  
That I have had before,  
But did not finish, -- some way back,  
I could not fix the year,

Nor where it went, not why it came  
The second time to me,  
Nor definitely what it was,  
Have I the art to say.

But somewhere in my soul, I know  
I've met the thing before;  
It just reminded me -- 'twas all --  
And came my way no more.

Emily Dickinson

## Chapter 5

### A Day in the Life of Peggy Moles

The setting in which a person works creates the backdrop for what she does each day on the job. Peggy Moles spends her days at Oak Grove Elementary School and its surrounding community.

Oak Grove is one of 17 elementary schools in the Roanoke County Public School System. The school is located on Grandin Road Extension in Roanoke, Virginia (Information about school and community taken from the Oak Grove Elementary School Handbook, 1994-95).

The present school is the third building that has been used as an elementary school in this community. In 1958, the present building was opened; a new addition was added in 1970.

In 1971, Oak Grove was one of the first elementary schools in Roanoke County to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1986, the school received national recognition as one of 210 outstanding elementary schools in the United States. This award was presented to Peggy Moles by President Reagan.

Oak Grove Elementary School is located in an affluent area of Roanoke County. Seventy-three percent of its students come from professional families. Thirty-four percent of the families have incomes over \$50,000. Eighty-one percent have incomes over \$30,000. Less than two percent of the students qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

The school population is predominantly Caucasian. It's ethnic make-up is as follows: 3% African-American, 1% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 93% Caucasian, and 1% other categories (Student population information taken from an administrative survey, 1995).

Oak Grove is a high performing school as indicated by its student performance on standardized testing and by other reporting required by the state of Virginia. With this school and community as its setting, "A Day In the Life" is a composite of experiences and relationships constructed from actual observations of

Peggy, interviews, surveys, and teacher logs. Some of the dialogue is fabrication, but based on actual comments from conversations during the interviews.

The day begins. . . The morning sky is radiant as Peggy and her husband, James, enjoy a breakfast of toast and coffee. Peggy awakened at 5:00 A.M. as she does each morning. Today will be particularly difficult due to a special education situation which is consuming a great deal of her time.

As James sips his coffee, Peggy takes this opportunity to share her feelings. "I worry about not getting in the classrooms enough lately," she says. "Special education is consuming more and more of my time."

Her husband sits and listens quietly. He senses that Peggy needs to talk about this, so he just waits patiently, serving as her sounding board. He enjoys listening to Peggy and watching her as she works through these situations, weighing the positives and the negatives of any decision she might make. If she is in the process of making a decision, she tells James about the opinions of those from whom she has sought and received advice. Occasionally, she stops and asks James' opinion. "James, what do think the reaction will be if I ask for an aide for this child?" she asks,

referring to the special education problem that she is facing.

James offers a few words of advice, at the same time knowing that this is just Peggy's way of thinking through and rationalizing her thoughts. "Maybe you ought to talk to some of the other principals who have had similar situations -- see how they handled it," James offers.

Before James finishes, Peggy counters with, "But, what if I just use the aides we have and add a few volunteers for special activities?" James smiles and pats her hand. He knows the agony she is going through at this moment. He knows the pressure she puts on herself to make the right decision. James is aware of her devotion to her work, but he also worries about how intense she becomes. At times she allows her work to be all consuming.

Peggy's coffee sits cold and untouched. She hasn't eaten much breakfast this morning. James warms her coffee, and Peggy relaxes a little. They always enjoy this morning time together.

Peggy finishes her coffee and leaves the breakfast table to dress for the day. James stays behind to do a few chores. His day is much more flexible than hers.

Peggy spends time getting her hair and make-up just right. She selects a gaberdine blazer and a straight skirt for the day. The teachers call this Peggy's uniform. They appreciate Peggy's professional dress. "We always know it's Peggy, even from a distance. We see her uniform -- red blazer, black skirt, and perfect posture." Peggy feels that how she dresses makes a statement about how she feels about her job.

By 6:30 A.M. Peggy is at the door, ready to leave for her day at school. She shouts to James, "I will be home for dinner by 5:15, unless something comes up!" She's out the door, armed for the day. James thinks, "The steel magnolia is ready for whatever this day has to offer." He hopes it won't be too difficult. This year seems to be particularly hard for her.

As Peggy drives to school, she thinks about the day's schedule. She recalls what remains on her desk from yesterday. Today she wants to be sure to remember to call the superintendent about an idea she has to improve the mentoring program for the school system. She also wants to double check a few items with the Planning Committee. "I hope I have time to get in a few classes," she says to herself. "I just have to find the time."

Peggy pats the steering wheel, then checks the rearview mirror. She sits up straight and sighs. Today she would really rather be babysitting her granddaughter. The thought of Kelly makes her smile. "I don't have time to even think about that," she says.

As Peggy drives into the school parking lot, she notices that some trash has blown onto the school grounds, probably from the highway that runs past the school. "I must remember to tell the custodian," she mumbles to herself. She pulls into her parking space which is near a side door of the school. As she gets out of her car, she takes time to notice the cars of the other early arrivals.

As Peggy walks into the building, she notices what a great job the evening custodial staff has done. "I want to be sure to put a note in their mailboxes to let them know I noticed," she thinks. Almost immediately she sees the day custodian just outside the cafeteria doors. "Harry, when you have time, there is a bunch of trash on the playground. I think it must have blown up here during the night," she said. Harry looks up and nods. She knows he will take care of it, so she walks on down the hall to the office.

She puts some soft drinks in the refrigerator in her office and sits down at her desk. She glances over



the paperwork she has left for this morning. She makes a stack that will be placed on her assistant's desk to be handled later in the day. What she takes care of first are some notes that she wants to have in a few teachers' boxes when they arrive.

"Thank you for a job well done. That demonstration you did for your class yesterday was outstanding. The children really seemed to understand that difficult concept," she writes to one teacher. "I'm so glad you responded to the request for faculty liaisons for the spring festival on the morning bulletin. Your help will be appreciated," she writes to another. "If you need a break during the day, let me know. I know you are going through some hard times. I understand how you feel," she comments to a teacher who is having some personal problems.

Peggy writes a few more notes and notices that her secretary, Beth, and the assistant principal, Diane, have arrived. They discuss what is ahead in the scheduled day, knowing that it is the unscheduled events that will take up much of their time.

Diane has some questions about a child who has been placed in her office for in-school suspension. "Have we called his mother?" she asks Peggy.

"Yes," Peggy answers. "I spoke with his mother yesterday before I left. She is aware of his problem and is working with him at home. I think he will have a good day."

Beth follows up. "His mother called right after the teacher brought him to the office. The teacher had phoned her to let her know that he was having trouble. The two of you were busy, so she spoke with me about it," Beth indicates. "This mother is extremely supportive. She wants her son to do well. She will not tolerate his misbehaving," Beth adds.

Peggy thinks about how naturally the three of them work as a team. Beth is the manager of Peggy's and Diane's day. She is in charge of the main office and admits that she tends to protect Peggy from difficult parents whenever possible.

As the arrival time for the students and teachers approaches, Peggy goes to the front lobby and perches on the back of a sofa. From this location she greets the teachers and the students as they enter the building. She makes comments to the teachers and students such as:

How's your son doing this morning?  
I hear you have a new baby brother.  
I'd like to see you before our meeting this  
afternoon.

You did a tremendous job on that bulletin board display.  
I had a nice comment from a parent about the individual attention you are giving her son.  
What about that UVA game?!

Today Peggy's mind is on UVA's big victory last night. She'll harass the VA Tech alumni as they come into the building -- all in good fun, of course. Her mind is also on the special education meeting that is scheduled for this afternoon. She uses the free time this morning to make contacts with teachers about the meeting. She also makes her presence known to the students.

After most of the children and teachers have arrived, Peggy walks out to check the bus area. She has a message for one of the drivers. She could have called her or sent her a note, but Peggy chooses to deliver the message in person.

I had a phone call yesterday afternoon from the mother of one of your riders, little Fred Hayslett. Fred's mother told me that her son likes to come to school now, because he can't wait to see your smile as he gets on the bus each morning. You're security for Fred. I just wanted you to know how much you drivers mean to our students.

Peggy likes to have face-to-face contact with her staff. She feels strongly about having such contact with her bus drivers. "You are the people who begin

and end each school day for our kids and that's important," she explains to this driver.

As Peggy is chatting with the bus driver, out of the corner of her eye she notices a strange car that is parked at the curb near the school. She makes a mental note to make a call about it. She also notices that the trash is no longer on the playground. She is pleased that the custodian acted so promptly. "I am so lucky to have such a conscientious staff," she thinks. She tells the bus driver that she will see her this afternoon and heads back into the building.

As Peggy enters the building, she meets Diane who is coming to find her. An angry parent is in the office and is demanding to see no one but "the principal". "He wouldn't even tell us what he wants," Diane explains to Peggy.

"The day is off to a great start," Peggy moans as she walks away. She remembers Mr. Dale. She knows exactly what he wants. "Mrs. Pruettt has asked Yolanda to do her own homework," Peggy says to Diane. "Mr. Dale doesn't even bother to have his daughter re-copy 'his' work," Peggy adds. "Last year it was Mrs. Harris. There is always someone who is picking on his daughter," Peggy chuckles. This situation will be just a matter of listening and waiting.

Peggy goes directly to the office. She doesn't want to keep Mr. Dale waiting. That would only make him angrier. She walks into the office with a big smile on her face and says, "So nice to see you here, Mr. Dale. I have such nice things to tell you about your daughter. I was going to call you today."

With this opening compliment she has disarmed Mr. Dale. How could he possibly attack this woman who has just made such a positive statement about his daughter? It actually works for a little while, but Mr. Dale is persistent. His story will be heard. Peggy listens patiently. She knows that attentive listening frequently solves the problem.

"Perhaps the teacher would be pleased if Yolanda would improve her handwriting," Peggy says, trying her best to hold back a chuckle. "Mrs. Pruett is having a great deal of difficulty reading what Yolanda writes." Peggy has gotten her message across without directly approaching the subject of Yolanda's father's doing her work for her. She is usually a bit more direct, but with Mr. Dale she knows what works best. Mr Dale now seems satisfied that his concerns have been heard, and he has heard the message about doing his daughter's homework.

Beth is sitting at her desk in the outer office and observes Mr. Dale's departure. Suddenly she hears laughter coming from Peggy's office. She gets up and goes to Peggy's door. "Did you see the look on his face?" Peggy asks.

"You handled him well," Beth replies as she smiles. Mr. Dale will be satisfied for several more months.

Beth reminds Peggy that she is scheduled to do an observation in ten minutes in Mrs. Landon's room. Peggy gets herself settled, reviews the lesson plans for the class, and heads down the hall. "Let me know if Mr. Dale comes back," she says over her shoulder as she leaves.

Peggy is stopped almost immediately by Mrs. McHenry whose son, Joe, has a bus problem. This is the only time that Mrs. McHenry can get to the school today, and she is persistent about discussing Joe's problem. "Well, Mrs. McHenry, we appreciate your taking the time to come to see us. I have an appointment to observe a teacher and her class at this time, but I'm sure our assistant principal can help you," Peggy explains and sends Mrs. McHenry in the direction of the office. Peggy hurries on down the

hall. She has just two minutes to get to the classroom. She wants to be prompt.

Suddenly a fourth grade boy comes flying out of his classroom, screaming obscenities and almost flattening Peggy. "Oh, no!" Peggy sighs. This is Tommy, the subject of this afternoon's meeting. Luckily for Peggy, the school guidance counselor has walked up behind her and volunteers to take care of Tommy. His outbursts are becoming a daily routine, and the other students are beginning to repeat what they hear him saying. Peggy knows the complaints from these students' parents will be coming to her desk, and she understands the concerns.

Peggy shrugs her shoulders, out of anxiety more than helplessness, and proceeds to the classroom for the observation. Her thoughts have wandered from the task at hand to her afternoon meeting. "What strategies will work best for Tommy and for the other students?" she ponders. "The Child Study Committee will have to be very creative!"

She tries to forget Tommy and says hello to the class. She finds the chair the teacher has provided for her and glances over the lesson plan once more. "I must focus!" she demands of herself. Observing a teacher is something that she takes quite seriously,

and this teacher is having some difficulties which she must address.

Peggy chooses to focus only on the teacher's classroom management techniques. She notes that there appears to be no observable behavior management plan. The children do not seem to know the class routine, if there is one. The students are not settled and prepared as the teacher begins instruction. "I have my work cut out for me here," Peggy thinks. Peggy makes notes and thinks about suggestions that she might make to this teacher. "This teacher must receive intensive assistance. She should have already had this assistance, but our children will not continue in this atmosphere. Perhaps this teacher needs to be counseled into another profession," Peggy thinks, feeling rather irritated.

After about thirty minutes Peggy has seen enough. She has known since the year began that this teacher was going to be a challenge. She is well aware that this teacher was assigned to Oak Grove for her "to cure" or to "to eliminate". Peggy has been in this situation before.

Before leaving the classroom Peggy schedules a time for a post-observation conference. She will meet



with this teacher immediately. "This situation cannot continue," she thinks. "I must act quickly."

She leaves this classroom and stops to visit the class next door. She is delighted with what is happening with this teacher. She writes the teacher a note in which she states, "The level of difficulty was perfect. You had every child right with you. Everyone seemed so focused."

On her way back to the office she stops by the library to check on the school's Book Fair. She observes the children as they eagerly look at the books and make their purchases. A book, Three Billy Goats Gruff, catches Peggy's eye. "Oh, I must get this for Kelly," she says to a parent who is helping with the Book Fair. Everyone knows that Kelly is her granddaughter and that she has absolutely stolen her grandmother's heart. By the time Peggy is ready to leave the library, she has a stack of books that she has selected for Kelly. "I will be back with a check," she says and leaves to go back to the office.

As she turns the corner, she almost bumps into a local TV weatherman. He is an active member of the Oak Grove PTA. Peggy is aware of the importance of this parent to her school. Even though her schedule does not permit time to chat with him, Peggy takes the time.

"What did you think about that UVA game?" she asks him. "Thanks for holding off the rain!" she chuckles. "We fans really appreciate your weather magic."

He laughs and joins her as she continues her endless trail to the office. As they approach his son's classroom, he stops to check for his notes. He is a guest speaker in his son's class today. "Yes," he says humorously, "We are talking about the weather." Peggy suspects that he may mention Oak Grove on the 6:00 news this evening, but she knows that he is very careful not to be biased toward Oak Grove in his newscasting.

Before going to her office Peggy makes one more stop. She wants to check on Tommy's predicament. She walks into the special education classroom, and Tommy sees her. "Well, here comes the principal! How are you, Mrs. Molehole?" he yells. Peggy isn't shocked. In fact, this is mild. "He's toned down some," she thinks thankfully. However, she does not tolerate such behavior and disrespect. She escorts him to the office to call his mother.

As Peggy leaves the room, she continues to try to think of strategies for Tommy and for the other students who are exposed to his behavior. She reminds herself that it is his behavior that she abhors and not

the child. "Sometimes, it is hard to remember this," she thinks. With Tommy, separating the two is quite challenging.

Peggy wants to make some quick notes about Tommy, so she hurries back to her office. She is lucky. She makes it to her office door without being stopped -- not through it, but to it! Her secretary stops her by saying, "Tommy's mother just called to check the time of the meeting this afternoon. She said something about due process."

Peggy does not even bother to turn around. She feels the pounding in her head begin. One more thing to face and to consume even more of her time. She rubs her temples. She doesn't have time for a headache today. "I just won't put up with this!" she tells her body. She is aggravated that she does not have control over the headache.

The telephone is ringing. No one answers it. Peggy suddenly realizes that Beth has left her desk to bandage a skinned knee. She picks up the receiver. It is the superintendent. "I like a woman who answers her own phone," the superintendent says humorously.

"If only she knew what I've done this morning other than answer this phone," Peggy thinks. "I just

do whatever needs to be done. We work as a team here," Peggy responds.

Peggy is a personal friend of the superintendent, so she feels quite comfortable kidding with her. The superintendent wants Peggy to develop a mentoring program for teachers and beginning administrators. She is well aware of Peggy's expertise in this area.

Peggy is very pleased that the superintendent has asked her to do this. "As a matter of fact, I was going to call you to express some interest in doing just that," Peggy explains.

"Great minds think alike," the superintendent responds. Peggy is pleased. Mentoring is a special interest of hers. She feels quite confident that she will do a good job with this project.

As this conversation ends, Crickett, an administrative intern whom Peggy is mentoring, comes to her door. Peggy's door is always open to the interns. Peggy welcomes Crickett who has been working on a scheduling problem with the artist-in-residence. Normally, she would seek help from the assistant principal, but Diane has lunch duty today.

Peggy knows that providing time to talk with the interns is a necessity. She puts aside her file of

ideas about mentoring and gives Crickett and her problem her full attention.

Peggy listens as Crickett describes her dilemma. Just by allowing Crickett to talk about the problem permits her to come up with her own solution. Crickett is ecstatic. Peggy has facilitated her in her problem-solving; she feels that she has made an administrative decision on her own. She is beaming and so is Peggy. "I learn so much from you interns. You keep me fired up," Peggy tells Crickett.

Beth comes to Peggy's door again, because Peggy has an important phone call. Peggy takes the call and finds out that it is about the upcoming assessment center activities. As she is talking, she sees the physical education teacher bring in a child who is obviously bleeding. She cuts the phone conversation short with a comment, "I'll call you this evening. I have an emergency here."

Peggy rushes across the office to find the situation is not what she had feared. The child has a nosebleed and has managed to smear blood all over himself. The teacher leaves, and Beth takes care of the child. Peggy sighs with relief. The child is not hurt!

She decides to relax for a few minutes before going to get her tray from the cafeteria. She returns some phone calls and writes a few notes.

"Relax, did I say relax?" Peggy asks aloud. The phone is ringing again. No one else is available to take the call. "Looks like I'm it," Peggy says as she picks up the receiver.

The call is for a teacher whose son has had an accident on the playground at his school. The teacher will need to leave for the remainder of the day. Peggy assigns an aide to cover the teacher's class while the teacher comes to the phone. Meanwhile, Peggy calls a substitute for her for the rest of the day. Peggy goes to the teacher's room to be sure that everything is in order for the substitute. This substitute has been at Oak Grove previously, so Peggy is confident that the class will be in good hands.

On her way back to the office she stops to interact with some students who are putting up a bulletin board display. Peggy asks them questions about their work. "What gave you the idea for this title? It reminds me of my favorite little boat, The Mary Jane," Peggy explains to the student who has written a wonderful story about a little sailboat.

Peggy loves to talk with the children and to share experiences with them.

Peggy decides to pick up her lunch on her way back to the office. She pats her skirt pocket to be sure that her lunch money is there. It is, so she proceeds to get her tray. "Chicken chunks today," she laughs as she interacts with the cafeteria staff. She chooses a salad and an apple to complete her meal. "Did Tommy come through the lunch line today?" she asks the manager.

"See that mess on the wall!" the manager responds. "Tommy has been here!"

Armed with nourishing reinforcements, she goes back to her office to have lunch. Peggy does not know what a "real lunch break" entails. As she eats, she signs a stack of certificates that will be presented during an upcoming assembly. She checks the incoming phone calls' list and returns a few calls. After the teachers leave this afternoon, she will make the calls that she does not get to make now. She doesn't give herself time to eat the apple; it will serve as an after-school snack.

Peggy sets her tray aside and pulls out the folders for this afternoon's meeting. She wants to review all the data she has gathered. She wants to be

prepared. The door to her office is closed. She does not want to be interrupted. Legal matters are involved here; this is just too important.

Thirty minutes later, she makes two phone calls to double check a couple of items. She just cannot seem to feel secure with this situation.

There's a knock on her door. Peggy knows that something important must have happened, otherwise Beth seldom interrupts when her door is closed. Beth sticks her head in and says, "That was Tommy's mother on the phone. She postponed Tommy's meeting. Didn't give a reason."

Peggy sighs. She is not relieved. She knows that this is just part of this parent's coping strategies. She is delaying action, but this situation needs immediate attention. In addition to the problems with Tommy's mother, other parents are beginning to complain about their children's sudden increase in new and exciting vocabulary words which they are learning from Tommy. There have been three such calls today, and Peggy has assured each caller that she is aware of the concerns.

Peggy asks her secretary to make the necessary calls to cancel Tommy's meeting, and she leaves to tell the teachers involved and ask the case manager to



reschedule as soon as possible. As she explains the situation to Tommy's classroom teacher, Peggy observes tears glistening in the teacher's eyes. Peggy steps to her side and gives her a hug. "I understand," she says. "We'll reschedule as soon as possible. Let me know any time you need help." She could say nothing more.

Since she doesn't have Tommy's meeting, Peggy thinks about all that she needs to do and tries to prioritize the list as she walks down the hall. She frequently walks around the building. She finds herself in the kindergarten wing. Peggy laughs as she realizes that what she really needs is relief. "What an appropriate place to find it, here with small children who can make me laugh," she says to herself as she thinks about her granddaughter, Kelly, and talks with the kindergartners.

"Oh, I haven't paid for my books at the Book Fair," she remembers. Peggy goes directly to her office to get her checkbook. On the way she hears a disturbance. Without a second thought, she knows. "It's Tommy!" As she approaches his classroom, she sees the assistant principal rush into the room. Peggy knows that Diane can handle the situation. After

seeing that everything is under control, she turns and walks back to her office.

Peggy keeps a list of students to whom she wants to speak or to send a note. She reviews her list. There are several on the list who are SCA officers and who have also received honors in various local competitions. She decides to call these students to the office to congratulate them as well as to discuss some SCA business. She spends about twenty minutes with these students. "How are your plans coming for School Spirit Day on Friday?" she asks. "Do you think we need to add more equipment to the playground?" "How do you feel about the new playground rules?" The students leave Peggy's office after they have provided her with their input. They feel good about their individual performances for which Peggy praised them, as well as about their roles in the student government at Oak Grove.

Peggy decides to phone the PTA president to get some more input on some of the same issues she has just discussed with the students. She praises the planning that the president has done for the upcoming spring festival and the work that the festival committee has underway. She also meets with teachers who want to do

a final review of the School Renewal Reports for today's faculty meeting.

Peggy is beginning to feel better. Her headache vanished while she was talking with the students. Being with the students is always relaxing for her.

While she has the time, Peggy decides to write a letter that she has been planning for some time. She wants the senior citizens, who live in the retirement community across the street, to know how much she appreciates their participation in Oak Grove's Reading Buddy Program. She would prefer to write each individual a personal note, but for now a general letter will have to suffice. She makes a note to discuss the content with Oak Grove's Language Arts Coordinator.

As she begins to draft the letter, there is a gentle knock on her office door. She glances up to see two beautiful eyes peering at her. "Kelly!" she shrieks. Peggy is delighted to feel her granddaughter's arms around her neck. "How did you know how much I need to see Kelly today?" she asks her daughter-in-law. Molly just smiles.

Peggy takes a break to spend some time with Kelly. "I have a surprise for you today," she says. She opens her closet door and takes out a little bunny dressed in

green bibbed overalls. Kelly beams and runs to sit on Peggy's lap, waiting to hold the bunny. However, Kelly's mother tells her that they must go because grandmother has work to do. Reluctantly, Peggy lets Kelly slide from her lap. "See you later," she says as Kelly and her mother leave.

"Bye, Mr. Bunny," Kelly responds as she looks longingly at the stuffed toy.

"Mr. Bunny will be right here for your next visit," Peggy replies. Kelly knows that he will wait for her, so she leaves quietly with her mother.

The mail has arrived, and the secretary spots a letter that she feels Peggy will want to see right away. It is correspondence from the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals. Peggy had been notified earlier that she had been selected as Virginia's National Distinguished Principal, but she had not received written verification. "This is it! I just know it!" Beth exclaims. Peggy recalls this same excitement when Oak Grove was named as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Beth takes the letter to Peggy and stays as Peggy opens it. She knows that Peggy will want to share this time with her. Beth is correct. This is the letter they have been awaiting. "No one deserves this honor

more than you do," she tells Peggy as tears trickle down her cheeks. "You're so much more than a boss to me. You're my dearest friend," she says. All good times must end, it seems, so her secretary concludes the sharing time with the comment, "Don't forget that you have a faculty meeting this afternoon."

"Thanks for jarring my memory," Peggy responds. "And thanks for just being you." Peggy reviews her notes for the faculty meeting and looks over the agenda to be sure that she has covered everything. Faculty meetings are held sparingly at Oak Grove. Most of the correspondence is done through the morning bulletin, committees, and team meetings. So, when Peggy holds a faculty meeting, she has an established agenda and sticks to it. "Yes, I'm ready," she says as she puts her notes and agenda on the corner of her desk to be picked up later.

As she starts to get up, she sees a proud mother, who also happens to be a teacher at Oak Grove, standing in front of her desk. She is clutching a photo album. Peggy knows that this teacher has stopped by to share some cherished memories with her. Sharing their family experiences with Peggy is a natural occurrence for the teachers. They know that family comes first in Peggy's

life, and they enjoy sharing their own families with her.

Today the photo album contains wedding pictures. Tomorrow it might be the new baby, a graduation or a new home. As this teacher displays her album so proudly, Peggy looks over the teacher's shoulder to her own mementos -- her pictures of Kelly. "Oh, no!" she exclaims. "I haven't paid for Kelly's books yet!"

After she and the teacher share the pictures, Peggy and her checkbook go down the hall toward the library. Peggy pays for the books and checks her watch. It is almost time for the students to leave for the day. "Where has this day gone?" she asks herself. "What have I accomplished today?"

She ventures back to the office, picks up her transmitter, and starts out to the bus-loading area. The bell rings, and students begin to file out to the buses. Rose Howard comes to the door in tears. She has lost her bus note giving her permission to ride to her father's house this afternoon, but she frequently goes there on Wednesdays. Peggy asks a student teacher to take her back to her classroom to look for the note. No luck. The note cannot be found. Peggy radios the main office to ask if anyone knows what Rose is supposed to do. Rose is in kindergarten, and Peggy

hesitates to take her word for this. The secretary has no clues; neither does the assistant principal.

Peggy has to make a decision. She talks to Rose's teacher and to the bus driver. Together they decide that Rose should ride the bus to her father's, and the bus driver will be sure that someone is at home or return her to school. Peggy feels confident that she has made the right decision, but she will do a follow-up phone call just to be sure. She radios Beth requesting that she call Rose's father immediately.

The buses are finally gone. The halls should be peaceful and quiet now. Sure! As Peggy enters the hallway, she hears voices, laughter, and sighs of relief. It has been a long day for everyone, and several teachers are reflecting on the funny events of the day.

Peggy has a few minutes before the faculty meeting is scheduled to begin. She realizes that the teachers need a break before focusing on the meeting. She wants to tell just the right joke today. "I will have them in stitches," she thinks.

She rushes back to the office, gathers up her notes and agenda, and heads to the library. She senses that this needs to be a short meeting. As she enters, she hears them shout, "Congratulations!" They have

done a great job of keeping a secret. Peggy sees refreshments on the table. "We are proud of our National Distinguished Principal," they say.

She'll save that joke for another day. She had been thinking of ways to boost their morale. "Isn't it funny," she ponders. "They, in turn, were thinking of me."

Peggy covers the agenda quickly. Several School Renewal committees share their reports. The social committee gives some details about an upcoming faculty dinner. One teacher shares an update about a faculty member who is ill. There is a feeling of togetherness in this room.

Peggy takes this opportunity to comment on the teachers' support of each other. "It pleases me to see how much you support each other. You seem to really care about one another. That's so important," Peggy explains.

The meeting draws to a close. Some of the teachers stay to enjoy the remaining refreshments. Others rush off to leave for the day or to work in their classrooms. Peggy meets briefly with the chairperson of the Planning Committee. She wants to ask her opinion about several concerns she has heard voiced among the teachers. The teacher asks Peggy



about a decision her committee needs to make. "That's really your decision. I want you to make it and to feel good about it. You have my support," Peggy explains as she listens to the teacher's ideas.

It is late afternoon, and most of the teachers have left for the day. Peggy is discussing the day with Beth and Diane. They tie up the loose ends, and Beth and Diane leave also.

Peggy then settles in her office for her quiet time. She sorts through the mail that has arrived by the school system's "Pony Express". She places the mail in two stacks -- that to be handled today and that which will wait until tomorrow. She writes several memos, answers two letters, and completes a report.

In addition to dealing with the mail, Peggy returns several phone calls. The people she cannot reach now, she will call later from her home. She glances at the clock. It is almost 5:00 P.M. She knows that James is waiting for her.

Peggy puts the mail away. Her desk is clear when she leaves her office. Before leaving she walks through the building searching for the evening custodians. Instead of just leaving a note, she wants to tell them how nice the building looked this morning.

Everything appears to be in order. Finally, Peggy permits herself to leave.

The trip home is unwinding time for Peggy. She tries to relax as she listens to music on the car radio. She thinks about James, and a smile forms on her lips. "I'm so lucky," she thinks. "He's more than my husband. He's my best friend."

It is almost 5:30 P.M. when Peggy pulls in the driveway. James hears the car and has a cool drink ready when she comes through the door. "Dinner is almost ready," he says as he greets her. "Sit down and put your feet up for a while."

After dinner Peggy makes some additional phone calls, watches TV for a short time and begins to get ready for bed. The phone is ringing. "Oh, no!" she mumbles. "I just know that it's Tommy's mother."

This time Peggy is delighted to be wrong. It is her son with a wonderful "Kelly story" to tell. For the first time today James sees a peaceful glow cover Peggy's face. He knows who has called. If only for a few brief moments, the school day is behind her.

Once off the phone she shares the "Kelly story" with James, and between the two of them they tell many more. As bedtime approaches, Peggy gathers some articles to take to bed with her. This is her

professional reading time. She checks to be sure that her notepad is beside her bed. She will awaken several times during the night to jot down things to take care of in the morning.

James wishes the notepad would disappear. But, for now he realizes that it is a security blanket for Peggy.

The midnight moon is shining through the window as Peggy finally gives in to sleep. The moon will probably still be glowing when she awakens in the morning. Peggy really doesn't have time for sleep. James smiles and watches the moon as sleep overtakes him.

What will tomorrow bring?

I asked no other thing,  
 No other was denied. . .  
 Emily Dickinson

### Experience

I stepped from plank to plank  
 So slow and cautiously;  
 The stars about my head I felt,  
 About my feet the sea.

I knew not but the next  
 Would be my final inch, --  
 This gave me that precarious gait  
 Some call experience.  
 Emily Dickinson

## Chapter 6

### **Peggy Moles: A Transformational Leader**

Peggy, the leader, has many of the same qualities as Peggy, the person. This study examines the leadership of Peggy Moles using Aburdene and Nasbitt's (1992) definition of a transformational leader: a person in a position of authority who (1) encourages participation; (2) shares power, information and decision-making; (3) enhances the self-worth of others; (4) gets others excited about their work; (5) facilitates; (6) networks; (7) creates a nourishing environment; and (8) is visionary, flexible, holistic and personal.

An analysis of Peggy Moles' leadership style revealed that she has many of the characteristics of a

transformational leader. This study is limited to a review of five of these: (1) encouraging participation; (2) sharing decision-making; (3) enhancing the self-worth of others; (4) creating a nourishing environment; and (5) facilitating others. Documentation of these characteristics was extracted from the interviews, teacher logs, observations, documents, and surveys that were analyzed for this study.

### **Encouraging Participation**

Encouraging participation refers to the input and involvement of teachers, parents, and community in a school. Peggy is enthusiastic about having her teachers, staff, and parents participate in all aspects of Oak Grove. Teachers are aware that Peggy wants their participation. The comments they make include:

She lets us know that she expects us to participate in the life of Oak Grove.  
She wants to know our feelings and lets us know how she feels.  
When she comes into my classroom, she truly cares about what I am doing, and she tells me this. This makes me want to be more involved in my teaching and in the activities at Oak Grove.

Teachers refer to Peggy as a good communicator and express their appreciation for and recognition of the manner in which she uses her communication skills to get people involved in the school. They state:

I think there is a lot of communication -- both written and verbal. She encourages us to become involved.

She's good at communicating her vision -- our mission -- for our school. She always wants the parents and community to understand what goes on at Oak Grove and wants them to participate in its activities.

The superintendent comments that Peggy communicates directly. "She doesn't make you figure it out," she explains. "Everyone knows where Peggy is headed. She wants everyone to participate in all aspects of the school."

Teachers describe the encouraging notes which Peggy leaves in their mailboxes or on their desks in their classrooms. One teacher states,

Sometimes I come to my room in the morning and find a note from Peggy right there on my desk. It's usually about something she has seen in my classroom. Sometimes though, she just wants to say thanks for something I have done. That's so encouraging. It makes me want to do even more. I want to become more involved in our school.

Another teacher comments about Peggy's way of complimenting her teachers.

She passes along compliments so well. She lets us know what people think about us. She's so sincere in her praise of a job well done. Her little notes that she places in my box mean so much. She makes me want to improve myself -- both for me and for Oak Grove. She makes me want to participate more school-wide.

One teacher comments further, "Peggy always leaves a note to make you feel good. She wants us to be involved."

Many of the teachers mention Peggy's daily morning greeting in the front lobby of the school as a positive, cheerful beginning for their school day. This is a special time when the teachers communicate with Peggy. They indicate that they can feel her openness and encouragement, which boosts their willingness to participate more freely, in statements such as the following:

She greets us each morning. She lets us know that she wants us to be involved.

She's always there in the front lobby when I get to school, and she always says something to get me through the day. She's really interested in us. She wants us to feel that we are participating in all aspects of our school.

She creates a warmth in the school each morning as she begins our day at school. This creates a setting which makes me want to become more involved each day.

Other teachers describe Peggy as being supportive. They emphasize her willingness to have them try new ideas and methods in their classrooms. Several teachers speak of her use of a favorite expression, "Go for it," when they approach her about trying something new as long as it is instructionally sound. Others state:

She allows us as teachers and as people to solve our own problems.  
She is very supportive and free with praise.

Teachers claim that Peggy is willing to delegate responsibility which encourages their participation in the activities of the school. "She allows us to make decisions. At the same time she lets us know that we are accountable for the results of our decisions," one teacher states. They point to her use of committees and grade level meetings as opportunities for their involvement in the decision-making process of the school. "Our School Renewal committees are given a great deal of responsibility. We have to be very involved," another teacher explains.

Teachers also suggest that Peggy often leads by example. Peggy participates in many of the inservices and other staff development activities that are planned for her teachers. One teacher explains that Peggy "gets dirty with the rest of us". Another expresses the view that the teachers "just know what to do" without being told what to do by Peggy, because of her constant, quiet guidance. "She leads by example by showing us what she wants done. She's not a dictatorial leader. She leads quietly," a teacher claims.



Teachers describe Peggy as being an expert in the area of public relations, which includes her working relationship with the parents and community. They feel that Peggy openly seeks parent and community involvement and encourages their participation in the daily work and decision-making at Oak Grove. For example, Peggy sought and received the support of a local retirement community to assist in Oak Grove's Reading Buddy Program. These senior citizens work with students who have reading difficulties.

The volunteer program is viewed as a natural and necessary part of the school. The teachers speak of the ways volunteers are involved in the school, as well as the ways the school celebrates its volunteers. The school has a special breakfast, lunch with parents, lunch with grandparents, and other such recognitions to express its appreciation for its successful volunteer program. The assistant principal, who serves as the volunteer coordinator, indicates that at least 75% of the parents of Oak Grove students volunteer in some fashion at the school.

The teachers feel that their participation is encouraged and expected. Parents, administrative interns, teachers, the assistant principal, the secretary, and central office personnel mention Peggy's

encouragement and support of their participation in the activities of the school. One teacher states, "She is willing to go through the process of providing the opportunity for teachers and parents to develop their own means of participation and involvement. She wants us to have ownership."

Parents express that awareness of her support and indicate that they feel welcome when they participate in the school's activities and functions. One parent comments, "She has a willingness to be open in her communication with the community. I think she knows as a principal and as an educator that community involvement in education is critical to success."

"She's very inclusive. She includes everyone," another parent explains.

Encouraging participation of parents, teachers, and the community is a central part of Peggy's leadership style. Log responses include:

She met with me to discuss needs and to reach a decision about a special education student.  
We met to discuss how inclusion is working in another school system.  
We discussed the placement of students for the upcoming school year.  
She sought my input on some low children with special needs.  
She asked for suggestions to improve the Adopt-A-Highway program.  
We discussed information that needed to be placed in a letter to a specific parent.  
She sought my input on kindergarten registration.

Other log responses mention the daily bulletin as a means of effective communication that keeps them abreast of what is happening, as well as providing an opportunity for Peggy to encourage their participation in various events and processes. Comments include:

The morning bulletin provides information and is a means for Peggy to seek our involvement. She says thanks for a job well done which makes us want to participate even more.

Many responses indicate that Peggy's direct, personal contact with the teachers instills in them a willingness to participate. They comment:

Her bright and cheerful morning greetings in the front lobby let us know she cares. This makes me more willing to work harder and to do more.

She asks me about my daughter and her job. I know she truly cares. This makes me more open to helping within our school.

The data indicate that Peggy's encouragement of participation in the school is acknowledged with appreciation and support. However, the teachers are aware that even participatory decision-making has its limitations. One teacher states, "She encourages us, I think, to be part of the planning for the school and yet lets us know where our limits and boundaries are, too."

The teachers reflect on their involvement in the affairs of Oak Grove Elementary School realistically.

They are aware that with active participation in decision-making, they also have the responsibility for accountability. "If she has delegated responsibility, she will expect accountability," one teacher explains.

A representative of the school system's Central Office speaks of Peggy's willingness to have others participate and be involved at Oak Grove Elementary School. "She gives people a lot of room to do their own thing. She kind of has some broad parameters to work within, but lets the individual style of people surface. There's some flexibility within her management style," he explains. He views Peggy as being a consensus builder, "taking the different ideas and trying to focus and pull people together".

A supervisor at the central office level views Peggy's encouragement of participation by the manner in which Peggy offers and participates in inservices and staff development at her school. "Peggy is always there. She's always there with the teachers. She's there to give them those encouraging words right at the time they need it," this supervisor suggests.

The secretary at the school acknowledges Peggy's desire to have people participate in all aspects of the school. She states that Peggy is always asking questions: "How do you feel? What do you think?" In

encouraging participation of others Peggy also gains their support. "You see what she's doing and you want to do well for her," the secretary indicates.

Encouraging participation is a characteristic of transformational leadership that is a natural part of Peggy's personality and style. "I think she's a leader who involves the other people. She makes them want to follow her, and she does that by involving them," one teacher explains.

Peggy often refers to herself as an invitational leader. "I lead through an invitational process." Perhaps this reflection on her own leadership serves as an appropriate description of her encouragement of the participation of others at Oak Grove Elementary School.

### **Sharing Decision-Making**

The second characteristic of transformational leadership that Peggy exhibits clearly is that of sharing decision-making. Sharing decision-making refers to the ability and willingness of an administrator to involve others in making the decisions for a school.

Some of the school system's central office personnel indicate that they view Peggy as a pioneer in shared decision-making in a system that has not fully supported or even encouraged such a leadership style.

However, the superintendent acknowledges that shared decision-making is taking place at Oak Grove Elementary School and that the school system has not discouraged the process in any way.

Teachers emphasize that Peggy is willing to and does delegate responsibility and decision-making to individual teachers, committees, and teams. Peggy supports, encourages, and allows her faculty to develop over the years to the point that she feels confident that it is competent enough to act responsively. One teacher indicates that Peggy "encourages everyone to grow professionally and be involved in active decision-making". She indicates that the people who work at Oak Grove "feel that they have an opportunity to make something of themselves -- to become a little better at what they do". "Peggy has a natural ability to allow others to make decisions," she concludes.

Teachers often use the terminology **shared decision-making** to describe how decisions are being made at Oak Grove Elementary School. One teacher indicates that Peggy does not make snap decisions; she seeks as much information as possible from those involved before reaching a decision. She encourages the teachers to make decisions whenever feasible. The teachers explain how Peggy as the administrator is

willing to make that final decision when this is necessary, but not without viewing the positives and negatives, and not without seeking input from all parties involved or affected by her decision.

Teachers make comments such as:

She honors my opinion even if we aren't in agreement. She really wants to know how I feel. She encourages us to make decisions. She would like us to examine all sides of an issue before reaching a decision. She really wants us to make the decision. I don't think I've ever seen her make a snap decision. She carefully weighs the positives and the negatives. She relies heavily on her building personnel to assist her. In many cases, she expects us to make decisions for our school.

The teachers describe the extensive role that committees play at Oak Grove Elementary School. The school is involved in the School Renewal process, and the committees required for this process are aggressively active. The teachers make comments which describe this role:

On the School Renewal committees you need to be motivated to try new things. Peggy gives us a great deal of decision-making authority. We use committees to make many decisions here at Oak Grove. Peggy doesn't make a decision on her own without first checking with the appropriate committee.

In acknowledging Peggy's leadership role other words the teachers use to describe Peggy's willingness to

share the decision-making powers include interactive, open-minded, and confident.

The teacher logs reveal statements about sharing decisions at the school. These statements include comments (1) about discipline problems; (2) the authority of the School Renewal committees --Planning, Staff Development, Communication, Climate, and Curriculum and Instruction; (3) involvement in decisions about school functions; and (4) input into decisions regarding instructional strategies. For example, the teachers make decisions about: (1) their own behavior management plans; (2) their own instructional techniques; (3) their attendance at school functions; (4) the changes needed to improve the school climate; and (5) the types of staff development that are necessary at Oak Grove.

All of these areas seem to indicate Peggy's willingness and openness to share decision-making. One teacher states, "She elicits our input. She asks for the best while she is giving her best. She wants us to make decisions."

The faculty, staff, and parents of Oak Grove are part of any planning of activities for the school. The annual spring festival is a good example. This



festival is a celebration for everyone connected with Oak Grove, and everyone is involved.

Peggy's teachers both acknowledge and commend her for her delegation of power and authority at Oak Grove. "She relies heavily on her teachers to assist her in making decisions," one teacher explains. "She gives us much of what used to be the principal's power; she respects our ability to make decisions."

Another teacher describes Peggy as the type of leader "that doesn't go ahead and make a decision on her own . . . she'll ask us how we feel about it . . . before a decision is reached." This teacher states further, "I think it's not just Peggy making decisions, it's Peggy thinking about other people."

"She allows us to be a part of decision-making, and she will often throw things out for the faculty and ask us what we would like to do," another teacher indicates. "She not only let's us participate as leaders; she encourages that."

A Central Office supervisor views Peggy as an example of a transformational leader. "She's real participatory, and she encourages her teachers to be involved in the actual decision-making process," she states as she describes Peggy's leadership style. "She's been real innovative in site-based management."

For example, a few years ago the school system initiated a Reading/Writing Workshop. Peggy became very enthusiastic about this project after seeing the enthusiasm of the Language Arts Coordinator and several classroom teachers. They took the information back to the faculty and provided the teachers the opportunity to develop and implement the program at Oak Grove.

Another Central Office representative refers to Peggy's leadership style as being "an open kind of management style". She has "flexibility within that management style," he explains. He feels that Peggy is very secure with her leadership and views her "willingness to be put in this kind of environment, to be scrutinized. . . in this study" as an example of a leader who feels secure and is willing to share her decision-making powers with others.

The assistant principal of Oak Grove Elementary School describes Peggy as a leader who is "able to delegate" and to share her decision-making powers. The school secretary perhaps sums up how the school feels about Peggy's ability and willingness to share her decision-making powers. "She makes everyone feel that her leadership involves everyone. I mean everyone has a say in final decisions and the ways in which things are implemented," she explains. She states

further that Peggy is "just a dynamic woman, and when she leads, you don't think that she's leading anyone anywhere. It's sort of like she's taking you with her."

Sharing decision-making is a characteristic of her leadership of which Peggy is quite proud. Being invitational is a natural process for Peggy. "I believe strongly that an administrator should have the people working with her in a participatory process," Peggy explains. "I have a lot of confidence in my staff. I value their opinion." This confidence and trust are cornerstones for Peggy's sharing of decision-making.

### **Enhancing the Self-Worth of Others**

Self-worth is the feeling of importance that one gets from being valued and respected as professionals and as individuals. The teachers at Oak Grove acknowledge that their principal enhances their self-worth on a daily basis.

The term used most often to describe Peggy is **friend**. The teachers view Peggy not only as their principal, but also as a person whom they cherish and trust and who is available to listen to their confidential problems and concerns. The teachers indicate that they do not go to her for sympathy, but

for understanding. They are aware that what they tell her will be kept confidential and that she will have some comforting words for them that will boost their morale. They suggest that:

She is a very dear personal friend. She's always there when I need her.  
She's my confidant.  
She's so accepting.  
You can tell Peggy anything and you know that it will go no further.  
Anything you tell her will be held in the strictest confidence.  
If she's needed, she's there.  
She's our companion.

Others do not use the term, friend, but express the same feeling for her. They use terms to describe her in this role such as nonjudgmental, genuine, encouraging, understanding, and respectful. They feel that Peggy is a person who is capable of raising their self-esteem by respecting them personally and professionally. Examples include:

She uses praise to promote self-concepts.  
She writes notes to teachers individually to promote and praise accomplishments.  
She makes comments in faculty meetings about teachers and projects that she deems excellent. She also comments about accomplishments of teachers' family members.

The teachers state that they enjoy working at Oak Grove, because they feel that they are respected and appreciated. "Peggy has so much respect for all of us. We choose to be here," a teacher explains.

The data indicate that the teachers feel that enhancing the self-worth of others is a very significant characteristic of a principal's leadership, because it touches them both professionally and personally. They appreciate the fact that Peggy acknowledges that they have lives away from the school, as does she. Many express their appreciation of her providing them time to be away from the school to attend functions with their families. Sometimes Peggy covers a class herself so that a teacher may leave the school to attend a special function elsewhere.

The teachers appear grateful that Peggy understands women and how women relate to different situations from a female perspective. Many of their comments address this issue as an indicator of Peggy's promotion of their feeling of self-worth.

She has love and respect for her teachers.  
She tends to be in tune with her faculty.  
She is open and caring.  
She understands the feelings of other women.  
She is willing to listen.  
She is dependable.  
It is easy to relate to Peggy.  
She is caring and understands problems and  
people's feelings.  
She understands the importance of family.

Teachers mention Peggy's ability and willingness to listen. They indicate that Peggy's door is always open. They feel that she is very nonjudgmental and

that she allows them to work through their own situations and difficulties as she sits and listens. They view her as being supportive and caring and claim that they leave Peggy's office feeling rejuvenated and more self-confident. They feel that she boosts their self-worth and make comments to support this feeling:

She listens to us. She's nonjudgmental.  
She shows genuine concern for all of us.  
I'm comfortable in her office.  
She has a sense of humor. It's so uplifting.  
She's compassionate.  
She nudges us gently when necessary.  
She makes us feel good about ourselves.

The teachers view this willingness to listen as one way in which Peggy sees them as individuals who have needs.

Teachers mention Peggy's high expectations, indicating that her expectations promote their own. The teachers realize what Peggy expects of them, and they also know that she will support their efforts to meet those expectations. They do not fear her high expectations and standards, because they know that she will not expect more than they are capable of doing. She holds herself to these same expectations and standards. She will never ask of teachers what she would not do herself.

"Peggy expects 100% from each teacher, but she gives 150%. This encourages us to want to give even

more and makes us feel that we can. We feel good about ourselves," one teacher explains.

Other teachers state:

She conveys expectations and has confidence that teachers can reach their goals.  
She offers guidance.  
She serves as an authentic role model.

Included in her high expectations which promote self-worth are things such as individual professional growth, participation in inservices and staff development, and the development of innovative programs to be used in the individual classrooms. Peggy does not insist that every teacher follow the same methods and techniques. She allows each teacher to develop her individual style and to teach in ways that she feels most comfortable as long as the methods are effective in the education of the students.

One teacher explains that Peggy has not required her to change her instructional techniques, even though most of the other teachers have made major changes. This teacher does not use whole language or cooperative learning techniques. "I still do things my own way. I'm still very structured and rule-oriented and less cooperative learning-oriented. But my methods still work, and Peggy allows me to use them." Another teacher adds that "Peggy is accepting of any kind of

teacher as long as the children are learning and the local and state guidelines are being met."

Teachers rate praise from Peggy as a significant factor in the enhancement of their self-worth. "She praises freely," one proffers. Offering praise is part of a natural, daily routine for Peggy. The teachers view this as proof of her self-confidence and her belief in their abilities to do good jobs. Sometimes these praises are voiced at faculty meetings; sometimes during casual contact around the school; sometimes during planned or unplanned classroom visits; and sometimes in a simple note that states, "Thanks for a job well done."

Peggy and Oak Grove Elementary School have received numerous awards. As Peggy acknowledges each of these awards, she gives the credit for the award to the teachers, students, and parents of the school. She explains that she could not do her job alone and that others are a big part of the successes. "Peggy always gives someone else the credit for her accomplishments," one teacher explains.

Teachers state that Peggy is a constant reinforcer of their self-concept and thus their self-worth. Peggy listens to her teachers' opinions, and they know that she respects what they say and do. This gives them the



self-confidence to be willing to take risks and to be involved in the decision-making process, as well as in other activities at the school.

She always respects our opinions. She respects us for who we are.  
I feel like I'm worth something now, because she always makes us feel that way.  
She looks at what I've done and tells me I'm fantastic. This makes me feel like I am fantastic!"

One teacher speaks at length about how Peggy has boosted her professional self-concept. "She has made me work diligently to obtain the highest degree of teaching proficiency that I possibly can. She is so accepting," she explains.

Several of the members of the Oak Grove faculty and staff have experienced personal difficulties such as major health problems, a divorce or the death of a family member. Each of these women believe that Peggy helped them survive their difficult personal situations. Peggy's strong feelings toward family life allow her to understand and to place personal problems in the proper perspective. These women indicate that Peggy's acceptance helps them as women raise their self-confidence and self-worth.

"I could not have survived as a teacher without Peggy's support. She made me feel that I was

important. She made me feel good about myself," one teacher comments. Others state:

My personal life has been difficult to bear at times. I walk into Oak Grove and everything is okay. I know that Peggy will accept me and help me.

During my illness I felt surrounded by my Oak Grove family. This made me feel good, feel needed.

The secretary states, "Peggy is my boss and my friend, and I probably ought to put those in reverse order. She's always a sounding board." The secretary goes on to say, "She's good for my self-confidence. She's good for my ego."

Peggy's assistant principal states, "She brings out the best in everybody. She encourages everyone to grow." Speaking about their working relationship, the assistant principal adds, "Peggy treats me as an equal, and I think she thinks my opinion is worth something, and that makes me feel good."

Another teacher speaks highly of Peggy's ability to build self-confidence in her teachers. "Peggy instilled so much confidence in me. Her belief in me made me think I could do anything and be anything. And, her belief that I was a wonderful teacher convinced me that I was a wonderful teacher," she explains. "My confidence level increased so much because of the faith that she put in my abilities."

Throughout the study the data provide examples of how people feel that Peggy has influenced their lives by boosting their self-esteem and thus making them feel better about themselves. Enhancing the self-worth of others is clearly a goal for Peggy in her role as an elementary principal. She believes that how teachers feel about themselves as individuals has a direct effect on how they perform in the classroom. Thus, she attempts to boost their self-worth whenever possible.

#### **Creating a Nourishing Environment**

Cioci, Lee, and Smith (1990) asserted that "although leadership may not entirely determine the 'personality' of an organization, its leadership largely determines its structure and culture" (p. 1). The participants in this study concur. A nourishing environment is one in which teachers, students, parents, staff, and administrators flourish personally and professionally due to the warm, open, positive atmosphere it provides. The teachers at Oak Grove Elementary School indicate that they feel good about the environment at their school.

Teachers describe the school environment as being positive. These teachers feel that they work in an atmosphere that is productive, friendly, and caring. They believe that Peggy has created an environment that

is healthy for everyone. "Oak Grove's environment is caring, positive, and upbeat. It welcomes students, teachers, parents, and the community with open arms," one teacher states. This teacher admits however, that the environment is also demanding and high pressure.

By encouraging teacher involvement and input in decision-making, Peggy shows that she respects her faculty and its ability to do what is best for the students. Working in such a positive environment provides teachers an opportunity to feel good about what they do and thus produces more productive, positive results. Comments include:

Oak Grove's environment is full of respect for every individual.  
Our environment is professional, respectful, supportive, and caring.  
Our environment is comfortable, fun, and professional, yet very demanding.

Oak Groves's teachers indicate that the environment of their school is warm. They feel that Oak Grove is a welcoming and warm place to be.

Teachers claim:

We want to be here. Coming to work each day is not a struggle.  
The teachers feel secure and happy.  
Our school is very warm and inviting.  
Oak Grove is warm and open.  
The teachers are very appreciative of their secure environment.

These teachers describe Oak Grove's environment as being comfortable. "Our school environment is relaxed and comfortable," one teacher suggests. Teachers do not feel threatened or pressured by Peggy. They describe her as supportive and willing to carry her share of the load. They also believe that their individual, personal needs will be met and appreciate Peggy's acknowledgment of these needs. "Our school is open, loving, caring, and a comforting place to be," one teacher suggests.

In examining the environment of the school other terms used to describe it includes: upbeat, supportive, open, respectful, loving, child-centered, caring, friendly, accepting, relaxed, cooperative, inviting, helpful, kind, considerate, professional, intense at times, and focused. One teacher sums up her feelings by stating that "Oak Grove is very child-centered, and the teachers here are very willing to cooperate and share for the benefit of everyone. It's an upbeat, caring place to be."

Teachers feel that Peggy's direct role in providing this nourishing environment is a result of her quiet way of leading. Several teachers suggest that Peggy leads by example stating:

She calmly exhibits her leadership. We know  
what to do by her example.  
She doesn't have to tell us; she shows us.

They describe her as being a calm, pleasant leader  
who is compassionate. They comment:

She's always pleasant to every one.  
She has a pleasant personality.  
Her voice is always calm. She never raises it.  
She has dignity and control.  
Peggy has a quiet assurance and confidence in  
herself which she transfers to others.

These teachers acknowledge how important compassion is  
in a good administrator, again emphasizing the  
importance of having such a special environment in  
which to work.

Teachers appreciate Peggy's accessibility when  
they need to discuss professional or personal problems  
and acknowledge that confidentiality is important to  
them. They state:

She's always there.  
Peggy's door is always open.  
She's our confidant.  
We like this trustful environment.

Peggy's whole demeanor encourages a nourishing  
environment both for faculty, staff, and the students.  
"She's calm, supportive, focused, and caring," one  
teacher states. Another teacher indicates that "school  
environment has always been a number one priority with  
Peggy."

One teacher, while discussing the environment at Oak Grove, states, "I think individuals feel secure. I think parents feel comfortable in coming to the school. The students feel comfortable." In essence, this teacher describes Oak Grove as a pleasant place in which to work and grow professionally and personally.

Other teachers describe the working relationship of the faculty members:

I think we work well together as a faculty. I think there is a lot of communication. I know that when I have a problem, I talk about it.  
There is a spirit of cooperation.  
Almost always there is a positive aura around the faculty and staff.

One teacher describes the physical environment which she feels is so important to the overall atmosphere. When Peggy came to Oak Grove, "the school became physically much more attractive, and it became much warmer for the community, the parents, the students, and for the teachers." This teacher goes on to say that Oak Grove is "very open and accepting and warm. It's a very loving place to come to. I tell my students that our classroom is our home away from home."

Teachers appreciate the many events and celebrations that occur at Oak Grove which serve to create an upbeat environment. "We all get positive

strokes from Peggy. We get support and recognition," one teacher explains. Others speak about the weekend trips the faculty takes, the First Friday celebrations, and the sharing of secret pals. "We take terrific trips together," one teacher explains. "Once we went on a whale watch at Virginia Beach. We bundled up. Rain was pouring. We saw absolutely nothing, but we had a wonderful time. We had fun watching, laughing, telling jokes, and just getting away together." She feels that such events "keep the spirits very good." Speaking of Oak Grove, she states, "If we didn't love it, we wouldn't be here."

A former teacher speaks extensively about the nourishing environment of Oak Grove. "I think it's very business-like," she explains. "The focus has always been on education and getting the child educated. The environment is always welcoming. The caring and the concern are still there." Including Peggy as the support system for Oak Grove's nourishing environment, this woman concludes, "Peggy has been a real inspiration for a lot of women in teaching."

Creating a nourishing environment is a characteristic about which Peggy feels quite strongly. She is a leader who is conscious of the importance of a nourishing environment for the employees of the school,



as well as for the students, parents, and community. It is important to Peggy that her staff feel comfortable and secure. Peggy is responsive to and values the opinions and feelings of others. She works to create and to maintain a positive, caring, loving, professional, and nourishing environment at Oak Grove Elementary School.

### **Facilitating Others**

Peggy is viewed by the teachers as "the great facilitator". They feel that she is their guide, not their master. They feel that through (1) her ability and willingness to delegate; (2) her sharing of decision-making powers; and (3) her promotion of the self-worth of others, she facilitates their ability to grow professionally and personally.

To facilitate, one must be respected for her skill and knowledge base. Because Peggy is viewed as being knowledgeable, caring, and respectful of others, she commands respect from those around her. Commanding respect facilitates her ability to lead and to help others in their professional and personal lives.

Peggy takes the time to work with her faculty and staff as they face problems and decisions. She provides them a supportive base for creating their own ideas and then provides them the opportunity to work

through problems and concerns to reach their own solutions. Comments include:

Peggy is not the type of person that goes ahead and makes a decision on her own. She provides us the space to solve our own problems. But, she's there if we need her. She always allows us as teachers to solve our own problems, to come to our conclusions, to come to her for help or support when we need it. She facilitates our decision-making and problem-solving.

Peggy is willing to make the final decision, but she first allows those involved to reach consensus and a decision, if possible. Comments include:

Peggy has a way of making the right decision when she needs to, but it will be for the benefit of everybody, and it will usually make everybody feel okay. She consults her staff about what it would like to see happen in any situation.

Teachers indicate that Peggy's professionalism is a characteristic which allows her to serve as a facilitator for others. She has a strong and current knowledge base that she is willing to share with her teachers and colleagues. The teachers view Peggy's level of knowledge as being significant in the area of instructional matters and emphasize that she keeps abreast of the most current trends in education. "A lot of people look to her school as a model as to what is going on instructionally. She's probably one of the most current principals out there," one teacher

suggests. "It just seems that she is always one step ahead of everyone, and everyone knows it."

Peggy states that she "wants her teachers to be knowledgeable so that they may speak intelligently when they talk to parents and other professionals". Peggy is eager to stay abreast of what is new in the field of education, and she makes sure that we know about what is happening," one teacher explains. "She's always asking us about what we have read. She's right there on top of things, encouraging us to read professional literature," another teacher states.

Teachers view Peggy's knowledge base as a facilitator in their own formal professional development. Not only does she provide inservice and other staff development activities for them, but she also shares her personal experiences and knowledge gained from her own professional reading and attendance at conferences and workshops. "Peggy always does her homework. She attends various conferences and reads a lot of articles. She always shares this information with us," one teacher explains.

Peggy is a presenter at many professional meetings and conferences. She encourages her teachers to present at conferences as well. Comments include:

Peggy is so capable of sharing her knowledge and experiences. She does presentations at conferences and works individually with other school systems that are involved in the School Renewal process. She is devoted to School Renewal and works hard to get others involved in this process.

Peggy shares her knowledge at professional meetings. She's just so respected. This makes us willing to go out and try these presentations on our own.

Teachers respect the professional manner in which Peggy handles the day-to-day operations of the school. "She's constant. We know what to expect. This makes us more willing to take risks, to try new and different approaches to things." They feel that Peggy has high expectations for each of them which facilitates them in reaching the goals and standards set by the school.

Others comment:

Peggy sets very high standards for us all. But, she works hard also and helps us meet these standards.

Peggy has opinions -- a vision -- about what she wants to get done and where we're headed. She holds us to high standards and guides us on the way to reaching them.

They also feel that Peggy is willing and does, when necessary, take the required action when she has a teacher who is not meeting the standards and not doing her job well. They respect Peggy's ability and reasoning in such situations and feel that each will be handled fairly and in the best interest of Oak Grove, as well as the individual involved. This allows them

to feel that what they do is important, and that all teachers will be held to the same high standards. This encourages them to do the best for their students and the school.

One teacher, who had felt unwelcome in the school system, gives Peggy full credit for giving her a chance.

Peggy welcomed me with open arms -- no hesitation whatsoever. She stuck herself out on a limb by allowing me to work here. She had no qualms about my coming to Oak Grove. She stuck up for me. I'll always be grateful to her for that. She made me feel secure. If I ever need her, I know she'll be there.

This teacher views Peggy as the person who is responsible for her success as a teacher, as well as a person. She describes how low her self-esteem had been when she came to Oak Grove. She explains how Peggy has encouraged her to grow professionally and personally.

Teachers describe Peggy as a mentor who makes them feel successful. They attribute their own professional growth to her advice and guidance by making statements such as:

She is my guide. I depend on her.  
She's a tremendous role model.  
She's a role model for us all.  
She gets right in the middle of things. She  
    doesn't just watch things happen.  
She guides us as we work through our problems.

Others do not use the term **mentor**, but explain that Peggy has encouraged their professional growth by providing opportunities for inservices during the school day or by allowing them to visit other schools to observe programs being implemented. Comments include:

She's great at creative planning. She finds ways to cover our classes so that we may attend services during the school day. We realize that she thinks this is important. She sets an example for us by providing the time.

"Peggy is a wonderful role model," another teacher suggests. "She not only lets us participate as leaders, but she also encourages that. . . . If she has delegated responsibility, she will expect stewardship to be there, to have an accountability." She feels that Peggy involves her teachers in the decision-making at Oak Grove by creating a professional atmosphere in which the teachers feel secure and comfortable. "She's encouraging and guiding rather than forcing," she explains.

Teachers describe Peggy as a facilitator when it comes to the promotion of faculty interaction.

Comments include:

It's a very key issue with Peggy -- that the faculty members feel good about themselves as far as the interaction. Peggy is very, very encouraging as far as helping one another.

To be a facilitator a leader must recognize the needs and the feelings of her faculty. Peggy's teachers indicate that she is very much aware of their needs. They comment:

She's empathetic and sympathetic. Nothing is beneath her.  
She participates in the dirty jobs as well as the glamour jobs for which the school receives the glory.  
She praises freely.

This encourages the teachers to try new methods and ideas without fear if they fail.

In discussing inservice and staff development teachers indicate that "Peggy practices what she preaches." They explain:

She shows us how to do things, but doesn't say one word about wanting us to do these things in our classrooms.  
When Peggy is doing a presentation for the faculty, she uses different teaching methods to cover different learning styles. She's accommodating for our individual learning styles. This emphasizes the significance of doing so with the students, and a lot of us will.

Other teachers focus more on Peggy's enhancement of their own personal lives as a means of facilitation. One woman had experienced tragedy in her life and thus found herself dependent upon the people around her for support and encouragement as she worked through her personal tragedy. She gives Peggy credit for being extremely helpful in this situation. "She's a very

good friend of mine. She combines wonderfully a very professional attitude with being able to be a warm friend to people," she explains. This combination helps Peggy's teachers feel comfortable in doing things on their own, knowing that Peggy is their support if they need it. Comments include:

She admires us for the things we do. I think she wants us to be people who have things to do. She's very sensitive to things in our personal lives.

I feel that I am worth something because she makes me feel this way. She makes me feel confident to try and do what I need to do personally and professionally.

Teachers suggest that Peggy is a mentor for all who are willing to accept her guidance. They state:

Peggy has influenced my life as a teacher by being very complimentary of the things that I do.

She just helped me to foster the feeling that everybody else had always given me -- that I was a person of great worth. She just made me feel like I had so much to offer that it made my life seem full of meaning.

Peggy is so willing to listen, to guide, to redirect.

She lets us know, and very sincerely, what people think about us. She has just given us a lot of confidence.

Peggy's sincerity and encouragement serve to boost our morale and cause people to feel good about themselves, thus allowing them to do their best professionally.

Teachers acknowledge Peggy's role in getting parents involved at Oak Grove. "She brings people in,"



one teacher states. Once parents and teachers are involved, "She's there behind us," she concludes.

One teacher explains how Peggy has worked to create and maintain a positive, warm, caring school environment in their school. "You walk in here and everything is okay. . . . People care about you," she indicates. "Peggy has led Oak Grove Elementary School in this direction, and we both acknowledge and appreciate this facilitatory environment," she adds.

Other teachers believe that Peggy's consistency is a facilitatory factor for them. "We do not have to play guessing games with her. Peggy's always the same," one teacher asserts. "This provides the security that is necessary if people are to feel good about their day-to-day development as professionals and as individuals. We always know what to expect."

As teachers describe Peggy's facilitatory role, they use many different words to create their description: hands-on, positive, involved, devoted, concerned, optimistic, thorough, approachable, and attuned to the needs of her faculty. They indicate that perhaps the last descriptor on this list is one of the most significant requirements in a facilitatory situation. Comments include:

Peggy seems to know exactly what her teachers need without having to ask them.  
Peggy has a very special sense. She appears to know exactly how we feel. She knows when a kind word is needed to help us to get through the day.

The role of facilitator is significant in a professional setting. Peggy refers to herself as an invitational leader. "I think that I'm a real supportive kind of leader. I think I'm an interactive kind of person. I think that I'm real invitational." The responses of the school community support that assessment.

## Chapter 7

### **Vignettes: Impressions from the Professional Setting**

A description of a day in the life of Peggy Moles provided details of the happenings around her and of the people with whom she comes in contact. These individuals have their own stories to tell about their impressions of Peggy and her leadership.

#### **The Secretary's Impressions**

Beth, the secretary at Oak Grove Elementary School, is a delightful woman. When someone enters the main office, Beth greets him with a smile and is ready to address every need.

Peggy and Beth first met when Peggy came to Oak Grove to tour the school and meet with the principal who was retiring. Beth recalls that her first impression was, "I think I'm going to like her. This is going to be good." When Beth was introduced to Peggy, she asked her what she preferred to be called -- Mrs. Moles or Peggy? "I'm Peggy to the people who like me," Peggy responded. Beth indicates that she developed a special feeling for Peggy at that moment.

Peggy's first summer at Oak Grove was a busy one for everyone. "We just tore the place apart," Beth states. "We just did all kinds of housecleaning, and it was wonderful. She was so easy to be around,

comfortable to talk to. She did not hesitate if there was something she wanted done." Peggy encourages Beth to be part of the decisions being made by seeking her advice and opinions. Beth claims that Peggy would ask, "How do you feel about this? What do you think"? That first summer was spent "putting Peggy's touch" on the school.

Beth describes Peggy as "the type of person you like as soon as you meet her. She's very open and straight forward. She's my boss and my friend, and that probably should be put in reverse order."

Beth has no difficulty describing Peggy as the leader of Oak Grove Elementary School. Beth states:

She's dynamic. Her mind never stops. She is always thinking, watching, and that's the way she leads. She's just a dynamic woman and when she leads, it's not like she's leading anyone. It's sort of like she's taking you with her.

Beth points out that Peggy does not ask anyone to do anything that she would not do herself. When new programs are implemented, Peggy seeks input from everyone involved. "She makes everyone feel that her leadership involves them. I mean everyone has a say in final decisions and the ways in which things are implemented," Beth states. "Peggy believes in sharing her decision-making."

Beth describes her working relationship with Peggy as one that changes throughout the school year. During the school year when the students and teachers are at school, their relationship is very business-like. They do not have time for more personal contact. "We hit the door running in the morning. We often joke about the fact we hardly ever get to talk to each other during the school day," Beth indicates. Peggy knows that she can depend on Beth to get the job done. Beth comments that "it is sort of an unspoken compliment. She knows that whatever she needs, I'm going to get it done. . . . I know that she's watching and supervising, but I'm never aware of that."

The summer is a more relaxed time for both of them. Beth indicates that during the summer they "talk, think, discuss, and plan". Summer goes by quickly for them. Beth tries to always be at work when Peggy is there. She feels that she and Peggy work as a team and feels quite good about this working relationship.

Peggy's open leadership style has helped to create what the secretary views as a special climate at Oak Grove. "When she came in, we changed everything from the color of the walls to the way the rooms were done. The whole building, I think, has a welcoming feeling,

and she has done that," Beth indicates. She describes Oak Grove's atmosphere as being "bright, cheerful, and welcoming".

Beth believes that there is an open relationship among the teachers and between Peggy and the teachers. There is so much to be done in addition to teaching. Peggy carries her share of the load and "no one ever complains". When there are tensions among the teachers, Peggy faces them directly and brings the teachers to her office to work out the differences if they cannot work them out on their own. "They don't seem to have any qualms about coming to her, and she is always there," Beth explains. If the teachers have personal problems, "Peggy is their sounding board."

Beth describes the interactions among the teachers and Peggy as a team effort. "We are the Oak Grove faculty and staff, and we back each other to the hilt. We stick together," she explains.

In describing Peggy's leadership style, Beth indicates that she feels that Peggy leads by example. "You see what she's doing, and you want to do well for her, too." She gives an example of teacher attendance at events such as the school's spring festival. The teachers are not mandated to come, but they come because they feel that they are a part of what is going

on at Oak Grove. The teachers really want to please Peggy.

Beth also observes that Peggy can be and is "hard-nosed" when that quality is required. She is willing to face teacher and staff problems and does what is necessary to remedy them. If dismissal of personnel is the answer, she has no qualms about doing so. Beth explains, "We have had people in the past who just could not or would not measure up. They are no longer with us." Beth feels that this sends a strong message to those who are doing a good job. "This is one way of letting them know that quality is expected and appreciated."

Beth observes that Peggy gets the parents of the Oak Grove students involved in the school as much as possible. "She just opens the door, talks to them, and tends to solve problems relatively easily this way." Peggy often diverts an angry parent's energies into productive assistance in some fashion at the school. Peggy says things such as, "Okay, you come up here and work. You help us." This tells the parents that the school will not shut them out and that Peggy wants them to be a part of the school, even if they disagree with something that is taking place. She solves problems by involving parents.

As a problem solver Peggy has to deal with the politics of the school system and the community. Beth describes Peggy as a politician by declaring, "She's good. She's really good." Peggy is never intimidated by facing what she has to face. She often invites the political figures into the school and allows them to see what is needed and what is going on there first hand. This is her way of politicking. "I don't see her as a politician, but I do see her as someone who can do what needs to be done, and if politicking is what it takes, she's good at it," Beth explains.

Peggy's secretary describes the personal side of Peggy as being extremely significant in her life. According to Beth, Peggy is able to prioritize effectively. She confirms that Peggy's family comes first in her life and the school second. "When a child walks through the office door, I know that she is expecting me to take care of that child. Nothing else matters," Beth indicates. In her caring for the students she also wants to keep the parents happy. "I have a tendency to sometimes be a little protective because a great number of parents can be overwhelming. . . . I sometimes feel the need to screen a little bit, to act as a buffer. But, I don't think she likes for me to do that."



Beth claims that Peggy has been, and is, a major strength and influence in own her life. She indicates that when she first accepted the position at Oak Grove, she had not intended to stay for a long period of time. After Peggy came, she never really thought about leaving. "I'll be here as long as Peggy is here," Beth offers.

Often there are tears as Beth speaks of her feelings for Peggy. "She's good for my self-confidence. She's good for my ego," Beth claims. She indicated that Peggy is always there to praise a job well done. "This looks great! This is good. You've done a good job." -- are comments that Beth frequently hears. Sometimes it's just a pat on the back, a smile or a nod to say thanks. "It's her way of saying thank you, the way she does it. It makes me feel that I've done a good job. It makes me want to do a better job for her," Beth explains.

Beth views Peggy as an inspirational force in her life. She states, "I feel like I do what I do well, and it's because I know she expects me to do well. When I do well, I feel better about myself. I feel more confident. I feel needed; she makes me feel needed."

Beth appears to be devoted to Peggy personally and professionally. It is obvious that their working relationship is filled with respect, admiration, and satisfaction.

### **The Assistant Principal's Impressions**

Diane, the assistant principal at Oak Grove Elementary School, is a dedicated, hard-working woman who takes her job quite seriously. Diane describes herself as a "jack of all trades". Her contract is for ten and one-half months, and her job is filled with duties. "I do most everything Peggy does, plus a few other duties that are mine alone," she explains.

Referring to her job on a daily basis, Diane comments, "I just take over wherever Peggy needs me." When Peggy is away from the school, Diane is the person who is in charge.

Diane views Peggy as a very competitive person who is driven by the need to be first. "She brings out the best in everyone, because she has high expectations." Her competitive nature and participatory leadership style allow her to be able to set expectations and get expected results. "She just has a way of doing it and makes people feel good about themselves. . . . She can pretty much plan it and make it happen." Diane explains further that sometimes Peggy's "leadership

style allows the teachers to think they're doing something, but it was really Peggy's idea from the beginning. Most of the time Peggy gets her way," Diane suggests.

Diane views Peggy as being personally ambitious. Peggy is not content unless there are many significant things happening at Oak Grove. Her ability to delegate allows her to see many things accomplished at the school. Her ambitions become the ambitions of others.

Ability to delegate is one area that Diane views as being a requirement in a good principal. She views Peggy as being especially effective in this role. Diane indicates that Peggy has enough confidence in her faculty to allow decisions to be passed on for others to make or carry out. She feels that Peggy is comfortable with delegation of workload and with shared decision-making.

Along with the ability to lead her faculty and staff in the direction she wishes them to go, Diane indicates that the same is true for the community. "One of the biggest things I think a principal needs to be able to do, and Peggy certainly has done it, is to carry the community with her," Diane explains. She believes that Peggy is an expert in school-community relations.

Diane offers input regarding several of Peggy's innovative ideas that have been effective at Oak Grove. One, in particular, gives Diane great pleasure -- the Reading Buddy Program. This program was initiated originally to work with at-risk children in kindergarten who had not had exposure to literature and books. The program has now been expanded to include first and second graders. It is staffed by volunteers, most of whom are senior citizens who live in a retirement community in the neighborhood.

Diane also discusses Peggy on a more personal level. "She's a good friend and that means a lot to me," she offers with tears in her eyes. As a result of Peggy's support, Diane feels that she is more confident and that she has a deeper feeling of self-worth. She summarizes Peggy's support by saying, "She always sticks by you."

Diane indicates that she feels that Peggy has a professional face and a personal face and suggests that she knows both of them. "Peggy's personal face beams when she mentions her family," Diane offers. Diane expresses appreciation for the significance that Peggy places on her family.

At times it appears that Diane is somewhat envious of Peggy's life and professional success. "Peggy has

it all. You couldn't ask for much else," Diane claims as she describes Peggy's supportive husband, her successful sons, and her professional success. In addition to her stable family life, "Peggy has a lot of simple, plain values and that means a lot," Diane suggests.

Diane becomes very emotional at times. She and Peggy have shared some personal and professional experiences that have been stressful and challenging. Diane mentions one professional situation that she feels has been extremely stressful for Peggy. "Special education situations have been hard this year," Diane explains. She believes that Peggy's inner strength and her willingness to work with parents allow her to make the most of these difficult times.

Peggy and Diane are two women who respect each other and who also work well together as an administrative team. They appear to have become cherished friends.

### **The Teachers' Impressions**

Teachers are the heartbeat of every school, and Oak Grove Elementary School is no exception. Cioci and others (1990) asserted that "how teachers view their principals' leadership is important" (p. 1). Oak

Grove's teachers are very willing to share their thoughts and feelings about their principal.

Teachers describe Peggy as a knowledgeable and enthusiastic leader. Words they use to describe her include: professional, sensitive, positive, fantastic, innovative, warm, friendly, committed, concerned, highly organized, empathetic, sympathetic, tactful, and easy-going. One teacher states, "She combines wonderfully a very professional attitude and being able to be a warm friend to everyone."

Peggy's teachers are very accepting of her. "I just find Peggy the complete and really very much the perfect leader because of her ability to be so well-rounded. She works well with all factions of the school," one teacher comments.

Each of the teachers refer to Peggy as a friend. "She's our friend, our mentor, our companion, but she's still our boss," one teacher suggests. They view this as being quite an accomplishment for Peggy. The teachers consider as quite extraordinary the fact that one individual can command the respect necessary to lead an organization, yet be considered a personal friend by the individuals in the organization.

The role of "friend" does not overshadow the views that the teachers have of Peggy as a leader. Many of

the descriptions of Peggy as a friend are also used to represent her in her leadership role. The following list of comments are representative of the teachers' descriptions:

- She is highly organized and very professional.
- She is an instructional leader and a role model for us all.
- She praises freely.
- She is concerned.
- She is very sensitive.
- She is innovative and she is very up on what's going on in education.
- She is an excellent leader in that she delegates authority.
- She's concerned and considerate of other people.
- She's tactful and mindful of people's feelings.
- She allows us to be a part of the decision-making.
- She has a keen sense of humor and uses that sense of humor.
- She delegates responsibility, but also expects accountability.
- She has opinions about what she wants to get done and where we're headed.
- She allows us to be a part of the planning for the school, and yet lets us know where our limits and boundaries are.

These statements indicate that these teachers feel Peggy is a sensitive, knowledgeable, secure, and effective leader. The picture of Peggy which they paint portrays an open, professional relationship.

Nevertheless, working at Oak Grove Elementary School is not always the "bed of roses" that one might expect. One teacher cites the demands of the parents as a source of constant stress. She indicates that parents' emphasis on grades and their expectations of

the teachers are factors that create this stress. She sums up her comments by suggesting that she thinks that Oak Grove is "a high pressure school".

Even though this teacher acknowledges the stress level at Oak Grove, she does not view it as an overshadowing factor in the overall positive atmosphere. She simply acknowledges that it exists. As a contrast she speaks of the many celebrations that take place at the school.

A discussion of Oak Grove's school climate leads quite naturally to comments about the interaction among the teachers at the school. These teachers view the Oak Grove faculty as being cooperative, supportive, honest, direct, dependable, helpful, professional, and friendly. One teacher, perhaps, speaks for most of the teachers when she describes the Oak Grove faculty as being "honest and refreshing".

These teachers outline the characteristics they view as being necessary in a good principal. They feel that a good principal must:

- have a strong personality;
- be knowledgeable about educational issues and trends;
- be dedicated;
- be a good listener;
- be open to the opinions of others;
- be a good delegator;
- be a good balancer;



respect the involvement of parents in the school;  
be someone who respects you as a teacher and a person and realizes that you do have a personal life;  
be highly organized;  
have expertise;  
be sympathetic and empathetic;  
have an open door policy;  
be willing to experiment;  
be flexible;  
be personable;  
have self-confidence; and  
be able to share the decision-making.

It is obvious that Peggy is the model that they use as they think about the characteristics of a good principal.

Many of Peggy's teachers indicate that she is very professional in all aspects of her job. "She's very professional in her dealings with everyone. . . . She listens more and says less. . . . She really knows and understands something before she will get involved," one teacher explains as she talks about Peggy in her political role. "I think she is one of the most respected people at the County level," she suggests. This teacher thinks that the respect that Peggy commands has a great impact on her role in political issues. She feels that Peggy is trusted and therefore, has little difficulty in getting what she wants from the political community.

Another teacher emphasizes that Peggy is very impartial. "If she has political preferences, it is never known. She listens openly to everyone . . . and makes informed decisions," she explains. Still another comments about Peggy's political role. "She knows when to give and take. . . . Peggy learned to say what she knows they want to hear. In essence, Peggy knows how to play the political game."

One of Peggy's teachers laughs as she thinks about how Peggy handles the politics of the principalship. "She's very smooth . . . and has confidence in herself . . . as she deals with the politicians. She's not abrasive, but is not afraid to ruffle some feathers if that is what is necessary to accomplish her purpose." She indicates that Peggy is willing to compromise if that will allow her needs to be met. "She's a good listener. . . . She has confidence to do what she feels is right," the teacher suggests.

This same teacher also assesses Peggy's role in the over-all realm of the school system. "Peggy doesn't buck the system. She doesn't complain," the teacher explains. Speaking of Peggy's superiors, this teacher continues, "She's not afraid to give her feelings, to share her thoughts. When a decision has been made, she moves forward in a positive manner even

if she doesn't agree with the decision. She's very loyal."

Another teacher comments, "Peggy can sort of say what she needs to say, get her point across, and people tend to do what she says." She uses the slogan, "What Peggy wants, Peggy gets." She suggests, however, that "such a working relationship requires mutual respect and understanding". She indicates that such a relationship exists at Oak Grove.

### **Central Office Personnel's Impressions**

#### **The Superintendent**

Linda, the superintendent of the Roanoke County School System, is female and has been in the system for over thirty years. She has known Peggy since they were in high school together. Linda smiles as she remembers Peggy as the "person who was always the 4-H president. . . . The person who was very responsible if given duties to do. . . . The person my mom would have liked for me to model myself after". Linda indicates that Peggy has maintained these qualities as the leader of her school.

She's been a person who throughout all of her career has wanted to keep growing, to keep learning; she has excellent judgement about teachers in her classrooms. She knows how to empower teachers, to help them feel like things are their idea when it's really what Peggy wanted all the time.

The superintendent believes that Peggy uses good judgement and is highly respected by the parents of her school. Linda indicates that this is shown by the manner in which the parents of Oak Grove are involved in the activities of the school and how they trust and support Peggy.

Linda also views Peggy as a risk-taker. According to Linda, Peggy is not afraid to try new things and to evaluate them honestly and critically. This includes the work of the teachers in her school. Peggy is considered to be a woman who can make the hard decisions.

Linda also sees Peggy as the instructional leader of her school. She stays abreast of the most current research and information in education. "She stays involved in her profession. She's confident in her level of knowledge," Linda explains.

Peggy is also viewed as an excellent mentor. Linda speaks of Peggy's work in the principal preparation program at a nearby university, as well as her work with student teachers that are assigned to her school. "Peggy sets standards which make everyone else work a little harder to keep up. She's a motivator." Linda indicates that administrative interns seek Peggy

as their mentor and that a local university recommends Peggy to its interns.

As superintendent, Linda appreciates Peggy's openness and willingness to assist in the professional growth of others.

She's a very visible leader. She understands that leadership means being in those classrooms on a day to day basis. Therefore, she can talk about what the problems are and how to implement new ideas rather than the person in the ivory tower who just talks theory and a good game. She's a scholarly leader in that she's not afraid to cite research. She reads widely.

According to Linda, Peggy is well prepared for her administrative duties and faces problems directly.

"Peggy tries to assemble the facts as she sees them, seeking information from all available sources." Then she "solicits advice; she's not a lone ranger". Peggy is not afraid to find out how others feel about a problem or concern. She's confident in her ability to face it and make a decision after carefully examining all possible solutions. Linda admires Peggy's adaptability. "Peggy is always willing to fall back to plan B if plan A doesn't work, and sometimes even to plan C or D".

Linda views Peggy as an innovator in her school. "She has a sort of finger on the pulse of what will get this group of teachers excited or what they are looking

for," Linda suggests. Peggy has the ability to examine situations to determine if an innovation is needed. "When an innovation is selected and implementation is in progress, she doesn't just toss out an innovation and then expect the teachers to make it happen. She works it all the way through; she stays right with it and builds support for it," Linda continues. "Peggy Moles, the innovator, enters it with careful thought, careful prior planning, with enough resources to make it happen, and then is persistent." Linda indicates that the follow-through is what leaves so many innovations "hanging out there" and suggests that this is not the case with Peggy.

Because of things such as her persistence and supportive qualities Peggy is respected highly by her peers. Linda indicates that others respect Peggy's judgment; have high regard for the standards she sets; appreciate her ability to pull it all together; and admire her political sense of when to speak up and when to sit quietly.

Linda speaks of Peggy's ability to handle political situations in a very professional manner. "Peggy has a keen sense of cultivating support," Linda explains. Linda indicates that she thinks that Peggy

is not openly manipulative, but that she is not above doing what is necessary to gain the support she needs. "Peggy uses good judgment about what is said and what is implied, but left unsaid," Linda suggests.

Linda discusses the qualities that she sees as being necessary in someone whom she considers to be a good principal and adds that Peggy exhibits these qualities. Linda believes that a good principal must have (1) rapport with all the audiences with which she has to deal; (2) empathy for children; (3) a sincere need to serve children; (4) a sound educational knowledge base; (5) stamina and good health; (6) strong instructional leadership; and (7) a vision. Linda describes Peggy as a visionary leader and one that communicates her vision successfully. "Peggy presents her vision openly -- she doesn't make you figure it out," Linda explains.

Sometimes visions and openness can lead to struggles and heartache, even when doing what is viewed as being what is best for children. Linda suggests that one such struggle is taking place in Peggy's life at Oak Grove -- the implementation of the inclusion model in special education. Linda indicates that the school system does not endorse full inclusion and "does not believe that full inclusion is desirable or legal".

However, it has chosen not to interfere with Peggy's attempt to implement an inclusion model at Oak Grove. Linda indicates that she feels that Peggy is struggling with the time it is taking away from her other projects and concerns. She suggests that Peggy worries about "the other projects and ideas that she believes could improve the education of the other five hundred children in her school". This does not mean that the movement lacks support from Peggy. However, Linda believes that Peggy "is not happy about the amount of attention that inclusion has required".

Linda, as superintendent, views Peggy as a leader who is visionary and as a leader who seeks to fulfill her vision. She indicates that she feels that Peggy will do whatever is necessary to be a successful leader at Oak Grove Elementary School.

#### Supervisor

Joan, a supervisor at the Central Office level, speaks of Peggy from both a personal and professional perspective. Joan has known Peggy for at least sixteen years and feels very confident in her opinions about Peggy and her leadership.

As a colleague Joan finds Peggy to be a person who is willing to share her knowledge and expertise with others. She believes that Peggy is a very visionary



leader. "She can see what is going to come in the future, and then she's able to work with the people in order to implement that vision," Joan explains. She indicates that Peggy keeps abreast of current knowledge and information and is willing to share her knowledge and visions for the future with anyone who is interested and willing to listen.

Joan refers to Peggy as a transformational leader. "She's very open in allowing her faculty to have input and encourages it to make decisions. She's real participatory. She involves parents all the time; she involves teachers."

Included in her willingness to share is Peggy's willingness to keep her faculty prepared for the future by keeping it abreast of knowledge and happenings in education. Peggy depends heavily on professional reading in order to do this effectively. Joan states that "Peggy gets excited over something new, and she wants her teachers to feel this excitement." Through this excitement the teachers see that "she is genuine". "She's so enthusiastic and devotes so much of her time toward something new that her teachers just want to jump in and share the experience," Joan explains.

Such sensitivity and excitement may lead to discomfort. Joan reports that one such discomfort is

the inclusion model in special education presently being implemented at Peggy's school. "She has a group of parents in her building right now that are moving toward inclusion, and it's been stressful for her," Joan explains. She views Peggy as being very concerned and perhaps torn between what is best for the special education students and what is best for the education of all the students. Joan observes that Peggy is having a hard time dealing with the inclusive model and indicated that she feels that "it's been some of the lowest moments in Peggy's entire career." Joan is concerned about the amount of stress she sees in Peggy as she struggles to do what she thinks is best for all concerned.

Joan also suggests that Peggy serves as an excellent role model for female principals. She indicates that she feels that successful female principals must have a strong support system at home.

Women work all day and still have to go home and cook dinner, raise the kids, drive the car pools, do all kinds of things. It just doesn't let up. If you don't have a husband that is going to help you in this area, it just goes against you. I think Peggy's husband has been there for her every step of the way. If you don't have that combination, it's going to be hard for a woman to be a professional. Peggy is lucky. She has such support in James.

Another Central Office Representative's Impressions

Ed, another person in the school system's Central Office, speaks about "the Peggy" he has known for about twenty-five years. Ed views Peggy as an ideal leader and principal. He describes her as being enthusiastic, dedicated, articulate, a high achiever, and professional. Ed believes that Peggy has the special ability to keep things in perspective, even with the very high standards she sets for herself and her school.

Ed explains that Peggy uses all of these skills in her leadership style. "She lets the individual style of people surface and allows a great deal of flexibility within her management style." According to Ed, Peggy has expertise as a consensus builder. Ed indicates that she takes different ideas, tries to focus, and then pulls people together. "She is able to maintain a great deal of integrity in the process," he explains.

Ed confirms that Peggy's peers admire and respect her. "Her peers gravitate toward Peggy," Ed explains. They appreciate her opinions and points of view because "she can back those up with observations and readings, and there's credibility to what she says". Ed indicates further that "she has a real force in sharing

ideas and people try to utilize the thoughts that she shares."

Ed discussed the characteristics that he views as being necessary in a good principal. He believes that such a principal must be able to relate to all kinds of people. The principal must value education and be enthusiastic in his or her approach to the principalship. Ed also believes that a good principal must use this enthusiasm as she provides a quality education for the students. He indicates that Peggy exceeds all of these requirements.

Ed expresses the view that Peggy's being a part of this study is typical of her willingness to take risks. "She's totally open. I think this alone, just to be willing to be put in this kind of environment to be scrutinized and evaluated indirectly, shows a characteristic about Peggy that is admired and respected," Ed concludes.

#### Resource Teacher

Kathy, a resource teacher, works with Peggy and her teachers at Oak Grove. Kathy taught at Oak Grove Elementary School previously. She very willingly shares her perceptions of Peggy as the principal of Oak Grove from both of these perspectives.

Peggy "instilled so much confidence in me. Her belief in me made me think I could do anything and be anything," Kathy explains. For example, Kathy maintains that:

Her belief that I was a wonderful teacher convinced me that I was a wonderful teacher. My confidence level increased so much because of the faith she put in my abilities. I think that I'm probably a kinder, gentler person because of her example.

Kathy feels that Peggy's communication style facilitates Peggy's effectiveness as an administrator. Her teachers appreciate the fact that Peggy treats them as professionals and communicates with them accordingly. She holds faculty meetings only when absolutely necessary and always has an agenda. Peggy uses memos to keep her faculty in touch with the routine matters at the school. "Her morning bulletins were my salvation," Kathy remarks, referring to the "food for thought" that Peggy includes on the bulletin each morning. "The teachers feel that this communication style is indicative of Peggy's respect for them as professionals," Kathy adds.

In discussing Peggy and her dealings with people, Kathy describes Peggy in her political role as a school administrator. "Peggy, the politician, is very tactful, first and foremost," Kathy claims. She is

respected by her supervisors and the community. "Politically, I don't think she plays games. I think she is very straight forward," Kathy explains. She doesn't make quick decisions. She seeks input and as much information as possible in making a decision. She is willing to compromise when that is feasible, but she will not give up something about which she feels strongly. She keeps her personal politics to herself. She stays out of the politics that exist from time to time among parents and neighborhoods. She puts her political energies into getting what she needs for Oak Grove Elementary School. "What Peggy wants, Peggy gets. That's sort of been her little trademark," Kathy declares.

Kathy views Peggy as being a very competent administrator. She rates Peggy's knowledge and implementation of instructional matters as exceptional. "When they talk about a principal needing to be an instructional leader in the school, I think Peggy truly is," Kathy claims. She believes that Peggy's compassion, flexibility, and intelligence are qualities that are essential in providing effective instructional leadership.

Kathy describes Peggy's leadership as being quiet and dignified. "She doesn't have to say anything. You

know exactly what you should do, how you should act, and what should go on," she suggests. Kathy feels that this understated style suits Peggy well, adding, "She's dignified in her leadership style."

Kathy discusses the qualities that she feels are necessary in a good principal.

I think a good principal has to have intelligence and a strong sense of self. A good principal has to be flexible and open to new or different ideas; she can't feel threatened by them. She has to be empathic to the teachers and the children and needs to be able to balance the needs of each of those because they are sometimes in conflict. A good principal has to have a degree of loyalty to the people who are working for her. Teachers, parents, and students must feel that there is undisputed confidentiality in any concern discussed with the principal. Teachers need to be able to believe that what they say will go no further. Above all, a good principal must be a good educator. She must put education first and keep abreast of the trends and the research in the field. Judgments made by a good principal should have a solid knowledge base.

All of Kathy's feelings about leadership and the qualities of a good principal are related back to her feelings and perceptions of Peggy Moles. Kathy concludes by saying, "Peggy is an excellent principal. She has been a real beacon for a lot of women."

### **The Administrative Interns' Impressions**

Peggy views her mentoring role as one of the most cherished in her principalship. She speaks openly of the six years during which she has worked with Virginia

Tech serving as a mentor to interns who aspire to become school administrators. Two of these interns, Judy and Crickett, share their thoughts about Peggy.

Both interns are female, and both view Peggy with awe. "I felt welcome and that she really respected me and my opinion," Judy states as she reflects on her experiences under Peggy's guidance. Judy speaks of how Peggy involved her in everything that happened at the school. Peggy also includes the interns in meetings and professional activities away from the building. "She was supportive and available," Judy contends.

"She is a mentor most definitely, in a positive sense. She is a wonderful teacher," Crickett offers. These women feel that Peggy is willing to explain anything and everything in detail, but at the same time allows the interns to seek their own answers. Crickett explains that Peggy frequently has the interns give their own assessments of what they have observed.

Judy and Crickett are delighted that Peggy is so devoted to their professional development. They view Peggy as a very proactive leader. Speaking of instructional matters and other day-to-day activities that take place in a school that can go astray, Judy suggests that Peggy can catch it before it ever gets



too big and get it worked out so that very few incidents escalate into big problems.

Judy explains further that she learned from Peggy the importance of being proactive as opposed to being reactive and states that she has used what she learned from Peggy in her present position. She admits,

I think that maybe I used to let things slide and think that maybe they'd get better on their own. Now when I see a problem, I go right in and talk to the person. I handle things so much better that way instead of thinking it will go away without saying anything.

Judy comments further about Peggy's proactive leadership. She views Peggy's use of praise as a major strategy in this area.

Peggy was quick to praise her teachers when they did something that was really great. Then when there was a problem, she felt at ease going back to these teachers and working it out. When she had to handle a problem with a teacher, she always did it in a helpful manner.

Crickett indicates that Peggy doesn't tell the teacher that what she is doing is wrong. She approaches it with the question, "What can you do to make this situation better?" This seems to allow the teacher to feel that she has some control over the situation, even if Peggy has to make the final decision as the administrator.

Peggy's interns have a great deal to say about Peggy's leadership. "She is a leader who involves the

other people. She makes them want to follow her, and she does that by involving them," Crickett explains. Crickett notes that during the time that she was at Oak Grove, she never heard Peggy mandate anything. Peggy might say, "I have an idea. What do you think about this? Will this work at our school? How can we make it work?" Crickett indicates that in the end Peggy usually gets what she wants. However, she has a way of making it seem that others made the decision and want it also.

Peggy states that serving as a mentor is a personal passion for her. It is something that she feels obligated to do, but even more importantly, it is something that she enjoys doing.

Peggy also suggests that serving as a mentor for interns who aspire to become school administrators is a fulfilling experience for her. It appears that the experience is as equally rewarding for the interns.

### **The Parents' Impressions**

#### **Richard**

Richard, a parent of an Oak Grove Elementary School student, speaks openly about his child's principal. Richard is a former president of the Oak Grove PTA and has been a patron of Oak Grove for twelve years. He feels that the success of the school is due

largely to Peggy's leadership. He indicates that he thinks that Peggy recognizes parental support as being important and that she encourages the parents to participate in the school.

This openness to parental involvement has led to what he sees as tremendous parental support of this administrator. Richard suggests that the parents view Peggy as being fair and equitable and as someone who is respected.

Richard indicates that he feels that Peggy's relationship with the students is a non-threatening and non-intimidating one. He views this relationship as one of mutual respect and love. "The children do not fear her. She is effective due to the respect she commands from them," he states.

Peggy is viewed as being a leader who has wonderful rapport with parents, students, and her staff. Richard suggests that this rapport is built through her "self-confidence and leadership style".

Richard indicates that Peggy's leadership includes the ability to select and maintain an excellent faculty and staff at Oak Grove. "She really cares about her staff. She cares who teaches here." He states further that he thinks that "she makes it her personal business to make sure that Oak Grove has the best teachers

possible." When there are vacancies on the teaching staff, Peggy "fights for the best". He points out that she uses her work with student teachers as a resource in obtaining excellent teaching candidates.

Richard also perceives Peggy as a principal who is not afraid to face the dismissal of a teacher if this route is deemed necessary. He believes that she faces problems as they occur and is willing to take the action that is needed to remedy any situation.

Richard indicates further that the parents appreciate and respect Peggy's support of the PTA and other parent efforts at the school. She shares her ideas with the PTA board, but doesn't force it to do what she wants it to do. "She doesn't rule with an iron hand. . . . Peggy allows the PTA to maintain that independence which it's supposed to have although she does have an uncanny ability to get what she wants," Richard adds humorously.

Richard comments about Peggy's leadership style. He describes her as being firm, understanding, caring, cooperative, and open. He finds her to be a consensus builder who guides in the direction in which she wishes to see the school go. "She communicates openly," he declares. She is always willing to meet with parents

and to listen to what they have to say. Then she shares her views of the situations with the parents, and if necessary, makes an informed decision that she feels is in the best interest of the school.

Dedication is a word that comes up many times as Richard describes Peggy as the principal of Oak Grove. "She really cares and has dedicated her administration to providing the best for Oak Grove."

He indicates that Peggy is an effective diplomat. He claims that her communication skills are exceptional. "She can communicate very diplomatically," he states. "She is persuasive; she can talk with parents and sway them quite easily in the direction she would like for them to go."

Richard believes that Peggy's diplomatic skills allow for an open and supportive school environment. Parents are actively involved in most aspects of the school on a daily basis. The faculty and staff work in a comfortable and secure environment. "She cares," Richard asserts.

Richard discusses the qualities he deems as being necessary in a good principal. He believes such a person must (1) have good communication skills; (2) be firm, but fair; (3) be willing to work with parents and the community; (4) be genuine; and (5) put education

first. He feels that good principals must be continuously striving to improve themselves as well as their schools. "Once a person becomes a principal, she must continue to reach higher; she just can't rest on her laurels," Richard concludes.

When asked if he would change anything about Peggy, Richard's immediate response is, "Her age". He wishes that Peggy could stay at Oak Grove for many years in the future, but is realistic in thinking that retirement for her will come sooner than most people would like. Other than her age, Richard would change nothing about Peggy. He feels that "she is an ideal principal just the way she is."

#### Kim

Kim is a parent of an Oak Grove student and serves in a leadership position for the school's PTA. She has worked with Peggy for nine years in some capacity at the school. She indicates that she and her husband purchased their home in the Oak Grove school district so their children could attend this school. "We'd been hearing such good things about it," she explains.

Kim suggests that one of the reasons that she feels the school is effective is because it has an effective principal. She describes Peggy as being supportive, nurturing, and encouraging. "She's like a

mentor," she claims, speaking of how Peggy has promoted her own leadership skills. "I feel like she is just the kind of person who supports you, and you feel like you want to do the best to make her happy because you value her opinion," Kim explains.

Kim observes that Peggy "commands a lot of respect". She has earned the admiration of her peers and the people with whom she works. She is also respected by people who do not really know her but know of her reputation.

Peggy has the respect of the students at Oak Grove as well. "The kids love her," Kim comments. She speaks further about how the students take their birthday cupcakes to Peggy's office or just stop by to say hello.

Kim views Peggy as a participatory leader who welcomes the input of parents, students, faculty, and staff. While describing Peggy's leadership style, Kim suggests, "What comes to mind is a coach. She's a team player, and she likes to involve as many people as possible in her decision-making."

According to Kim, Peggy shares very openly the honors she receives. Kim mentions Peggy's recent honor -- being named Virginia's National Distinguished Principal. When Peggy received this honor, she

congratulated her teachers, staff, students, and parents. In essence, she gave credit for the honor to others. "This is typical of Peggy," Kim explains.

Kim discusses Peggy's role when working with the PTA leaders. "She's supportive. . . . She's very inclusive . . . she includes everyone," Kim conveys. Peggy offers suggestions, and the PTA uses her as a sounding board to test its ideas. "We get to bounce things off her. She's very good at knowing what's good and what isn't, and even though something isn't, she never says, 'I wouldn't do that'," Kim explains.

In discussing Peggy and her leadership at Oak Grove, Kim speaks of the qualities that she sees as being necessary in a good principal. She feels that a good principal must be someone who can relate to and communicate with young children as well as with their parents. A good principal must be willing to listen to new ideas and put them to use if that would be in the best interest of the students. Above all, a good principal must look beyond the formal schooling of children to what might be in their future. Kim believes that Peggy is an example of a principal who possesses all of these qualities.

Kim speaks about Peggy's handling of political situations. "She's a very strong supporter of her



school. She is very strong and behind whatever is needed. She's strong in her convictions." Kim suggests further that she feels that Peggy "knows how to pick her fights" and does so very carefully. She does her homework and usually is able to get what she needs for her school. Kim describes Peggy as an effective administrator for Oak Grove.

Perhaps the strong support she has from the parents of Oak Grove assists her in such political situations. "Everyone just respects her highly," Kim claims. "They all want to know what she thinks. . . and are very impressed" with her thoughts about most things. The PTA expressed its appreciation of Peggy and her leadership by awarding her National Lifetime Membership in the organization.

Speaking of the good feeling she gets when she walks into Oak Grove, Kim explains, "It's just like a family." She views Peggy as being very supportive of her teachers and staff and thinks that this support has led to this mutual good feeling. Kim indicates that she feels privileged to have her children at Oak Grove under Peggy's leadership.

## Chapter 8

### Comparison to the Literature

This study, although limited to one subject, supports many of the findings in the literature reviewed. However, the study is also different. It is a narrative, and it describes one female principal in detail. The study accomplishes this by describing the thoughts and feelings of the subject and others close to her, as opposed to studies which are statistical in nature and use many subjects.

Many of the studies of transformational leadership have excluded females as subjects or have used very few. This study offers an example of transformational leadership that anyone who is in a leadership position should be able to adapt and put to use. It offers a practical look at a woman who is a transformational leader but, at the same time, provides actual examples to which either males or females can relate.

Peggy Moles, without a doubt, meets the criteria for transformational leadership as described in the literature. The data indicate that she (1) encourages participation of her teachers in most aspects of the school; (2) shares her decision-making powers with the faculty and parents in many situations; (3) works daily to enhance the self-worth of others by providing them

opportunities to feel good about what they are doing; (4) creates a nourishing environment in which they work and communicate; and (5) facilitates the practice of others by allowing them to feel that they are free to try new ideas and methods and that they will be supported by the administration in this process. Vivid examples of these characteristics appear in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

The results of this study agree with Burn's (1978) description of transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers seek to raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation. The data support this by providing actual descriptions of such occurrences. The study agrees with Sadker, Sadker, and Klein's (1991) assertion that female administrators tend to have concern for others; tend to be participatory leaders; and tend to place a strong focus on teaching and learning.

Oak Grove's faculty and staff provide specific examples of the application of the characteristics of transformational leadership that go well beyond a mere statement that they exist. Their examples provide a more animated version of transformational leadership than revealed through the literature review.

The literature is quite clear in its description of the characteristics of an effective principal. Most studies list the characteristics and state whether or not the characteristics are being met, usually using large numbers of subjects. This study began with the assumption that the subject is an effective principal. Although the subject clearly exhibits the prerequisite characteristics, this study goes one step further by describing the subject's effectiveness through specific examples and confirming effectiveness through the eyes of others.

This study agrees with Chen and Addi's (1992) findings that the principal is of particular importance in developing and maintaining the school climate. However, it offers a more intense description of how this actually happens by giving specific details.

This study adds depth to the literature. It provides individual identity to an otherwise generalized field. It also provides the reader with an opportunity to examine the life of one female in school administration and, at the same time, gives the reader a feeling for that female as a total person.

#### **Implications of the Study**

The study of Peggy Moles provides a practical and a successful model of transformational leadership. It

gives explicit examples of how she implements her leadership on a daily basis. Other administrators may assess their own situation and apply those techniques that may work for them in their own schools.

Elementary principals may glean that the teachers and parents in this study indicate through their descriptions that they prefer a transformational leader. They offer many specific examples that provide vivid descriptions of how this leader leads and offer their reactions to her leadership.

Administrators or persons who aspire to become school administrators can compare their own leadership style to the leadership style in the study. Perhaps they will find suggestions, ideas, techniques, or just some good stories that can assist them in their own practice.

Other researchers will realize that much can be learned by telling an in-depth story. Hopefully, researchers and other administrators will begin to expand the literature even further by reporting such stories in qualitative studies.

#### **Recommendations for Future Study**

A Female in the Elementary School Principal's Office: A Beacon for Women has attempted to show how one female, who is a transformational leader, leads her

school. It might be beneficial to study two or more principals, including both females and males, who have been deemed to be effective principals. In such a study one could examine more closely the issue of gender and how it relates to leadership.

Should the principal in this study retire soon, one might want to study the school after she leaves. Will the gender of the new administrator make a difference in the leadership of the school? Will teacher attitudes change? Will parental support change?

It might also be of interest to study a female principal who is not an effective principal and compare the results to the findings in this study. In the study of either an effective or an ineffective female principal, it would be interesting to find out the effect that a male researcher might have on such a study.

### **Summary**

A Female in the Elementary School Principal's Office: A Beacon for Women provides a description of one woman's leadership style. Through the stories told by the people at her school and by her family and friend, a picture emerged of a female who is a transformational leader but who is also a successful

wife, mother, and friend. Her story should be encouraging to women who elect to have careers in addition to a family. Her story is for anyone who has a curiosity about life.

In reality transformational leadership is more complicated than just the acknowledgement that a set of leadership characteristics exists. There are tensions and conflicts in such leadership.

For example, Peggy Moles is a perfectionist. She wants Oak Grove to be "the best" in every way. Peggy wants to perform as an exceptional leader in all areas of her leadership. These desires create tensions in transformational leadership. A transformational leader cannot always control the decisions the faculty and parents make. A transformational leader must, to some extent, give up control of the decisions she delegates to others. For Peggy this would most likely create an internal struggle.

Another internal struggle observed in the study is the tension caused by Peggy's struggle between self-confidence and self-doubt. It appears that Peggy frequently does not accept what she has done as being good enough and wants to do more. She has an undeniable willingness to please everyone. This creates internal conflict for her.

Peggy's friend, family, faculty, and staff acknowledge her competitive nature. However, Peggy does not appear to internalize this attribute to the extent others recognize it. Perhaps her competitiveness could at times be viewed as manipulation. Often the statement was made, "What Peggy wants, Peggy gets." However, the faculty does not describe her ability to achieve this as overt manipulation. They feel that they do make decisions.

Whether it be manipulation or not, the results are the same. Peggy's ability to lead in a way that "she gets what she wants" creates a high level of self-confidence for her and appears to make her a more effective leader.

On the surface Peggy appears to be a tough person. Her daughter-in-law referred to this in her remarks. However, underneath this surface of steel lies a delicate woman who is very human -- vulnerable, unsure of herself at times, and unwilling to accept anything less than perfection.

After the study and the related analysis were complete, the researcher chose to present her closing remarks in a letter to the subject. In turn, the subject responded to the entire study through a letter to the researcher.



## Epilogue

### Researcher's Views:

#### A Letter from the Heart

Dear Peggy,

I cannot begin to thank you sufficiently for allowing me to, in essence, place you and your leadership under a microscope. You opened your personal and professional lives to me without restrictions. You are a real trooper and a confident, trusting risk-taker. In this letter I will react to what I observed and recorded while examining you in your professional role, as well as you as an individual who has a life away from the school.

I became very aware of you as "person", even though most of my time with you was spent in a professional setting. As I spoke with your family and best friend, a vivid picture was painted of you as a woman who has dedicated her life to being the best -- the best wife, the best mother, and the best elementary principal.

Your family created a portrait of a mother who is unselfishly devoted to her children. Your fascination with learning and your insistence on excellence were considered to be motivators in your sons from an early age and appear to be continuing as motivators with your

grandchildren. Your role as a doting mother and grandmother was both acknowledged and appreciated.

Without hesitation, James expressed his views about you as a wife, mother, grandmother, and professional. He is proud of your accomplishments in all of these areas. He beamed as he told his story, but he also indicated a sincere concern about the amount of stress in your life and your retirement years which lie ahead. He wonders how you will handle "slowing down". On the other hand, he feels that you have so much to offer and hopes that when you retire, you will put your knowledge and expertise to use in other avenues. He has a book in mind.

While at Oak Grove, I found a woman on a mission. You seek to be the best administrator possible, not necessarily accepting the best that you can be. You appear never to be quite content with the results of your endeavors. You often appear to be harsh on yourself, never feeling that you have done enough. Your insistence on pleasing everyone tends to place a great deal of stress in your life.

On the other hand, I found that in most cases you do please everyone. Actually, you don't give up trying until you feel that you have done so. You seem to have difficulty admitting that this is sometimes impossible.

One day as we were discussing the many and varied recognitions you have received, you commented, "I wonder if I would receive them if the people bestowing the honors really knew me." At that moment I realized how very human and how very vulnerable you are.

In your never ending willingness to please, I found a somewhat frustrated woman. Many of the individuals with whom I spoke voiced their concern for you as you deal with a new special education model at your school. They respect your support of it, but they also acknowledged their perceptions of your inner struggle as you deal with it daily. They were empathetic.

Your colleagues and family represent you as a caring individual who has created a warm, nourishing environment at Oak Grove. The teachers feel that this environment has provided them a secure place in which to grow and develop both professionally and personally. They were encouraged by your interest in their private lives as well as in their daily roles in the classrooms.

Your faculty interprets your sharing of decision-making as a statement of your faith in them as professionals. They contended that you have allowed them to develop professionally to the degree that you

feel confident in delegating the responsibility of making decisions, as long as that responsibility is accompanied by accountability.

Your teachers feel that you facilitate their development as teachers and as individuals. Your open door, your ability to listen, your uncanny way of knowing just what they need, and your acceptance of their mistakes as well as their successes allow them the opportunity and give them the willingness to take chances. They felt willing to try new things with the comfort of knowing that you will understand and support them.

These individuals believed that you not only encourage their participation in all aspects of Oak Grove, but that you also expect it. They alluded to various ways that you provide opportunities for their involvement, such as the authority you give the School Renewal committees. Above all, they acknowledged that they feel obligated to do what you expect because of their self-proclaimed respect and admiration of you.

This admiration perhaps stems from their recognition of the significance you give to their own feeling of self-worth. They contended that your strong sense of family and your acceptance of them as individuals with lives outside the school tend to

promote their feeling of self-worth even further. They indicated that they feel that your willingness to share decision-making and the significance that you place on staff development are examples of your desire to have them feel worthy of the responsibilities placed with them.

Time after time they told me how happy they are to be at Oak Grove. Every teacher and staff member with whom I spoke described you as a "friend". They seemed to be in awe of your ability to balance that personal friendship with your professional role as their "boss". They felt good about this relationship.

Throughout the study I discussed your leadership style with teachers, staff members, your superiors, administrative interns, and your colleagues. Without exception, each described you as a transformational leader who respects and supports her building personnel. Each was aware that your family is placed first in your life, but that your role as an elementary principal is a close second.

As I reflect on this study, I am content with what I have done and with what I have discovered. I found a woman who is challenged and is challenging. Instead of being someone who folds under difficult situations, you

examine each situation and decide how to make the most of it.

I found a very caring individual. Your personal family and your school family appear to always be at the forefront of every decision you make. You seem to always want what is best for each of them.

I found a devoted and dedicated educator who is respected by her peers and superiors. There appears to be little, if any, envy or jealousy from your colleagues. I discovered a deep respect for you -- the woman and the elementary principal.

Indeed, I found a woman who has been faced with many of the same barriers that other women in school administration have faced. You struggled with the feelings of guilt as you took time away from your family to begin a professional career. You know what it is like to have to prove yourself in order to be accepted. You had to make hard choices and have had to set priorities.

I found a woman who, on the surface "has it all". But, underneath I discovered a woman who appears to be suffering from a need to please a world which is constantly changing and which is not always kind to those possessed by this passion to please.

Peggy, you are extremely successful, well-liked, honored, respected, and cherished. I found a woman that finds all of this difficult to accept without feeling that she has to do more and more.

I found a woman who is truly a transformational leader. You encourage participation, you share decision-making, you facilitate others, you create a nourishing environment, and you work to enhance the self-worth of others. These characteristics of your leadership were evident in all aspects of the study.

Above all, I found a friend. After many hours of interview sessions, observations, phone calls, and just conversing, I found a woman with whom I can commiserate. I respect your expertise, your knowledge, your leadership style, your family values, and your willingness to put others first in your life.

I, too, am concerned about the amount of stress that you place on yourself. I worry that you may not see yourself in the same light as others view you. Perhaps you need to take a step back and reflect on the impact that you have had on others. Relax and enjoy your accomplishments as others do.

I found a female in the principal's office at Oak Grove Elementary School who should be a beacon for all women. You have shown us that a woman can be a

successful wife, mother, grandmother and friend and have an enriching career as well. Perhaps you do have it all!

I look forward to continuing our relationship that has evolved from this study. I, too, found a friend.

Sincerely,

Alice



### **Subject's Response to the Study**

Dear Alice,

I reviewed your labors with great interest! I am overwhelmed with the depth of your study, the detail of your inquiries, and the understanding portrayed in your final analysis. You expended much time and energy conducting this study, but you always performed with an enthusiastic, positive attitude. I commend you for your expertise in gathering pertinent information and for your skill in organizing this information under each domain of transformational leadership. I also commend you for your tireless efforts to complete this study while carrying full responsibility as a school administrator.

I wish to share with you emotions I experienced while reviewing your work.

**Appreciation** surfaces first. I am deeply appreciative and consider it a great honor that I was asked to serve as your subject. Not only have I enjoyed the process, but I find the information you gleaned to be very rewarding and helpful. I was touched by the comments from colleagues, family, and friends. One rarely has the opportunity to receive this kind of feedback and

certainly not from semi-anonymous sources. The feedback became rather therapeutic in nature as I reflected on each comment, then reflected on my actions and reactions. I found your analysis of self-imposed stress and frustration over efforts to reach harmonious decisions to be most accurate! I only wish that every educational leader could experience this kind of scrutiny and use it for professional growth.

I must emphasize, however, that I currently enjoy and appreciate a staff of very professional, dedicated, loyal, and competent people. They are very strong individuals who seldom hesitate to assume leadership roles. They are not reluctant to share with me their concerns as well as their wishes, and their candor makes leadership easier. Our environment is enhanced by a secretary who generates warmth to everyone who enters the building. She establishes a tone that is conducive to positive interactions and negotiations. This invitational atmosphere is carried over to a well informed, involved community of patrons. They are very supportive of the educational process and seek participation in the school at every level. Consequently, transformational leadership is

facilitated by the nature of the individuals who comprise the entire Oak Grove community.

The central office staff receives another level of appreciation. Our division leaders indulge us in a great deal of autonomy and encourage diversity of leadership styles. They promote innovative ideas and are supportive when problems arise. With encouragement of this magnitude, new practices are less threatening and transformational leadership is again facilitated.

Little needs to be said for the appreciation of my family members. They are enablers. They have enabled me to devote much of my life to a profession I have loved. I almost always work very long days, but my family has eliminated the pressures of clock watching and is always available for rejuvenating interactions. My grandchildren have become the undisputed light of my life. They have intensified my desire to promote quality educational leadership so that all children can enjoy educational excellence.

**Challenge** is the emotion that emerges as I internalize the entire study. The staff members inferred in their comments that praise inspired them to want to accomplish even more. Confidence in their abilities

gave them incentives to strive even harder, overcome new obstacles, and look at new practices. Your dissertation impacted me in the same manner, Alice. I feel challenged to hone my human relation skills, seek new instructionally sound educational ideas, and energize my efforts at improving school climate. I also want to encourage staff members to pursue their own educational goals and dreams and feel rejuvenated in their efforts. This study has helped me have a greater appreciation for the catalytic effect of encouragement and recognition in facilitating this process. It has rekindled my energies to provide more feedback to my staff.

Another challenge I feel is that of crystallizing future ideas into effective leadership practices. You have been a master at just that, looking at abstract information and applying it to the various facets of transformational leadership. I would like to master your techniques.

Lastly, I feel that the nature of your dissertation offers a challenge to others to look more closely at future informal studies. You are fortunate to have a committee possessing the confidence to accept a study that does not rely solely on statistical data. It is

my wish that less formal studies will become increasingly significant. These studies can serve as an inspiration to individuals in principalships and classrooms so that they, in turn, may offer their rich experiences and expertise to colleagues, and subsequently their students.

Alice, I am impressed with your confidence and stylish demeanor. You were warm and charismatic with the participants, yet professional and proficient with the process. You were thorough and decisive in each interview, yet always managed to project a personal interest in each person's contributions. I will always value our friendship. Above all, I will feel deeply gratified if this information is in any way beneficial to any of our colleagues.

Thank you for inviting me to be a part of your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Peggy

Personal note---I truly envy your opportunity to work with the wonderful people on your committee. Several of these people have been great inspirational forces in my life, and I will always cherish our interactions and camaraderie.

### **Last Words**

It's midnight, April 7, 1996. My "Defense" is over. I have successfully completed my doctoral program and plan to graduate May 10.

As I reflect on my dissertation and on the questions that arose during my Defense, I feel that it is appropriate to describe my feelings and to respond to those questions in this fashion -- "last words". I have always enjoyed "having the last words".

During my Defense I was asked why my description of this principal appears so rosy. For some people the results of this study may appear too good to be true. I offer the following response to that question. I have reported what I found. I can do no more. My fieldwork and other data support the story I have told. However, as indicated in the summary of this document, internal struggles and tensions appear to exist.

I acknowledge that in studies such as this one there are certain limitations. For me, time was one such limitation. I did the entire study while working full-time as a school administrator. This was not an easy task.

Also, I admit that one must always consider the possibility that schools which strive to be the best might also strive to present themselves in the "best

light". Obviously, such a possibility must be considered.

Another very sensitive area is the respondent's reaction to the study. In such a study it is essential that the subject be provided the opportunity to read and react to it. Obviously, the subject would desire to appear in the most positive fashion possible. The subject and I were quite sensitive to this issue.

This study involved one participant who was an obvious outlier. This individual's comments and reactions, as reported on the survey, did not correspond to the comments and reactions of the other teachers. As in most faculties, not everyone is pleased with the leadership of the school. Because of this individual's obvious extremes in opinion, I did not report this data as part of this study. However, I feel that this person's opinions need to be acknowledged.

As I reflect on the study in its entirety, I ask myself the question, "What motivates Peggy Moles?" I think that her internal desires -- to be successful, to be the absolute best, to win -- keep her motivated to try harder and harder. These desires appear to make her even more adamant about reaching her own high goals.



I think that Peggy cherishes the awards which she and Oak Grove have received. I think that she thrives on the good feelings of success and accomplishment that such recognitions bring.

One of my Co-Chairmen asked what I would do differently if I could do the study again. The one thing that comes to mind immediately is "time". I would like to have more time to spend in the field. If there were situations in which people may appear to paint a picture that may be a bit too rosy, perhaps being in the school for a longer period of time would compensate for this possibility.

If I were to do a similar study, I would like to select a female principal who is at a school which has more males on the faculty. I think it would be interesting to see if males would respond differently than females to a female elementary principal who is a transformational leader.

Finally, time is an issue from another perspective. I am tired! If I were to do this study again, I would probably take a one-year leave of absence from my job. Doing this study while working as a full-time school administrator has not been a picnic. Obviously, it wasn't an impossible task, but it has been a stressful period in my life.

One final reflection -- I could not leave this study without commenting on the impact it has had on me personally and professionally. I'm exhausted, yet fulfilled. I'm delighted to be finished, yet feel the need to continue. I view this work as a beginning, not an end.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Data Collection**

The subject, six teachers, two parents, four central office personnel, two family members, two administrative interns, the school secretary, the assistant principal, and the subject's best friend were interviewed using the appropriate set of questions which appears in Appendix D. These questions served as a guide for the interview, but allowed flexibility for the researcher to probe as deemed necessary. The interview situation was informal, allowing for the most natural responses possible. The researcher listened, audio-recorded, and documented her observations and thoughts. The researcher made no indication of acceptance, agreement or disagreement with the responses. Time for the interview was flexible and allowed for several sessions where necessary. The interviewee selected the time and location for the interview. Other than the principal's interview, the interviews did not exceed one and one-half hours in length.

Using the open-ended survey which appears in Appendix E, the teachers at Oak Grove Elementary were

asked how they feel about their principal. The survey was voluntary and anonymous.

A teacher at each grade level and two supportive faculty members kept a Teacher Log consisting of all contacts with the principal over a specified two-week period. Specific directions for this documentation were given by the researcher during a meeting prior to the keeping of the log. The results were anonymous responses. A sample of the Teacher Log Form appears in Appendix F.

The researcher observed the principal at designated times over a two-month period. The observations covered as many aspects of principal's leadership as possible. The observations took place as the principal handled the day-to-day administration of Oak Grove Elementary School. Additionally, the researcher shadowed the principal for one entire day. Fieldnotes were recorded for all observations and were expanded later.

The researcher reviewed relevant documents at Oak Grove Elementary School. The form for this documentation appears in Appendix G. The subject read and reacted to the study.

## **Appendix B**

### **Data Analysis**

After the data were collected in each area, the researcher compiled the data into workable formats. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and two transcribers. A copy of each transcript was analyzed by the researcher as she sought themes that were common within and across the various interviews. The results of the interviews were reported in narrative form emphasizing the common themes that developed both within and across the interview groups. Each transcript was read and analyzed at least three times, noting common themes, as well as things that simply did not agree with the other descriptions.

The survey results were compiled and reported in narrative form. Each survey was read and analyzed at least three times, noting common themes as well as comments that appeared not to agree with the other data.

The teacher logs were analyzed to determine the quantity and the type of contact the teachers had with the subject. The summative results were reported in narrative form noting the nature of the contacts.

The review of relevant documents was reported in a narrative form as a description Oak Grove Elementary School, its patrons, students, faculty, staff, principal, and its community was created. The results of this review were reported with the intent being to create a feeling for the setting in which the subject works.

After the study was completed and the product was in semi-final form, the subject read and responded to it. The subject's response served as yet another means of validation for the study.

## **Appendix C**

### **Additional Review of the Literature**

This appendix provides additional relevant literature. The following topics are included: effective principals, women's career paths in school administration, barriers women face, internal barriers for women, and external barriers for women.

#### **Effective Principals**

History has shown us the fate of women in the field of education. At the same time research has shown that successful schools have effective principals, and these principals tend to have characteristics that are viewed as being characteristics of females.

Greenfield (1987) defined instructional leadership in terms of the actions undertaken by the leader with the intention of developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers as well as desirable learning conditions for students. Strong instructional leadership by the principal has been viewed as a major component of an effective school. Yet, due to all the routine, disjointed, unscheduled events of the average

school day, finding time to be an effective instructional leader is a problem for the principal.

Davis and Thomas (1989) asserted that effective principals have daily routines of problem-solving and decision-making, much of it unscheduled or unanticipated. They have a higher tolerance level for ambiguity and good coping skills. These principals have to be good communicators in order to solve problems and move on to the next event of the day. Effective principals have to be socially apt and be able to gain the respect and cooperation of their staff, parents, superiors, and community. They have to be friendly and good natured and be flexible enough to consider the individual personal and professional needs of their staff. Ubben and Hughes (1987) found that the principal had to recognize that individuals' personal goals have a direct effect on how they work to reach the goals of the school in which they work.

Davis and Thomas (1989) indicated that effective principals have to be professionally competent. They have to be able to know and apply basic research-based principles and techniques to the teaching and learning process. They have to be in tune with the goals and

objectives of the school. Dwyer, Barnett, and Lee (1987) suggested that research has indicated that one of the primary differences between an effective and an ineffective school is the principal.

In the 1990's, teacher empowerment was added to the principal's leadership role. Teacher empowerment means that the principal shares the school's leadership roles with the teaching staff according to the competencies needed to make certain decisions. Davis and Thomas (1989) and Parks and Barrett (1994) suggested that the principal must create the atmosphere, provide the appropriate training, and feel comfortable with herself and her staff in order for empowerment or shared decision-making to be effective.

Effective principals have a vision and are able to communicate it to the staff, students, and community. Their vision is their image of what the school should be and what they want to accomplish. Greenfield (1987) described this vision as the ability of the leader to look into the future and see the need for change. The leader has the ability to see how things need to be as opposed to the status quo. Rutherford (1985) found



that when a principal has a strong vision, most of the teachers become aware of the vision and accept it.

The principal's vision has been found to be tied to the climate or culture of the school. Walter and Stanfield (1988) described the school culture as the "glue" that holds the school together. The school principal creates the atmosphere for the formation of the climate or culture through her beliefs, actions, expectations, and attitudes.

Cohen (1983) reported that effective principals hold high expectations and expect all students to meet the goals of the schools. Blum (1984) found that effective principals believe that students' learning is important and convey this feeling to their staffs. Good and Brophy (1985) found that effective principals hold a strong sense of community that included values, common goals, and high expectations. Therefore, research has given evidence suggesting that the effectiveness of the principal impacts the overall effectiveness of the school.

### **The Principal's Workday**

To examine the real effectiveness of a principal it is necessary to examine how that principal uses her

time; that is, how she spends her day at school. Greenfield (1987) found that the activities in a principal's day tend to be an endless series of encounters with individuals and problems at the school. The implication was that the principal has to go from task to task without real planning or completion of any given task.

Blumberg (1987) described the principal's day as being very fragmented. The principal tends to move from one problem to another with little time to deal with the problem or to reflect on a solution. Many of the daily tasks are left unfinished. The principal's work is often a stream of unanticipated questions, problems, and situations, most of which have little to do with teaching and learning.

Davis and Thomas (1989) suggested that a typical day for a principal might be summarized in this way. The principal begins her day by confirming that all the staff are present or substitutes have been obtained. As the day progresses, she (1) monitors the work operations; (2) schedules events; (3) organizes and allocates resources; (4) deals with matters of safety and orderliness; and (5) handles other routine matters.

Most of her work will be verbal. She (1) dispenses information; (2) answers questions; (3) acts as an intermediary between various sources; (4) organizes field trips and other activities; and (5) talks with people from the community. Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, and Porter-Gehrie (1982) described the principal's work day as a series of events such as those listed above that tend to blend together into an endless list of activities.

In their studies of effective principals, Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, and Bossert (1983) reported that principals tend to have a theory that guides their actions. This theory is based on their experiences. They found that effective principals have high energy levels and are visible in their buildings at key periods in the day. Thus the use of time in the principal's day appears to have a direct effect on her overall effectiveness.

Even effective principals had very typical workdays. It had normally been assumed that the principal is the instructional leader of the school. Yet, Casey (1980), Rallis and Highsmith (1986), Peterson (1977), and Kmertz and Willower (1982) indicated that due to the lack of time, this has often

not been the reality. Peterson (1977) found that principals actually spend about 80% of their normal day dealing with problems. There appeared to be little time in the principal's day for emphasis on or the making of instructional decisions.

Casey (1980) found that principals prefer to think that they have more of an impact on the lives of the students than reality actually shows. Principals tended to underestimate the amount of routine work they perform and prefer to see their positions as higher level management than the actual work day presents. Kmertz and Willower (1982) found that observations provide a more accurate account of the principal's behavior than depending on the self-reporting of principals.

Valentine (1981) suggested that most principals believe that their instructional role influences student achievement more than the managerial role. If this is accepted as truth, then the managerial role of the principal should be reduced to allow time for the principal to become more involved in the instructional role of the school.

Involvement of the principal in the instructional aspects of the school would create a more direct relationship with the teachers and would allow for more accurate assessment of the teachers' opinions about their principals. Andrews and Soder (1987) studied the relationship between teacher perceptions of principals and student achievement in the school. Their findings indicated that there is a positive relationship between these two variables.

As the day of an administrator is examined, it appears to be evident that each administrator's day is somewhat different from that of others, depending on individual circumstances. Yet, there are many similarities. Each individual has his or her own priorities as each is faced with the mundane ritual of a school day.

### **Women's Career Paths in School Administration**

As the administration of schools has differed according to the gender of the principals, career paths also differed according to sex. Natale (1992) observed that for men "the opportunity presents itself" to become a school administrator (p. 17). On the other hand, women must "take the positions as available and

move on" (p. 17). These statements tend to generalize the effect gender has on career path.

Ortiz (1982) and Schmuck, Charters, and Carlson (1981) found that male and female school administrators have different career paths. Females teach longer before becoming an administrator. They tend to acquire staff positions in Central Office as opposed to line positions which have more prestige and authority. Hansot and Tyack (1981) suggested that these staff positions usually do not lead to advancement for these women.

Women have to find ways to move up the career ladder. Natale (1992) reported that moving from district to district was found to be the best way to move up, according to Ken Underwood, an education professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. "Otherwise," Underwood said, "a female will sit in the same place waiting for people to die" (p. 17). Richard Miller, the executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, stated that he believes that mobility is important. He stated that if women are not willing to move, they limit themselves.

Hansot and Tyack (1981) reported that when Ruth Love was appointed to the superintendency of the Chicago School System, one female administrator commented to her that it might be to her advantage to go to such an area "where things were in so much trouble that nobody would notice that she's a woman" (p. 29). This seems to indicate that a woman in a more prestigious location might not be acceptable.

The female's career path is a rough and rocky road, but not an impossible journey. Females must be persistent and face discrimination where it exists. They must examine their own fate in the face of the future of the women of the next generation. If women today continue to ignore discrimination, then the future will continue to be grim for females who would like to aspire to school administration.

Females who have become administrators must not forget those who aspire, but who have not acquired an administrative position. Often it appears that it is luck, in many cases, that places females in administrative positions. Females must be proactive. Research has shown that females have been successful in school administration. Females must be active in the

promotion of each other in an already difficult career path.

### **Barriers Women Face**

Women have been denied entry into school administration in various ways. Researchers have referred to these blockages as barriers or obstacles.

Even in the 1990's the good ole boys' network remains closed to most women. It appears that more laws will be necessary before there will be any significant change. New employment strategies must go beyond the formal structure for finding jobs. Methods of dealing with prejudice against women in the informal system of job contacts must be addressed. Hudson (1991) indicated that "almost two-thirds of all school administrators use informal routes to jobs" (p. 3). Without such contacts, females will continue to be penalized.

The lack of advancement of woman in school administration has attracted widespread attention due to the fact that women dominate the educational field as teachers, and large percentages have acquired the necessary credentials for school administration. Hudson (1991), therefore, suggested that there is



interest in identifying the obstacles that exist for women outside the equal opportunity laws.

Even though the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was meant to assure equal employment, the laws stop short of insuring equal access to jobs in education. For the most part, school boards have continued their traditional practices and have offered compliance to the equal employment opportunity on paper only. Hudson (1991) suggested that this is the reason that the majority of teachers are women, while the majority of administrators are men.

Greyvenstein and van der Westhuizen (1991), in studying females in school administration in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of South Africa, found that "socialized stereotyping of traditional gender roles and the associated attitudes of both males and females" (p. 7) are major barriers against women's success in school administration. They pointed out that if major changes are to occur, it will require the change of inherent and fundamental philosophies, cultural norms, values, and standards which are associated with gender issues.

As is evident in this brief introduction to barriers, women have faced and are facing both external and internal barriers. The internal barriers are areas over which women can exercise more control. Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) suggested that internal barriers consist of such things as the feelings women have about themselves and their roles. They defined external barriers as the institutional structures and practices that restrict women's access to administrative positions. Since women have been taught to be followers, many women have developed self-limiting beliefs about their roles and abilities. This may have caused them to restrict their professional choices to roles that they have been taught were gender appropriate.

The following may be a sad, but true statement for women. Hansot and Tyack (1981) suggested that "to know a baby's sex is already to narrow the range of predictions one might plausibly make about that child's future" (p. 6). They suggested further that gender is a "fundamental ordering principle in society, comparable to race or class in the pervasive ways it shapes life chances, attitudes, and behavior" (p. 6).

### Internal Barriers for Women

Women must first become fully aware that internal barriers really exist; they must face them before they can overcome them. The internal barriers begin with socialization in the home. Pigford and Tonnsenn (1993) reported that Gloria Steinem once said, "The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn" (p. 8). Thoughts women have about themselves have been influenced by the experiences they have had and by what they have been taught.

Rogers and Davis (1991) indicated that one aspirant to school administration concludes that "part of the problem. . . is that women aren't taught what things they need in the business world. They are taught about virtue, not about power; about goodness, not about strength" (p. 18). Hansot and Tyack (1981) suggested that resocialization efforts for women, such as assertive training workshops and gender awareness programs for men, are deemed necessary.

Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) suggested that from the moment the magical words, "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" are uttered, children are provided with different messages and experiences based solely upon

their gender. It is evident by the way girls are dressed; how they are taught to play cooperatively in groups; how winning is not stressed; how everyone gets a turn in games; and how boasting is discouraged.

On the other hand, boys are encouraged to be active; to explore; to be independent; and to take charge. Boys tend to play games in which there are definite leaders and followers, with clear winners and losers. Boasting and competition are encouraged. Through competitive games boys develop confidence at an early age. Family members tend to perpetuate these roles throughout the developing years of both males and females.

Pigford and Tonnsen indicated that another area that encouraged the development of internal barriers is the socialization in the schools. Schools tend to teach and reinforce behaviors considered to be gender appropriate. When the majority of the teachers are women, while the majority of the principals are men, this sends a clear message as to the accepted roles of men and women in education.

Pigford and Tonnsen suggested further that a major internal barrier for some women is their definition of

leadership. The "woman leader" is often viewed as a contradiction of terms. Women often feel that they can be a woman or a leader, but not both. The socialization process has imbedded in some females that the males are the leaders and the females are the followers. Thus, women have to "redefine leadership to include a feminine perspective or be resocialized" (p. 10).

Women were faced with a real dilemma. "If they conformed to society's behavioral expectations for women . . . they would be rejected as leaders. If on the other hand, the women adopted masculine behaviors traditionally associated with leadership -- that is, if they were competitive, aggressive, and tough -- they might have to deny their identity" (p. 11). Women who were successful in obtaining administrative positions were in danger of having a conflict which affected their self-concept.

For some women lack of confidence was a major internal barrier. These women simply thought that they could not be a school administrator. For example, Pigford and Tonnsen indicated that 51% of the beginning male teachers report that they desire to become a

school administrator, whereas only 9% of the single women, 8% of the married women, and 19% of the widowed or divorced women report that they aspire to become school administrators. Women tended to keep their aspirations secret so as not to get negative reactions from their peers. Women tended to wait to be asked to apply for such positions, rather than taking the initiative to do so because they wanted the jobs.

Woo (1985) asserted that women's worst enemy is often the women themselves. Since they have not been conditioned to be ambitious and determined, they find it tougher to fight the old values. They often become tired of fighting the system and simply give up. Even though women are more aware of opportunities and have better self-images and higher career expectations, these gains often create psychological and emotional turmoil for them.

Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) suggested that the absence of female role models creates still another internal barrier. In 1990, only 5% of the superintendents, 12% of the secondary principals, and 34% of the elementary principals were women. This could have led women to assume that only the very

talented and skilled women become administrators. "If women perceive that only a select few will be permitted to enter the administrative ranks before the door of opportunity is closed, many will choose not to aspire" (p. 12).

Pigford and Tonnsen indicated further that fear of rejection is a major barrier to school administration for some women. Fear existed, not only of rejection by males, but also of rejection by females who had been socialized to accept men, not women, as authority figures. This could create a difficult situation for a teacher who moved from among the ranks to a position where she supervised them. Women were less likely to support advancement of their female counterparts than they were advancement of the males.

These attitudes appeared to be changing somewhat. Jenkins (1966) studied both male and females and found that both have positive attitudes toward working with women. The more they worked with the female administrator, the more they realized that the ability to provide leadership was unrelated to the gender of the principal. However, thirty years later there

appears to be little change in the number of women in school administration, compared to the number of men.

Pigford and Tonnsenn (1993) suggested that the personal cost for success is a stumbling block for many women. The increased visibility and scrutiny, the hostility from males, the resentment from females, the work overload, and the increased responsibility are overwhelming for some females who have been socialized in other directions.

They indicated that being an administrator does impact the female's personal life. Work, in many cases, has to become a top priority. For males, this is not as difficult a situation. Most of the males have wives to depend on for psychological and emotional support. Women are less likely to have such a support system.

Pigford and Tonnsenn suggested further that marital status is viewed as the "number one" barrier to advancement in school administration for women. Women find themselves in a no-win situation. If married, school boards often question if they have the time to manage their family and run a school. If not married, they are often perceived as not being family-oriented.



If divorced, they may be thought of as having no sense of family or permanency. For males, marriage has not been viewed as an issue when it comes to aspiring to school administration. For females, it was, and is, a major issue.

Woo (1985) studied four hundred and fifty women in educational leadership at the University of North Carolina. She examined the reason for the lack of representation of women in school administration. The primary purpose of the study was to assess the needs, concerns, and the barriers that potential leaders encounter. The Center for Women at the University of North Carolina gathered information from these women that identified positive and negative elements that affect their professional decisions and progress. This study was built on studies from the 1960's and 1970's which examined social and historical factors that contribute to the neglect of women's talent, experience and leadership potential. The social scientists of the 1960's and 1970's had suggested ways to help women make better use of their capabilities -- assertiveness training, support groups and networks, affirmative

action mandates, child-care programs, and flexible workdays.

In Woo's study the respondents indicated that affirmative action and flexible working hours have no effect on their career progress. Assertiveness training and special career guidance have only minimal effects on professional advancement. These women showed no fear of success. They were strongly focused on professional goals and seemed at ease with their achievements. Not one expressed resentment about working. They did not think that playing dual roles as career women and mothers had affected their professional progress. These women were proud to have dealt with the conflict of internal barriers successfully.

The women in Woo's study contributed their determinations to have careers to their reliance on their personal strengths with occasional support from their families. They cited scarcity of opportunities, an external barrier, as the major obstacle for promotion.

Pigford and Tonnsenn (1993) cautioned women against blaming internal barriers for their situation

in school administration. Internal barriers can be overcome by individuals, whereas external barriers require institutional and social change.

#### External Barriers for Women

Waddell (1994) indicated that once women actually decide to seek positions in school administration, they quickly realize that there are external barriers as well as those within themselves. External barriers control the employment status and opportunity of males and females. Pigford and Tonnsenn (1993) asserted that the formal screening system determines who gets into the system and who is promoted. It sets the requirements for credentials such as degrees, certification, and experience.

Women have the credentials, so the excuse that women lack such credentials is no longer valid. In setting the requirements for experience for particular positions, women are often screened out as viable candidates. In most cases, job advertisements require minimal teaching experience with the emphasis on administrative experience. For women this is a "catch-twenty-two". For male administrators the average number of years spent teaching is five; for women it is

fifteen. Thus, teaching experience is devalued, and this is the major area of experience for women.

They indicated further that the informal screening system is also a barrier for some women. Women find it easier to meet the formal requirements, but few survive the informal screening requirements. It is difficult for women to fit in with those in power; that is, it is difficult for women to be accepted by the good ole boys' network. Women are excluded from the locker room discussions, as well as from various fraternal and professional organizations. Therefore, they miss out on the information that is shared, the formation of networks, and the making of major professional decisions. Even though research studies substantiate the fact that women perform as well or better than men as school administrators, women still struggle to overcome the stereotype of the male in the principal's office.

Bonuso and Shakeshaft (1983) indicated that the most significant external barrier is sex discrimination. Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) reported that the primary reason that women do not get administrative jobs is mainly due to the fact that they

are female. Some people have tried to convince women that sex discrimination is "history" because of the forces of the 1980's such as affirmative action, the feminist movement, and the raised consciousness of educators. Others realized that this is wishful thinking.

Bonuso and Shakeshaft (1983) completed a study which examined the influence of gender in the selection of secondary school principals in an effort to explore whether sex discrimination is still an issue in the hiring of school administrators. They reviewed the significance of two other studies -- the Zikmund study (1978) and the Fleming study (1974) -- which had studied discrimination by examining resumes that had been submitted for administrative positions.

In Zikmund's study (1978) resumes were sent to one hundred personnel directors of corporations. The applicant's gender and two levels of scholastic performance were systematically varied so as to yield four different resumes. The gender of the female applicants was identified quite obviously by the use of names such as Linda or Jane, or were unspecified using the first and second initial. The grade point average

was either that of a high achiever or that of an average performer. It came as no surprise that the number of replies to resumes and the number of positive responses were significantly greater for the "unspecified resume" than for the "female resume".

Flemings' study (1974) involved the assessment of employment practices toward female administrators in colleges and universities. Two resumes were submitted for rating by university officials. The resumes were identical, except for sex. The male candidates received significantly higher ratings despite the fact that the credentials were the same.

Bonuso and Shakeshaft (1983) used the Zikmund and the Fleming studies as a model for their study. Their study was carried out in New York and involved the superintendents or chief school officials in all six hundred and ninety school districts. Four hundred and seventy-two superintendents responded and participated in the study.

Each superintendent received a packet which contained a direction page, a hypothetical resume of an applicant for a secondary principalship including questionnaire items, and a group photograph which

included the applicant. The direction page gave specific instructions for completion of the instrument. The superintendents were asked not to rate the applicant in regard to resume construction. The job description was one page and listed major functions and responsibilities for the hypothetical position.

The resume was one page in length with credentials listed under the headings of education, experience, professional memberships, honor and awards, and community involvement. A five point rating scale was used in reference to these categories. The superintendents rated the candidates in each area from excellent to unsatisfactory. The study also examined the effect of height and weight by including the group photograph. A control group was used and a validation panel examined the information packet for clarity.

The results of this study showed no significant difference between the mean total rating received by all males when compared to the mean total rating of all the females. Neither was there any significant difference in the mean total ratings received by the males or females when compared to the mean total ratings of those in the control group. In addition,

there were no significant differences uncovered in the ratings received by males and females within each stature type. There was also no significant difference in the rating of the resumes based on sex.

The Bonuso and Shakeshaft study created a new set of questions. Even though the findings indicated that sex does not make a difference, the question existed -- did these superintendents just give "lip" service to equity or were they really hiring women? Due to these questions, Bonuso and Shakeshaft decided to do a follow-up investigation to determine the significance of the results of the first study.

The target population for the follow-up study was the four hundred and seventy-two superintendents who had responded to the first study's survey and who had actually hired a new secondary principal during the year in which they had responded to the inquiry. Using the 1979-80 and 1980-81 Directories of Public School and Administrators in New York State, it was determined that fifty-nine districts had recorded changes in at least one secondary principalship. The results indicated that 90.9% of the new secondary principals were male. The written information that was obtained



was followed up through telephone surveys; twenty-six superintendents were available to respond.

The results were staggering. In the final level interviews, eighty-six of the ninety candidates were male; that is, 95.5% were male and 4.5% were female. Thus, it appeared obvious. Women were not getting the jobs, nor were they participating in the final level interviews. Therefore, the question of the existence of sex discrimination in hiring was not answered by this study. Since an ample pool of female aspirants existed, either the excellent women did not apply, or sex discrimination still existed.

Rogers and Davis (1991) suggested that many male egos have difficulties dealing with women in power positions, particularly if the earning power exceeds that of the males. Administrative positions tend to encourage women in them to be aggressive and sometimes even abrasive. Males tend to have difficulty working with these women.

The good ole boys' network appears to be as strong as ever. Wheatley (1979) stated that in school systems "a strong informal system exists through which favors and opportunities are distributed" (p. 18). Lyman and

Speizer (1980) found that women must have the assistance of the informal network if they are to advance in the field. If the good ole boys' network remains closed to women, they must form their own groups to combat its monopoly.

Becker (1963), in his book, Outsiders, stated that a network of informal, interlocking cliques allocates the jobs available at any given time. In securing work at any level, or in moving up to jobs at a new level, one's position in the network is of great importance. Cliques are bound together by ties of mutual obligation, the members sponsoring each other for jobs, either hiring one another when they have the power or recommending one another to those who do the hiring (p. 103).

Wheatley (1979) referred to the informal system in public schools by suggesting that:

important information is communicated via the grapevine and those with the right connections are those who hear it first . . . Women may be excluded from an essential source of information whose immediacy and details would enable them to respond quickly and/or appropriately . . . instead, they are forced to rely on formal channels of communication, where the information is late and frequently of superficial value (p. 13).

For these reasons and various others, many females wonder if aspiration to school administration is worth their time and effort. However, if conditions are to improve for females in the field of education, women today must not give up. They must recognize the

barriers, overcome these obstacles, and get the jobs.  
The journey appears difficult, but it is not an  
impossible one.

## Appendix D

### Subject's Interview

Tell me about yourself, starting with your childhood.

Probing questions:

1. What do you see as your strengths as an elementary principal?
2. Are there any areas in which you would like to improve?
3. How would you describe your leadership style?
4. Tell me about an innovation at Oak Grove and your role in initiating and implementing it.
5. Tell me about your role in staff development.
6. Do you think that you lead differently than a man? If so, how?
7. How would you describe a typical faculty meeting at Oak Grove?
8. How do you handle student discipline?
9. Tell me about a problem at Oak Grove and how you handled it?
10. How would you describe your instructional leadership?
11. Describe your relationship with your superiors.
12. What do you like about your principalship? Is there anything that you would like to change?
13. How do you think you are perceived by your peers?
14. Do you see differences in the perceptions of you by males and females in Roanoke County? outside Roanoke County?
15. Has being a female made a difference in your professional life? Tell about me it.
16. Describe your feelings about the status of females in school administration. How do you feel about a female's chances for advancement?
17. Describe what one year of your principalship looks like.

18. Share with me your feelings about how you think the community feels about you as principal of Oak Grove.
19. Are you satisfied in your job? Why or why not?
20. What would you like my readers to know about "the female in the principal's office"?
21. How would you describe your relationship with your faculty and staff; with the students; with the community.
22. Describe how you create and maintain the school climate at Oak Grove.
23. How would you change the climate?
24. Describe what being a working woman has been like for you.
25. Has working out of the home affected your family? If so, how?
26. Tell me about your community involvement.
27. Describe your career path.
28. Describe any barriers you have faced or had to overcome.
29. Tell me anything we've not discussed that you would like to share with my readers.
30. Anything else that you would like to add?

### Teacher Interview

Tell me about your principal.

Probing questions:

1. How would you describe your principal as a leader?
2. Describe how your faculty interacts with each other.
3. Does your principal act differently when I am in the building? If so, how?
4. Do you think that you prefer to work with a male or female principal? Why?
5. Tell me how you would describe a "good" principal.
6. Do you think that being a female makes a principal lead differently? If so, how?
7. What does your principal do that influences your life as a teacher? as a person?
8. How does your principal handle the politics that one must deal with in school administration?
9. Tell me about the parent involvement at your school.
10. Describe the school climate at Oak Grove.
11. If you could change something about your principal, what would you change? What would you change about your school?
12. Any further comments?

### Assistant Principal Interview

Tell me about the principal of Oak Grove Elementary School.

#### Probing Questions:

1. How would you describe the principal as a leader?
2. Tell me how you would describe a "good" principal.
3. Do you think that being a female makes a principal lead differently? If so, how?
4. What does the principal do that influences your life as an assistant principal? as a person?
5. Do you think that you prefer to work with a male or a female principal? Why?
6. Tell me about a problem at Oak Grove Elementary and how the principal solved it.
7. Describe an innovation at your school. What was the principal's role?
8. Tell me about how the faculty members interact.
9. How do you view your working relationship with the principal?
10. How do you feel about women's status in school administration? Do you think that being a woman has made a difference in how this principal leads? If so, how?
11. How does the principal help you in your job?
12. Tell me what the principal does to create the present school climate.
13. What would you like readers to know about working with a female principal?
14. Any other comments.

### **Administrative Intern Interview**

Tell me about the principal of Oak Grove Elementary School.

#### Probing Questions:

1. How would you describe the principal as a leader?
2. Describe how the faculty members interact.
3. Describe a problem that you observed and tell me how the principal solved it.
4. Describe your relationship with the principal.
5. Give details as specific as possible as you describe the role the principal played in your internship.
6. How did this principal influence your professional life? your personal life?
7. In your opinion, has being female influenced how this principal leads? If so, how?
8. In your opinion, what is the status of female administrators today?
9. What does/did the principal do to create the school's climate? Tell me about the school climate.
10. How would you describe a "good" principal?
11. Any thing we missed? Further comments.



### School Secretary Interview

Tell me about the principal of Oak Grove Elementary School.

#### Probing Questions:

1. How would you describe the principal as a leader?
2. Describe the typical contact you have with the principal.
3. Have you worked with a male principal? If so, do you think that male and female principals lead differently?
4. Tell me your feelings about the atmosphere or climate of the school.
5. How has the principal influenced your life on the job? as a person?
6. Describe for me how the faculty members interact.
7. Tell me about a problem at the school and how the principal solved it.
8. Tell me about an innovation at the school. What was the principal's role in bringing about this change?
9. How does the principal help you in your job?
10. How would you describe a "good" principal?
11. What would you like my readers to know about "the female in the principal's office"?
12. Any further comments.

**Central Office Personnel Interview**

What is your position with the Roanoke County School System? Explain your responsibilities in this position.

In your position, how do you work with Peggy Moles?

Tell me all you can about Peggy Moles.

Probing questions:

1. What do you think Peggy does best in her role as the principal of Oak Grove Elementary School?
2. What other contributions does Peggy make to the school division?
3. How would you describe Peggy's leadership style?
4. Tell me about Peggy -- the politician.
5. Tell me about Peggy -- the problem solver.
6. Tell me about Peggy -- the innovator.
7. Describe the influence Peggy has with her fellow principals.
8. What impact, if any, has Peggy had on the Roanoke County School System?
9. What characteristics do you think a "good" principal must have?
10. How many elementary principals are there in Roanoke County? How many are female?
11. Do you think that female principals lead differently than male principals? Explain.
12. Describe Peggy's role in site-based management.
13. Further comments.

### Family Members' Interview

Tell me about Peggy Moles -- the wife , the mother, the mother-in-law, the principal, the woman.

#### Probing Questions:

1. Tell me what you like best about Peggy.  
How would you like to see her change?
2. How does/did she balance her role as a wife and a working woman?
3. How does/did she balance her role as a mother and a working woman?
4. Have you observed any thoughts and feelings of hers that reflect how Peggy feels about being a "female" administrator? Tell me about the feelings she has shared.
5. What does Peggy say about "school" when she discusses it at home or with the family?
6. How has Peggy's administrative position influenced her life with her family?
7. What are some things that Peggy would be too modest to share with me? Her successes; her desires; her aspirations; something she would love to do, but hasn't.
8. What is extra special about Peggy Moles?
9. How do you think that being a female has influenced Peggy's role as an administrator?
10. What does Peggy like to read? What is her favorite movie? her favorite music? her favorite poem?
11. What is Peggy's ideal vacation? Does she leave work behind when she relaxes?
12. How does Peggy prioritize the "things" in her life?
13. What would you like my readers to know about this "female in the principal's office" that you have not already shared?

### Friend's Interview

Tell me about your friend Peggy Moles.

#### Probing Questions:

1. Tell me what you like best about Peggy. Is there anything that you would like to see her change?
2. How does she balance her role as a wife, mother, and grandmother with that of an administrator?
3. Has Peggy shared any thoughts or feelings with you that might help describe how she feels about being a "female" administrator? Tell me about those feelings.
4. What does Peggy say about her job? When she talks about "school", what does she talk about?
5. How do you think that being an administrator has influenced Peggy's life?
6. What are some things that Peggy would be too modest to share with me? her Successes; her desires; her aspirations; something she would love to do, but hasn't.
7. What is "extra" special about Peggy?
8. How do you think Peggy prioritizes "things" in her life?
9. What would you like my readers to know about Peggy that we haven't discussed?
10. Any further comments.



4. Have you worked with a male principal? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you think male and female principals lead  
differently? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how?

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5. Do you think that female principals are as  
accepted by teachers as male principals? Why or  
why not?

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6. How would you describe the climate at your school?

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7. Other comments that you would like to make:

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Place in the envelope provided and return to the  
researcher. Thank you!!!!!!







**Appendix H****Human Subject Information  
Restatement of Memo from  
Ernest R. Stout  
Associate Provost for Research  
Approving Exemption**

TO: Alice Waddell  
EDAD

FROM: Ernest R. Stout  
Associate Provost for Research

DATE: August 4, 1994

SUBJECT: IRB EXEMPTION/"The Female in the Principal's  
Office"  
Ref. 94-187

I have reviewed your request to the IRB for exemption for the above referenced project. I concur that the research falls within the exempt status.

Best wishes.

ERS/php

**Informed Consent for Participants  
of Investigative Projects**

Title of Project: The Female in the Principal's Office

Principal Investigator: Alice Waddell

**I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH**

You are invited to participate in a study about how females lead. This research involves the study of the school's principal in an effort to report her experiences as the principal.

**II. PROCEDURES**

The following procedures will be used in this study: interviews, open-ended questionnaires, teacher logs, and direct observation.

The interview will be approximately one to one and one half hours in length.

The questionnaire will be open-ended, and you will be asked to tell how you feel or think about something. There are no right or wrong answers.

The teacher-log will document all contacts the teacher has with the principal over a two-week period. Instructions for this log will be given by the researcher.

The researcher will observe the principal in many and various settings. Confidentiality, and as appropriate, anonymity, will be guaranteed.

There should be no risks to you as a participant.

**III. BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT**

Your participation in this project will provide information about how female principals lead which will add to the literature on females in school administration.

No guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

**IV. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The results of this study will include no names, except that of the school principal, and that with explicit permission. The researcher will report information in a fashion to insure the anonymity of the participant.

Tapes of interviews will be reviewed by the researcher and the typist only. The tapes will be erased upon the completion of the final defense for the researcher's dissertation.

**V. COMPENSATION**

There will no compensation other than your satisfaction for participation in this research.

**VI. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW**

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time.

**VII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH**

This research study has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for projects involving human subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the researcher's doctoral committee, the school principal, and the school system.

**VIII. SUBJECT'S (PARTICIPANT'S) RESPONSIBILITIES**

I know of no reason I cannot participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities as indicated below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be interviewed. I will spend approximately one to one and one half hours with the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will complete a questionnaire. I will give approximately twenty minutes of my time to complete the form.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will keep a teacher log. I will document my contacts with the principal over a specified two-week period of time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

**IX. SUBJECT'S (PARTICIPANT'S) PERMISSION (to be given to human subject)**

I have read and understand the informed consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time. I agree to abide by the boundaries of this project.

Should I have questions about this research or its conduct, I will contact:

Alice M. Waddell                      703-463-3243  
Researcher

Dr. Wayne Worner                      703-231-6426  
Committee Co-Chairman

Dr. Jerry Niles                        703-231-8325  
Committee Co-Chairman

Ernest R. Stout                        703-231-9359  
Chair, IRB  
Research Division

**Letter to School Personnel or Intern Participant**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a doctoral student at VA Tech. I am presently working on my dissertation using your principal, Peggy Moles as the subject of my study.

The study is entitled The Female in the Principal's Office. It will report how you and I see Mrs. Moles as the principal of your school. The study will report the results of the surveys, teacher logs, and questionnaires without judgmental comments. The purpose is to tell the story of Peggy Moles and how she leads, not to evaluate Mrs. Moles in any way.

Mrs. Moles and Dr. Deanna Gordon support this study and your participation in it. Please read the attached "Informed Consent" form, sign it if you are willing to participate, and return it to the envelope that has been placed with the school secretary for collection of these forms. Please keep the back page of the consent form for future reference.

The areas in which your help are requested are listed below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me collect at 703-463-3243. Your assistance and prompt reply are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Alice Waddell

**Letter to Parent Participant**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a doctoral student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am presently working on my dissertation which is entitled The Female in the Principal's Office. Oak Grove Elementary School's principal, Mrs. Margaret Moles, is the subject for this study.

The Female in the Principal's Office will tell the story of Mrs. Moles. It will in no way be evaluative. Your input is necessary for this study to be complete.

I would like for you to participate in an interview which will consist of several questions. They will be simple and to the point such as "Tell me about Mrs. Moles, your child's principal?"

Your name will not be used in any fashion. Mrs. Moles and Superintendent Deanna Gordon support this study and your participation in it.

Please read the attached "Informed Consent" form which is required by the university for all research studies. If you are willing to participate, please sign the form and return it to me in the enclosed envelope. Keep the back page of the form for future reference.

Your participation will be appreciated. If you have questions, please call me collect at 703-463-3243.

Sincerely,

Alice Waddell

**Letter to Central Office Participant**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am presently doing the research for my dissertation which is entitled The Female in the Principal's Office. Roanoke County Principal Margaret Moles is the subject for this study.

This study will tell the story of Peggy Moles in her role as a female elementary principal. It will be report what is observed and the results of the interviews and questionnaires without making judgements. It will in no way evaluate Peggy.

I would like to have you participate in an interview which consists of open-ended questions which seek to paint a picture of Peggy.

Please read the attached "Informed Consent" form which is required by the university. If you are willing to participate, please sign and return the form in the enclosed envelope. Keep the back page of the form for your future reference.

Your participation and cooperation will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Alice Waddell



**Letter to Family Participant**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a doctoral student at VA Tech. I am presently doing research for my dissertation entitled The Female in the Principal's Office. Peggy Moles is the subject for my study.

This study will tell Peggy's story. I will report what I observe, along with the results of the interviews and surveys without making judgments. The study will not evaluate Peggy in any way.

I would like for you to participate in an interview that will consist of open-ended questions. Hopefully, your responses will help me create a picture of Peggy as a person.

Please read the attached "Informed Consent" form which is required by the university. If you are willing to participate, please sign the form and return it in the enclosed envelope. Please keep the back page of the form to be used as a future reference.

Your participation and cooperation will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Alice Waddell

**Appendix I****Letter to Superintendent Requesting  
Permission to Use Peggy Moles as the Subject**

October 28, 1994

Dr. Deanna Gordon, Superintendent  
Roanoke County Public Schools  
Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Deanna:

I hope that your "first" year is off to a great start. Mine is overwhelming, to say the least. I am hearing great things about Roanoke Co. You should be proud!!

I am beginning to work on my dissertation which is entitled, The Female in the Principal's Office. It is a study of one elementary principal as a complementary study to that of Harry Wolcott in the 1960's entitled The Man in the Principal's Office.

I have asked Peggy Moles (and she has accepted, if it is acceptable to you) to be my subject. Demsey and Jerry are my co-chairs, and both suggested Peggy.

This study is non-judgmental; it simply reports what is observed. VA Tech's research department has also approved the plans for the study.

We, of course, want your approval and support to use Peggy as the subject. We think she will be perfect.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call. I would appreciate your approval before I proceed.

I look forward to working with Peggy and her staff. I plan to meet with my committee in mid-November. Believe me, I am ready to get this done. I am at a new school this year, to add to my workload!!

I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks again for sending the articles and other information.

Sincerely,

Alice Waddell

**Superintendent's Response  
to Correspondence Dated Oct. 28, 1994**

November 2, 1994

Alice Waddell  
Cottage Farm  
Rt. 3, Box 375  
Lexington, Virginia

Dear Alice:

I found the subject of your dissertation to be quite interesting. I look forward to reading your research and would enjoy Dr. Wolcott's executive summary if you have it.

You are hereby granted permission to use Peggy Moles as the subject of your study. I know you will enjoy working with Peggy and we will benefit from your observation.

I look forward to seeing you in Roanoke County soon.

Sincerely,

Deanna Gordon  
Superintendent

dbw

c: James A Gallion, Assistant Superintendent  
Margaret S. Moles, Principal of Oak Grove  
Elementary School

**VITA**

Alice Moore Waddell

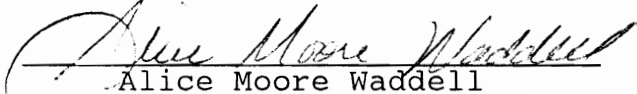
(Home)	Cottage Farm Rt. 3 Box 375 Lexington, VA 24450	(Work)	Natural Bridge Elementary School P. O. Box 280 Natural Bridge Station, VA 24579
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**Education**

Ed.D. - Educational Administration	Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA April, 1996
CAGS - Educational Administration	Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA December, 1993
M.S. - Educational Administration	James Madison University Harrisonburg, VA May, 1981
B.S. - Political Science	Radford University Radford, VA March, 1973

**Experience**

1986-96	Elementary Principal, Rockbridge County Public Schools Natural Bridge Elementary -- 1994- Central Elementary -- 1986-94
1975-86	Teacher, Rockbridge County Public Schools Highland Middle School -- 1983-86 Brownsburg Middle School -- 1975-83
1973-74	Teacher, Rockbridge County Public Schools Rockbridge High School -- 1973-74

  
Alice Moore Waddell