TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, COMMUNITY TYPE, RACE, AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Scot Bruce Turner

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

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Dr. Walter D. Mallory (co-chair)
Dr. Travis W. Twiford (co-chair)
Dr. Larry Byers
Dr. Cecelia W. Krill

January 22, 2008
Falls Church, Virginia

Keywords:
Leadership, Principals, Urban School, Rural School, Successful School, SES, Minority Status

TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, COMMUNITY TYPE, RACE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Scot Bruce Turner

ABSTRACT

This causal comparative study examined the relationship of the school demographic factors of ethnicity, socioeconomic percentages, academic performance, and school location (urban versus rural) on principal leadership with data analyzed when schools were placed into groups ex-post-facto.

One-Hundred and sixty-nine teachers representing six public high schools located in Virginia were surveyed using Powell's (2004) survey. Five areas, or domains of leadership were analyzed, (I) Vision, Mission, and Culture; (II) Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; (III) Collaboration and Shared Leadership; (IV) Family and Community Involvement; (V) Effective Management.

Quantitative data were analyzed (means, frequency, ANOVA, Tukey-Kramer HSD) with school results placed into demographic groups and locations to examine group differences in perceptions of principal leadership. Significant differences were found when schools were grouped according to location and demographic factors. A model of the contextual elements on the role of principal leadership was developed, and implications for research and future studies were presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this degree would not have been possible without the support and guidance of many people. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has helped me through this immense endeavor. I would like to especially thank my wife, Julie, and sons, Kyle and Carson, for their endless support and encouragement during the course of my doctoral program. I also want to acknowledge the role of my father-in-law, Dr. Gary Jones. You, sir, are an inspiration to me. You have been the perfect balance of guidance, pressure, and support, and I thank you for all you have done to support this venture.

I would like to thank each member of my committee who has helped me finish this study. Dr. Walt Mallory, co-chairman of my committee provided the statistical insight to guide me towards completion. Thank you for supporting me with analysis of the data. Dr. Travis Twiford, co-chairman of my committee provided a thorough and exhaustive reading of my dissertation and constant support. A special thanks to Dr. Krill who has been with me since the very beginning—who was even on the interview and selection committee when I entered the program. You have been a constant source of support and guidance and I am grateful. Finally, thank you Dr. Larry Byers. I will always remember the smile on your face after I successfully defended this dissertation. Thank you for the professional and personal advice. I am humbly grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS…….	iii
LIST OF TABLES……	viii
LIST OF FIGURES……..	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION……..	1
BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM……	1
Purpose of the Study…….	5
Research Questions……	6
Limitations of the Study…….	6
Conceptual Framework…….	7
Significance of the Study……..	11
Definition of Terms……	11
Organization of the Study…….	14
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE……	15
At-Risk……..	15
Who is At-Risk? ……	17
Federal Policy……	18
Effective Schools ……..	20
Leadership…….	23
Vision, Mission, Culture……	25
Curriculum and Classroom Instruction……..	28

Table of Contents (continued)

Page

Collaboration and Shared Leadership…… 31
Family and Community Involvement…… 34
Effective Management……... 36

Need for Study…….. 38

Summary…… 40

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY……. 42

Participants…… 42

Research Design…… 44

Data Collection…….. 45

Instrumentation…….. 46

Data Collection Procedure …… 48

Research Questions…… 49

Data Analysis…… 50

Assumptions and Limitations…… 51

Summary…… 52

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA…… 53

Population Characteristics……. 53

Descriptive Statistics……. 56

Inferential Analysis…… 57

Analysis of Research Questions…… 58
Research Question 1: *Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the schools are located?*..... 58

Table of Contents (continued)

Page

Research Question 2: *Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving federal free of reduced lunch rate lunches (low versus high)?*..... 60
Research Question 3: *Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when schools are compared by student academic performance (low, medium, and high)?*..... 62
Research Question 4: *Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly in each of the five domains of principal leadership when schools are compared by the percentage of minority students within a school (low, medium, high)?*..... 64

Summary..... 67

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RESEARCH FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 70

Summary..... 70

Research Question 1..... 72
Finding 1..... 72
Finding 2..... 73
Finding 3..... 75
Finding 4..... 75
Finding 5..... 76

Research Question 2..... 77
Finding 6..... 77

Research Question 3..... 78
Finding 7..... 78
Finding 8..... 79

Research Question 4..... 81
Finding 9..... 81

Table of Contents (continued)

Page

Conclusions…….. 81

Implications…….. 82

Recommendations for Further Studies……. 85

References…… 86

APPENDIX A: Permission to Conduct Study…….. 99

APPENDIX B: Letter Requesting Participation…… 100

APPENDIX C: Validation Survey…… 102

APPENDIX D: Validated Questions for Quantitative Study…… 110

APPENDIX E: Internet Survey…… 113

APPENDIX F: Frequency Table for all Respondents to Survey Questions by Domain…… 125

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Years Teaching at the Study School…….	54
2	Total Years of Teaching Experience…….	55
3	Demographic Data of Study Schools……	56
4A	ANOVA Table for Rural and Urban Schools on the Leadership Domains…..	59
4B	Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of School Location Groups based on Leadership Domains……	60
5A	ANOVA Table for SES on the Leadership Domains……	61
5B	Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of Student SES Groups based on Leadership Domains……..	61
6A	ANOVA Table for Student Academic Performance on the Leadership Domains……	63
6B	Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of Student Academic Performance Groups based on Leadership Domains……	64
7A	ANOVA Table for Minority Percentages on the Leadership Domains……	66
7B	Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparison for all pairs of Minority Percentage Groups based on Leadership Domains……	67
8	Summary Chart for Comparison of Means between Schools……	68

List of Figures

Figure		Page
1	Powell's Model of Principal Behaviors and Practices……..	8
2	A Conceptual Model for Mediating Effects of Contextual Variables on Principal Leadership……..	10
3	A Conceptual Model for Mediating Effects of Contextual Variable on Principal Leadership (Revised)……..	84

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The challenges for today's high school principals are enormously complicated. Beyond being an instructional leader and effective manager, he or she must also, according to Kantrowitz and Mathews (2007), "be politicians, crisis managers, cheerleaders, legal experts, disciplinarians, entertainers, coaches, and persuasive evangelists for their school's mission" (p.1). Principals facing these challenges must respond to the variety of constituents they serve, and meet both internal and external responsibilities, as the individual is ultimately held responsible for all aspects of the school operation.

These challenges are due to hosts of competing interests. Externally, principals must effectively balance and successfully encounter the political expectations of high-stakes testing of the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. They must meet the socioeconomic needs of students who come to school less fortunate than others, and address the issues of cultural changes in a workplace that is rapidly increasing in its diversity.

Political expectations guided by the federal No Child Left Behind Act have played a significant role in recent years by placing a spotlight on public school academic performance. Virginia's education system, as a whole, failed to meet federal requirements, even though more than seven out of ten of the commonwealth's public schools met federal benchmarks for adequate yearly progress during the 2006-2007 school year. (Richmond-Times Dispatch, August 24, 2007). Similar stories have been

thrust across a variety of mediums (television, internet) which have propelled school principals into the political arena to address public concerns regarding student academic performance.

The expectations of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have exposed a long-known challenge (Coleman, et al., 1966) facing the school principal—that one of the most important influences on student achievement is socioeconomic status (SES) of students. This sweeping federal legislation requires states to demonstrate progress from year to year in raising the percentage of students who are proficient in reading and mathematics and in narrowing the achievement gap. NCLB sets five performance goals for states:

- *All* students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-2014.
- *All* limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
- *All* students will be taught by highly qualified teachers by 2005-2006.
- *All* students will learn in schools that are safe and drug free.
- *All* students will graduate from high school (Virginia DOE, retrieved September 23, 2007)

Suffice to say, principals face an amalgamation of complexity with the abundance of federal and state guidelines that determine school success.

As principals face the external expectations of politics and socioeconomic needs, they must also be prepared for the cultural changes of a more diverse high school population in the 21st century. Hispanics in the United States accounted for almost half of

the national population growth of 2.9 million between July 1, 2005, and July 1, 2006 (1.4 million). The Black population increased by 1.3 percent between July 1, 2006 and July 1, 2007, while the Asian population rose by 3.2 percent, or 460,000. In contrast, the non-Hispanic, single-race White population, accounted for less than one fifth (18 percent) of the nation's total population growth (Retrieved from U.S. Census Bureau, September 23, 2007). While the United States has continued to see a population increase, its fertility and mortality rates have remained fairly stable. The recent increases in minority populations have been, according to (Lapkoff and Li, 2007), a result of increased immigration. The straining point for schools, according to these authors, is the increased need to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. This diversion of resources is a necessary part of what the school principal must do to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind, but is difficult in times of static or shrinking local and state resources. It may come at a cost to other programs valued by the community-at-large as well. (Cavanagh, 2003; Sunderman & Orfield, 2007)

Internal challenges are faced by high school principals as well. Newly developing methods for organizing instruction are being implemented which challenge the high school norms of teachers who have generally worked in isolation or independent of one another. These new and evolving methods exclaim the value of teachers working as a "collaborative team to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all" (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2006, p. 3). Creating an environment where staffs are willing to work in this manner, is very foreign to high schools, and may be almost an impossibility due to the increasing managerial and administrative requirements placed on the high school principal (Tanner & McLeod, 2006).

Perhaps the paramount non-academic priority for the high school principal is providing for the safety and security of students and maintaining a positive learning environment for students. Taking into consideration recent events at the University level, as well as events involving extremely violent acts of aggression of students on students, it is a constant concern for the high school principal to maintain a safe and secure learning environment for all students. External and internal forces place principals into a position whereby their leadership priorities are often competing in an environment where students bring at-risk factors to school—some of which principals can control; others they cannot.

A 1999 report from the National Association of State Boards of Education stated that the principal's job has become more complex and demanding (Tirozzi, 2000). With increasing academic requirements, rising poverty, and diversity, all of which compound already complex administrative duties, concerns and uncertainties continue to arise for school principals. School principals face an assemblage of parents, students, teachers, and staff members, as well as legal, budget, and curriculum decisions, and district office demands. The fact remains that the principal's job has become complex and very demanding (Barth, 2006).

As a result of these historic and ongoing challenges, the desire to understand the impact of principals' behaviors on school success is an issue that has been investigated for over 50 years and remains a current topic of interest to educators (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Heck, 1992; Hoerr, 2008). A number of studies have focused strictly on exploring the impact of principal behaviors and practices and their direct relation to student achievement. In contrast, studies focusing on the role of principal leadership in school effectiveness when explored within

the context of school-related variables such as SES and minority populations which might have an impact on the school organization (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998) have occurred less frequently.

Purpose of the Study

In her case study, Powell delineated principal behaviors and practices into five domains: (I) School Vision, Mission, and Culture; (II) School Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; (III) Collaboration and Shared Leadership; (IV) Family and Community Involvement; and (V) Effective Management. Powell (2004) found that an elementary school principal in Virginia demonstrated leadership that had an impact on school success, specifically noting the impact of a "principal's vision" on the overall success of the school (p. 125). Powell drew her conclusions from an elementary school with a significant percentage of students that had at-risk factors for academic failure.

However, Powell explored only a direct relationship between leadership and student success. This dissertation, adapted from the Powell study examined the role of principal leadership within the context of moderating school-based factors which may have an effect on principal leadership. The moderating variables explored in this study included the school location (rural versus urban), school socioeconomic population (SES), school academic performance, and school minority population. Stated differently, this dissertation adapted the Powell study and survey by adding contextual variables already existing within the study schools and explored relationships between these variables and principal behaviors and practices.

Research Questions

There are four research questions, which were addressed in this study. They were the following:

1. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the schools are located?
2. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving federal free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high)?
3. Do teachers perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when schools are compared by student academic performance (low, medium, and high)?
4. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly in each of the five domains of principal leadership when schools are compared by the percentage of minority students within the school?

Limitations of the Study

This study causally-compared the perceptions of teachers regarding their principals' leadership with respect to the school-level variables of school location, school SES percentages, school academic performance, and school minority percentages within six public high schools located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A causal-comparative study can only identify relationships; it does not often demonstrate a causal connection, and only inferences can be made, not actual cause-and-effect determinations. Many variables affect the level of success within a high school. This study focused on the

comparison of a limited number of these variables, and care should be taken when generalizing the results of this research to the overall population.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed through a combination of several different suppositions. Powell (2004) developed a theoretical framework for her study which was based upon her review of the literature regarding principal behaviors and practices. Powell determined that principal behaviors and practices have influence on all aspects of the learning community, which leads to school success. She categorized principal behaviors and practices into five domains: (I) School Vision, Mission, and Culture; (II) School Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; (III) Collaboration and Shared Leadership; (IV) Family and Community Involvement; and (V) Effective Management.

Her primary finding was that the success of the school is most influenced by the vision of the principal. Secondarily, she found that all other domains of leadership do influence student success within a school. Her conceptual framework is demonstrated in Figure 1. Building upon Powell's (2004) work, this study attempted to account for the moderating variables of school location (rural versus urban), school SES (percent by school), school ethnicity (percent by school), and school academic performance (overall school averaged score of English and math performance).

In a study conducted by Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996), the researcher's intent was to identify the way in which principal leadership interacts with intervening school level variables to yield improvement in student learning. Hallinger, Bickman, and

Davis (1996) identified salient features of the school community, i.e., percentage of students receiving

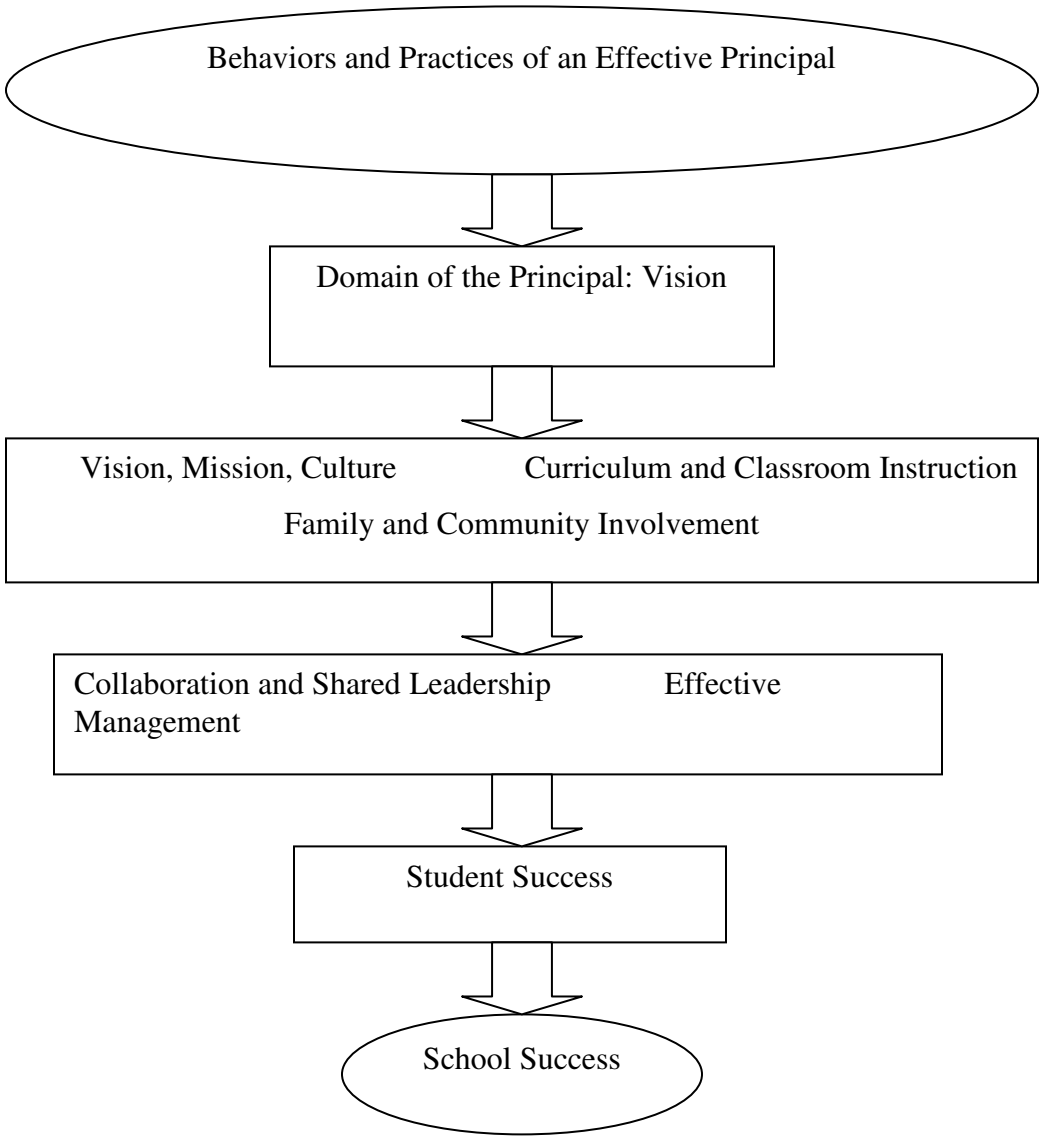

Figure 1. Powell's (2004) Model of Principal Behaviors and Practices. Used with permission of the author.

free or reduced lunch rates, and parental involvement, combined with measuring two other factors: principal gender, and level of teaching experience within the principal's school.

In Hallinger, et.al (1996), the researcher's intent was to identify how principal leadership interacts with intervening school level variables to yield improvement in student learning. Hallinger et.al (1996) demonstrated that principal leadership did have an effect on the reading achievement of students, but a causal relationship was demonstrated between reading achievement and the measured variables of student socioeconomic status, level of parental involvement, principal gender, and level of teaching experience.

In this researcher's study, a model represented in Figure 2 was derived utilizing the five domains of principal leadership as determined through the work of Powell (2004), and causal modeling as developed by Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996). This study considered the effects of school location, school SES percentages, school minority percentages and academic achievement. It is hypothesized that a relationship does indeed exist between these moderating factors and the domains of Leadership. However, this relationship can only be determined through the collection of data in this study. Taking into account the increased accountability of students who may be at-risk of failure, a study of leadership that explores the possible effect of these variables will offer a positive contribution to the understanding of the role these factors play in the overall success of a school.

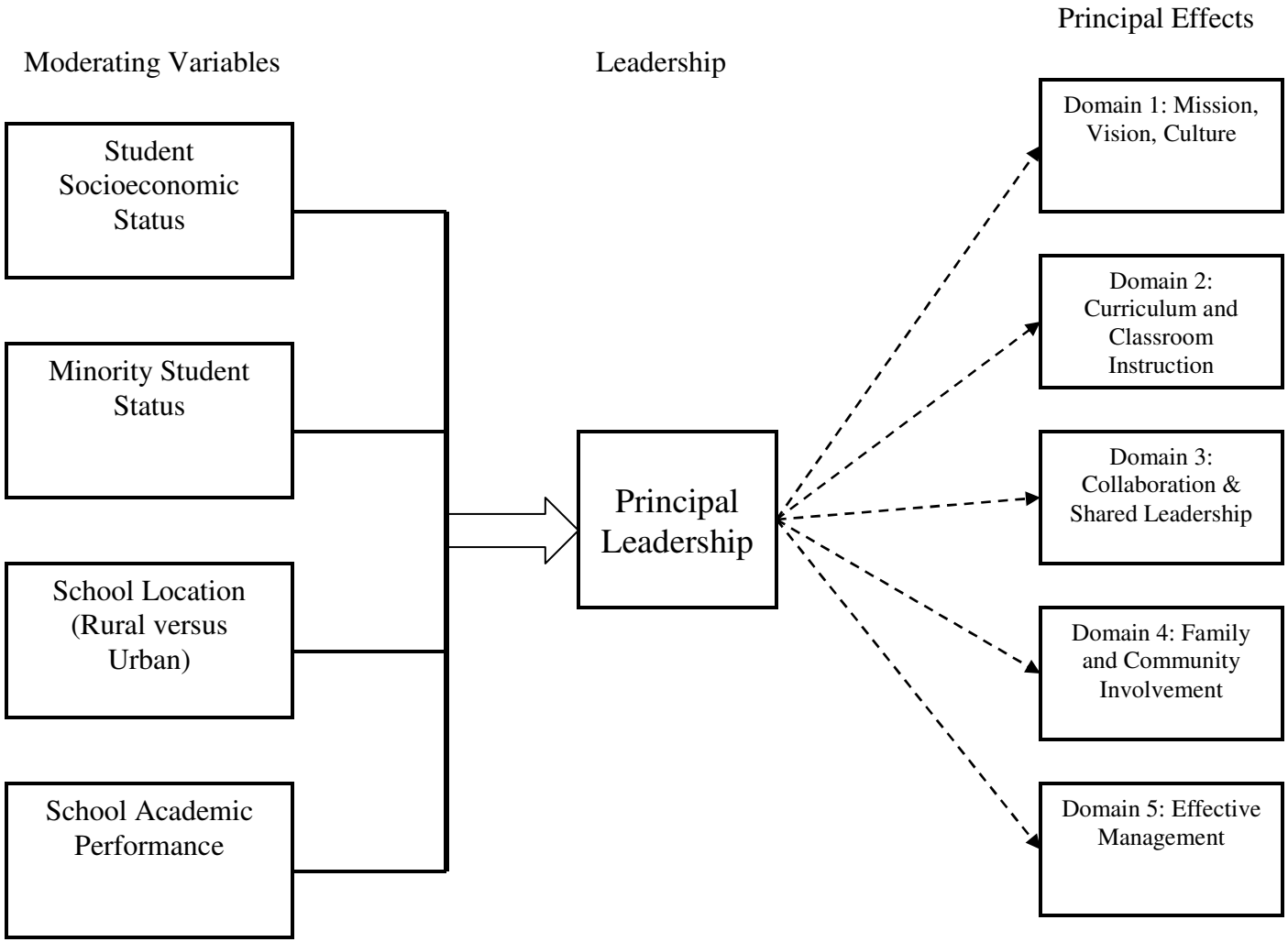

Figure 2: A Conceptual Model for Mediating Effects of Contextual Variables on Principal Leadership

Significance of the Study

To the extent that leadership practices of the principal have an effect on the overall student success within a school, the publication of this research will add to the literature regarding school success and the role that school-level variables may play in the overall effect of a principal's leadership. Student race and family SES are two contextual variables that principals cannot influence, but they have been identified as related to student achievement (Barth, 2001; Cunningham & Sanzo, 2002; Hinson, Spradlin & Welch, 2000).

In a study by O'Donnell and White (2005), the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement was explored, while incorporating the impact of student socioeconomic (SES) status as a predicting factor. O'Donnell and White (2005) focused not only on the relationship between leadership and student achievement, but also the interaction of principal leadership behaviors, and student socioeconomic status (SES) as a predicting factor of student achievement. They confirmed that student SES was a contributing factor in student achievement. Furthermore, Heck (1992) determined that strong principal leadership can result in improved student achievement, despite a variety of environmental problems such as low socioeconomic status, diverse student backgrounds, and limited parental participation in a student's education.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined for this study.

At-Risk Schools- Powell (2004) defined the at-risk school as "any school that meets federal guidelines for Title I schools and has 50% of students on free and reduced price lunch status" (p. 26). This definition was modified in order to provide for a larger

pool of schools during initial school selection. Therefore, for purposes of this study, high schools with a combined total number of students at 30% or greater number of students receiving free or reduced lunch, and 30% or more of the population considered minority students were included.

Collaboration- Operationally, Donaldson (2001) defines the leader who is collaborative in his or her actions as one who "Identifies the value of interdependent work, ensures a steady diet of feedback on this work and its effects, demonstrates values that reinforce the importance of collective responsibility and collaborative work, and enables people to act on the collected information to solve not just their own problems but to meet organizational challenges" (p. 91).

Culture- Owens (2004) refers to culture as "the norms that inform people about what is acceptable and what is not, the dominant values that the organization cherishes above others, the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of the organization, the rules of the game that must be observed if one is to get along and be accepted as a member, and the philosophy that guides the organization in dealing with its employees and clients" (p. 165).

Curriculum- refers to "an official guide prepared for use by administrators, supervisors, and teachers of a particular school or school system as an aid to teaching in a given subject area for a given grade; includes the goals or objectives of the course, the expected outcomes, assessment component and the scope of the materials to be studied" (p. 2). (Retrieved December 4, 2007 from VA DOE)

Family and Community Involvement- Family and community involvement has been described by Epstein (2001) as "A program of school, family, and community connections which are viewed as a critical component of school organization that may help to promote student learning and success in the school" (p. 38).

Leadership- The art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. (Kouzes & Posner, 1995)

Mission- The mission of the school is defined by the actions it takes to achieve its vision. Deal and Peterson (1999) referred to mission as "the focus of what people do" (p. 23). Deal and Peterson (1999) also implied that a school's mission is comprised of the intangibles that motivate teachers to teach and students to learn. Otherwise, stated, it is what people do, because it is the right thing to do.

Minority Student- For purposes of this study, any student who is categorized as Hispanic, Black, Asian-Pacific Islander, Native-American, or any other Non-White race (Retrieved December 4, 2007, from NCES.ed.gov).

Principal- The individual identified as the chief building level administrator in the school charged with providing instructional leadership for the school assigned, and managerial operation of the school and property.

Rural School- According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2007), three schools qualified as rural according to the Federal definition. Two of these schools were classified as rural: fringe-census defined territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area. The other rural school classified as town: distant-territory inside a town that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area (www.census.gov).

Successful school- For purposes of this study, a school that has met the required goals of the Virginia Standards of Learning Tests and is considered fully accredited is a successful school. The Commonwealth of Virginia (2007) accredits schools based on overall achievement on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests (www.doe.virginia.gov).

Urban School-For purposes of this study, three schools qualified as urban. Two of these schools Classified as suburban: large-inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more. The other urban school classified as city: large-within a major city with population of 250,000 or more (www.census.gov).

Vision- "An ideal that represents or reflects shared values to which the organization should aspire" (Bennis, 1995, p. 45).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains the context and background, research questions to be answered, limitations, purpose of the study, theoretical framework significance of the study, and definitions. Chapter two is a review of the literature that relates directly to the questions to be answered in the study. Chapter three contains the methodology used to conduct the study and analyze the data. Chapter four presents the findings of the study. The last chapter, Chapter five, includes conclusions, a summary of the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Discussion of the impact of leadership in relation to the successful schools with high populations of at-risk students requires a review of the at-risk student, theories behind the causes of at-risk students, and the way in which federal legislation has moved responsibility for the success of the at-risk student into the school. Because the inevitable success of the at-risk student is the responsibility of the principal, an exploration of what makes up an effective school and the leaders behind them is warranted.

At-Risk

The term "at-risk" as an identifier of students is complicated by the lack of a uniform definition, by the variety of at-risk environments these students may encounter, and by the complexities of the individual students themselves.

Although no uniform definition for the student identifier "at-risk" exists (Barr & Parrett, 2001, Brodinsky & Keough, 1989), it is generally considered to be a student who is at risk of academic failure, and, consequently, some type of societal misfortune. Sagor (1993) defined the at-risk student as "Someone who is unlikely to graduate on schedule with the skills and self-esteem necessary to exercise meaningful options in the areas of work and leisure…" (p. 4). According to Sagor, the term at-risk indicates the idea of a student's propensity towards or probability of underachievement. The Commonwealth of Virginia defines the at-risk student as a "Student having a physical, emotional, intellectual, socioeconomic, or cultural risk factor, which research indicates may negatively effect educational success" (22.1-212.5; B).

At-risk has also been defined within the context of the educational environment. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL, 2001) defined at-risk and suggested that students "are placed at risk by adults…when they experience a significant mismatch between their circumstances and needs, and the capacity or willingness of the school to accept, accommodate and respond" (p. 5).

In order for the school to respond appropriately, it needs to recognize the risky behaviors and environmental factors that contribute to a student being at-risk. This identification process, according to Brock and Groth (2003), is complicated by the exposure of youth to a variety of at-risk environmental conditions and behaviors. In a meta-analysis conducted by Wells (1990), he placed the conditions or characteristics for determining who might be at-risk into categories that included 73 identified characteristics. These categories included: (a) family-related characteristics; (b) school related characteristics; (c) student-related characteristics, and (d) community related characteristics. According to Wells, these characteristics were interconnected and interwoven and could not have been considered in isolation when determining those students at-risk (Wells, 1990).

In a similar discussion, Manning and Baruth (1995) identified three categories as at-risk conditions. These include school conditions, societal conditions, and personal characteristics of the students themselves. Moreover, the results of the national Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (2003) survey for data collected between February and December 2003 on risky-behaviors for student's grades 9-12, showed that numerous high school students engaged in behaviors that increased their likelihood of death (retrieved September 24, 2007). If the student is involved in an identified at-risk behavior, it can

pinpoint for educators how best to provide support for the student. However, educators must use caution to appropriately identify students that may or may not be involved in risky behaviors.

Identifying children who are at-risk is a difficult task. Barr and Parrett (2001) caution using the identifier "at-risk" as it applies to all students because within a single group of students exists great "complexity and diversity," but, they conclude, "The term at-risk seems to best capture their situation." (p. 2) Manning and Baruth (1995) suggest that educators should assume that "all children are at risk at some time, that at-risk conditions affect students differently, and that educators should use caution when identifying a student as at-risk" (p. 7).

School conditions, either deliberately or accidentally created, may also have a tendency to lead students to at-risk behaviors. In a review of the literature on low-performing schools, Corallo and McDonald (2002) note that common characteristics of at risk students include a correlation between higher stress levels and community poverty, higher teacher turnover rates, and higher teacher absentee rates.

Who is At-Risk?

As convoluted as the identifier at-risk may become when woven into the context of complex home situations, varying school settings, and a high number of identified risky behaviors, the research identifies that certain factors lead to a higher propensity for a student to become at-risk. In Brosnan's book, Against the Current (1997), he discussed the urban school student as an individual who typically comes from a home of "family chaos and instability, neighborhoods high in violence, crime, and gang-related activities, and an educational background at least one year behind their peers." (p. 7) Richardson,

Casanova, Placier, and Guilfoyle (1989) report that the five most commonly referred to identifiers of at-risk are: (a) poverty; (b) race/ethnicity; (c) limited English proficiency; (d) parents' educational attainment, and (e) single parent families.

Federal Policy

In order to wholly understand children who are at-risk, it is pertinent to discuss historical trends in federal education policies that targeted students placed at-risk and current implications of federal policy for the school principal. These children, who are more likely to be identified as failing than their counterparts under the currently more stringent guidelines, were only recently targeted in American education history.

An exploration of the at-risk student does not extend too far into the history of American education. Not until the 1960's did educators' give considerable attention to the subject of children who were at-risk of failure. The history of providing for the education of at-risk students is largely a history of two federal policies which reflected a paradigm shift of educational responsibility from the student and parent to the school and its leadership—The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which focused on the culture of poverty and meeting the needs of students at-risk through federal entitlement programs and *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which arguably moved a significant amount of responsibility of educating children into the hands of the school and its leadership.

In the midst of the 1960's, the American culture was divided by integration of public schools and an increasing urbanization of its population which gave rise to concerns for children who were living in abject poverty with little hope or opportunity afforded them. President Johnson proposed an aggressive agenda to create a "Great

Society," aimed at ending poverty, social injustice, improving education, and ending racial inequality. Central to Johnson's education agenda was Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA). It was implemented "to provide financial assistance to…local educational agencies serving areas within concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means…which contributes to particularly meeting the special education needs of educationally deprived children." (ESEA of 1965, 79 stat. 27, 27). Over the next four decades, ESEA would undergo tremendous changes which reflected both the political leanings of presidencies and political perspectives of a nation.

During its earliest inception, ESEA was marked by conflict, lack of direction, and lack of assessment measures. (Borman, 2002) This was seen as a result of school districts' disregard for program funding requirements, as most school districts simply moved the funds into their own general district programs. (Borman & D'Agostino, 1996). The 1970's saw an increased level of cooperation between state and federal governments which resulted in more fluid methods for funding local education agencies with federal dollars to support schools with at-risk student populations (Borman, 2002).

The 1980's were marked by a significant shift in education policy during the Reagan presidency. This shift resulted in the 1983 study known as *A Nation at Risk*. It highlighted perceived deficiencies in levels of standards within public schools (Sanders, 2000). Land and Legters (2002) argue that this policy changed federal education from a focus on the individual and his or her impoverished condition to the failures of the public school system and the areas in which public schools needed improvement. *A Nation at*

Risk was a Federal call to the states to develop higher standards for challenging curriculum, teacher quality, and more effective school leadership.

With this wake-up call to educational leaders, schools began to question whether principals really do make a difference in student achievement. *A Nation at Risk* recommended strong leadership as a means for school improvement stating, "It is our conviction that the essential raw materials needed to reform our educational system are waiting to be mobilized through effective leadership" (p. 27).

Inextricably linked to the success of the at-risk student are the practices of effective leadership within the setting of these tough and difficult schools. Almost 30 years ago, Ronald Edmonds (1979), disturbed by the notion that students identified as at-risk could not learn as much as students from stronger backgrounds, set out to disprove the idea and developed the correlates of effective schools.

Effective Schools

Three decades ago, a federally funded research project resulted in a paper written to discuss the effectiveness of American education. The paper, written by James Coleman (1966) and funded by the then United States Office of Education (not yet a federal department) concluded that public schools did not make a significant difference in the success of students. Coleman's report credited the student's family background as the main reason for a child's success in school. His findings proposed that children from poor families and homes, lacking adequate conditions or values to support education, could not learn, regardless of any action taken by schools.

However, there is plenty of evidence that schools can effectively teach children, despite their socioeconomic status. Early efforts to refute the findings of the "Coleman

Report" were proposed by Comer (1975) and Weber (1971). Applying a mental health approach, Comer believed that schools within poor and minority neighborhoods could do better if children's basic needs were met first. Within three years, he noticed improved learning within the school and increased participation by parents. Weber selected four urban elementary schools that were effectively providing instruction to children from poor neighborhoods. He found that all four schools shared some significant characteristics: (a) strong leadership by the principal as noted specifically by the principal's involvement in the instructional strategies applied and organization of the school programs; (b) high expectations for all students (which Weber noted was absolutely necessary—but not sufficient by itself); (c) An orderly, relatively quiet and pleasant atmosphere, and (d) an emphasis on student acquisition of reading skills, and frequent monitoring of progress within this area.

As Assistant Superintendent of the Department of Education in Michigan, Ronald Edmonds (1979) grappled with methods to improve the urban plight and low performance scores within the Detroit Public School System. He looked at student achievement data from schools in several major cities—schools where the majority of students came from backgrounds of poverty. Nationwide, he found, in contrast to the Coleman Report, schools where poor students were learning.

To determine why schools within these impoverished neighborhoods were effective, they Edmonds (1979) studied schools in similar neighborhoods where children were not learning, or were learning at low levels. Several conclusions were found from this comparative study. Edmonds (1979)concluded: (a) public schools can and do make a difference even with children from impoverished backgrounds; (b) children from poverty

backgrounds can learn at high levels; (c) there are unique processes and characteristics within schools where all children are learning, regardless of background.

Edmonds concluded that five qualities or "correlates" were consistent in schools they found to be effective. These five correlates included: (a) strong administrative leadership; (b) high expectations for children's achievement; (c) an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning; (d) an emphasis on basic skills acquisition, and (e) frequent monitoring of student progress.

In 1983, Purkey and Smith laid down an argument that Edmonds and others had been too simple in their discussion of those factors which make a school effective. In a critical review of the school effectiveness literature, Purkey and Smith noted that the literature was "…weak, in many respects, most notably in its tendency to present narrow, often simplistic, recipes for school improvement derived from nonexperimental data" (p. 426).

Purkey and Smith's (1983) analysis of outlier studies, case studies, surveys, and program evaluations, they concluded 13 characteristics that they considered the most important variables for school effectiveness: (a) School site management—autonomy of decision-making is school based; (b) instructional leadership—leadership is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process; (c) staff stability—once success is achieved, a staff coherency can promote and further enhance schoolwide achievement; (d) curriculum articulation and organization—programs should be planned, purposeful, and academically beneficial; (e) schoolwide staff development—with change also comes the need for continual learning; (f) parental involvement and support—parents support in and of itself is not sufficient, but if obtained, will support student achievement positively;

(g) schoolwide recognition of academic success; (h) maximized learning time—emphasis of use of time is placed on academics with little or no disruption, and (i) district support—few if any successes will be realized without the support of the district or central offices.

The last four characteristics were noted as being directly related to success on the basis of their impact on school culture. They included: (a) collaborative planning and collegial relationships; (b) sense of community—high levels of this quality seemed to reduce any feeling of isolation or alienation; (c) clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and (d) order and discipline within the school. Ironically, many of the aspects criticized by Purkey and Smith were the same findings as determined by earlier effective schools researchers. One similar finding, and a factor found in multiple studies on effective schools, was the significance of leadership within schools.

Leadership

The critical role of leadership may be the single most important factor in successful schools (Marzano, 2003). Marzano notes "Leadership is a necessary condition for effective reform relative to the school-level, the teacher level, and the student level factors" (p. 172). With the high expectations and demanding statutes for student academic performance as outlined in *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), this significant piece of federal legislation requires all students, regardless of race socioeconomic status or ability to be making academic progress, and provides sanctions for low-performing schools.

Consequently, a more cogent understanding is required of the measures principals can take to affect student achievement. Moreover, the call for recognition of

the role of the school leader's impact within schools with diverse populations needs further study, due to the rapidly changing landscape in public high schools. Statistically, the demographic profile of the U.S. school-age population paints the canvas with a population that is vastly different than half-a-century ago. In 1950, Whites accounted for 86% of the school-age youth. By 2000, their share had declined to 65%. By the year 2040, Whites, for the first time, will comprise less than 50% of the school-age population, with Latinos comprising a full 28%; African Americans, 14%; Asian Americans, 8%, and Native Americans, 1% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

Moreover, a disproportionately large number of minority students are not thriving in the current educational system. These young people are more often Black or Hispanic, have limited English proficiency, have parents who are single, or have less than a high school education. If allowed to continue, this disproportionate risk for educational failure threatens the economic base of the American society. There was a time that these students who did not finish school would have gone on to a trade school or entered the workforce with a skill that did not require education beyond a high school diploma, if even that was necessary (Education Trust, 2000)

This is no longer the case within today's society, and arguably, within an international society that is changing as rapidly as the technology that continues to propel it. Seventy percent of the 30 fastest-growing jobs will require an education beyond high school; 40% of all new jobs created will require at least an Associate's degree, and economically, college graduates who are highly skilled earn an average of $15,000 more per year than graduates with basic skills only (National Adult Literacy Survey, 1992).

The literature on leadership within effective schools centers on the behaviors and practices of the principals within them. There is a paucity of literature on the effective practices of principals within schools with high populations of at-risk students, and where these studies exist, they are discussed. Emerging from the literature of behaviors and practices were five domains, identified and validated by Powell's (2004) study: (1) vision, mission, and culture; (2) school curriculum and classroom instruction; (3) collaboration and shared leadership (4) family and community involvement and (5) effective management.

Vision, Mission, and Culture

Vision has been defined in multiple contexts and with varying levels of complexity. Bennis (1989) noted, "All leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision and the ability to translate that vision into reality" (p. 46). Within schools, the need for a principal with vision is exemplified through the capacity to bring a staff, community and students to a purpose and infuse into that purpose the commitment to motivate an organization or complete a task. Donaldson (2001) denotes that leaders infuse vision with purpose and commitment in three ways:

> (a) Leaders articulate a vision and a value system for the school that staff and constituents recognize as a good and consistent with their own purposes; (b) Leaders are constantly at work "bridging" the practical, daily work of members with the ideals of the school's purpose; (c) testing purposes and questioning the appropriateness of current commitments and practices. (p. 75)

Donaldson's definition of vision with purpose implies that school leaders are good communicators-as they are required to articulate the vision, they are habitual in their practices as they daily commit themselves to building purpose into vision, and realize that the vision should be flexible to current commitments and changing needs of the school. Indeed, as the needs of the school are changing, so the vision should change as necessary, but it should still inspire people with "Purpose and resolve" (Owens, 2004, p.271).

Evans (1996) notes that vision must be accompanied by a strategic plan. This plan often is the result of a personal conviction for the way a school or organization should operate. In their study, Walker and Dimmock (2005) held semi-structured interviews with five principals in United Kingdom schools with a substantial number of ethnic minority students. The five principals were respected in their communities for their work within multiethnic schools. The intent of the interviews was to determine how these principals identified their challenges and priorities in tackling the issues existing within schools with a high number of ethnic minority students, and to specify the challenges they faced in exercising effective leadership. They reported that these principals determined the priorities of their vision, and then established strategies to accomplish their goals. Three challenges identified as consistent with all five principals were: (a) seeing students beyond just their ethnicity as an identifier; (b) employing culture as a means to improve teaching and learning; (c) attempting to hire more minorities so teaching staff was a reflection of the student body. Other factors which reflected a strong sense of purpose and mission with these principals included the belief that a leader could

not rest comfortably on the rhetoric of their values and beliefs, but that they needed to expend considerable strategic and practical energy toward the realization of their vision.

While determining the purpose of and strategies to meet the goals of a vision, a principal must consider teacher's perceptions of their attributes as a factor in the eventual success of a school vision. A study conducted by Richardson, Lane, and Flanigan (1996) surveyed 1,225 teachers using Kouzes and Posner's (1995) instrument that was originally designed to determine the characteristics most desirable in business leaders. Using this instrument, Richardson et.al. attempted to find the characteristics of principals that made them ideal leaders according to the perceptions of teachers. Using Spearman's rank correlation to test (r ranks = .7774 (t=5.24, $p \leq .01$) for an association between the ideal characteristics of a leader as identified by Kouzes and Posner and teacher's response with a range between -1 and 1, and values near zero indicating a low correlation and values near 1 indicating a high correlation, teachers identified their top five or the ideal attributes of a principal as (a) honest (69.14% selecting); (b) competent (59.59% selecting); (c) forward-looking (48.00% selecting); (d) inspiring (32.73% selecting), and (e) caring (30.69% selecting). The authors noted that "The better a principal understands teachers' expectations; the more likely a principal can fulfill the expectations of the role" (p. 290). Sergiovanni (2005) called this the "Trust-first approach" and stated school leaders should make attempts to establish trust with his or her staff prior to setting the vision for a school (p. 93). With a better understanding of teacher expectations, the school leader will likely be able to tackle the challenges facing the implementation of a vision.

However, even with an understanding of what strategies are needed for implementation of a vision and the perceptions that may exist regarding the vision of the principal by his or her staff and community, the vision should be a reflection of the principal, staff, and community—or a shared vision. A shared vision can provide for an undeviating focus on student learning within a school. Huffman and Hipp (2000) studied the presence of shared vision within schools using Hord's (1997) framework of a learning community questionnaire to interview the principals and staffs of 19 diverse schools in the Austin, Texas area. In a semi-structured interview protocol, a total of 38 interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and analyzed in an attempt to determine whether the identified principals shared leadership and responsibility. In schools where a vision was identified as being shared, the principals were "Proactive, chameleon-like it seemed, intuitively sensing where support was needed, where to stand back, and when to take the lead" (p. 14). These principals had the capacity to trust their teachers and allow them the freedom and flexibility to contribute to the vision for the school. A teaching staff more committed to student learning within the classroom specifically noted this empowerment.

Curriculum and Classroom Instruction

Sergiovanni (2005) notes "Successful schools know how to make their visions useful. They do this by turning visions into action statements" (p. 55). The heart and soul of a school leaders' vision should be what occurs everyday within the classroom because it is ultimately the measure of a public schools' success in the United States. The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 defines a successful school as one that is making adequate yearly progress as defined by the accepted state benchmarks agreed upon between the federal authorities and individual state educational agencies. A successful school, then, is

one being orchestrated by a leader who understands instruction and focuses on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the vision for the school, hence the term instructional leader, and provides both an environment focused on student learning and outcomes, and continued teacher professional development.

Instructional leadership is not a new concept. In a 1934 journal article, Gray stated, "The unique function of instructional leadership is the improvement of teaching. In achieving this end, such leadership seeks to co-operate with, and to provide guidance for, intelligent, professionally-minded men and women engaged in teaching" (p. 417) In a meta-analysis of 30 years of research on the effects of principals' practices on student achievement, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) found a significant, positive correlation of .25 between effective school leadership and student achievement. For an average school, having an effective leader can mean the difference between scoring at the 50^{th} percentile on a given achievement test and achieving a score 10 percentile points higher.

Additionally, their study identified 21 leadership responsibilities, practices, knowledge, strategies, and tools which seemed to be linked to changes in test scores. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) added, "Just as leaders can have a positive impact on achievement, they can also have a marginal, or worse, a negative impact on achievement" (p. 5). An understanding of the instructional process requires an instructional leader to focus on learning rather than just teaching. Dufour (2002) notes that instructional leaders as supervisors of teachers should be asking teachers "To what extent are the students learning the intended outcomes of each course?" And, they should be asking themselves "What steps can I take to give both my students and teachers the

additional time and support they need to improve learning?" (p. 13). As an understanding of the instructional process and learning grows for the instructional leader, so does their comfort level with regard to being in the classroom, having conversations related to curriculum and instruction with teachers, and student achievement.

Today's instructional leader is also faced with the need to understand the complexities of data based decision-making. Under the pressures of continual progress as required by NCLB, school leaders must pay close attention to not only student learning and teacher effectiveness within the classrooms, but student outcomes and results. In an analysis of five pieces of literature discussing data-driven decision making, Lashway (2002) reports that schools will benefit as "Leaders challenge their own intuitions and assumptions" (p. 3). It may also support alignment of priorities for instructional delivery within a classroom, school, or program (Holcomb, 2004). Indeed, benefits of a data based instructional approach include: (a) timely student feedback; (b) documented improvements in instruction; (c) capacity to measure success and failure within specific programs; (d) guidance for curriculum development, and (e) accountability promotion (Thornton & Perreault, 2002). Still, just as the vision for a school should be a product developed within and by all members of the school community (Barth, 2001), the use of data for decision making must be made within a foundation that has already been laid by the instructional leader; one which includes a relationship of trust, and shared decision making (Thornton & Perreault, 2002).

While instructional leaders must be focused on the ever-present need to demonstrate student progress in achievement results, they must also be concerned with the professional development of their teachers. Several factors may inhibit the successful

implementation of a professional development program within a school. In a quantitative study on the effectiveness of professional development for teachers in public schools of Ohio, Zimmerman and May (2003) asked 143 principals to respond to seven open-ended questions. These questions were analyzed using the constant-comparison method to determine what participants considered to be inhibitors to professional development. The two most dominant inhibitors to professional development were lack of time and money.

Nevertheless, the instructional leader who understands his or her staff needs can bring an exacting focus to professional development—or a context (Dufour, 2001) that meets a staff need or curricular requirement. Dufour (2001) points out that this can lead to a more fulfilling learning experience for teachers as it will be based within the context of their school needs—"The artificial distinction between teacher work and teacher learning that exists in most schools is eliminated" (p. 4).

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

A plethora of labels is used to describe the idea of shared leadership. These adjectives include identifiers such as democratic, participative, moral, and distributive. Harris and Lambert (2003) identified shared leadership within the context of what they called "Leadership capacity." Their definition reflects a sense of collaboration and purpose that flows throughout a school where leadership is shared. They note:

> The key notion in this definition of leadership is that leadership is about learning together and constructing knowledge collectively and collaboratively…it means generating ideas together; to seek to reflect on and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information; and to create actions that grow out of these

> understandings. Such is the core of leadership. Leadership is about learning together. (p. 16)

The concept of shared leadership itself generates unsettled reactions by some within the context of current educational hierarchies. In order to provide a thorough discussion of the idea of shared leadership, a series of questions must be answered. They include: (a) How is leadership bestowed or allocated in such a model? (b) What are the implications for school leaders? (c) What is the role of the principal—as the designated leader within the context of shared leadership? (d) How does shared leadership operate in practice?

Determining how leadership is bestowed or allocated within the current context of school organization and structure may not be possible to the point that it results in a successful model of leadership. Current school models of leadership are "low leadership capacity schools that tend to be principal dependent, lack a professional culture and are significantly unsuccessful with children" (Lambert, 2005, p. 39). Therefore, Lambert states that bestowing or sharing leadership requires at least a semi-abandonment of the old methods of confining authority to the principal, and distributing it to other members of the learning community to increase the leadership capacity within a school.

When leadership has been allocated among school staff, the nature of leadership focuses not on determining the person in charge or the person making the final decision. Rather, leadership becomes about the task to be accomplished (Spillane, 2005), increases the depth of relationships between leaders (Sergiovanni, 2005), and increases the learning across the community of leaders within a school (Lambert, 2005). Sergiovanni (2005) refers to this process as changing the culture to accept leadership, not within the context

of position or function, but as a "Practice whose responsibilities, functions, and actions are shared by principals and teachers" (p. 42).

Implications for principals who release authority and responsibility can be enormous. Concerns for students, programs, and ultimately meeting the vision for school success and achievement, will become similar in nature and shared between school staff and the principal (Lambert, 2005). Lovely (2005) expresses this as "The wisdom of the working as a whole superseding any desire for individual triumph" (p. 16). Lovely indicates that shared responsibility and leadership allows others to share in the success of the school and thus, create an environment where a greater number of staff will endorse into the mission of the school. Examples are abundant within schools of complex problems that need a "pooling of intellectual capital" (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 68) in order to come up with a solution that fits the problem. It serves the principal well to allow those closest to teaching and learning to attempt to resolve problems in a manner that supports the instructional mission of the school since they are the closest to the actual experiences and students themselves.

In 2005, Kannapel and Clements selected eight elementary schools in Kentucky based upon the following criteria: (a) 50 % or more of the students were on free or reduced lunch; (b) the schools were performing at a high level on state assessments; (c) specific scores of students within the schools on free and reduced lunch were considered to be at a high rate; (d) progress continued to occur over time; (e) achievement gap between both low and middle income and Black and White students was fewer than 15 points, and (f) a variety of locations from urban to rural. The researchers sought to answer two questions: (1) What common characteristics that seem to contribute to

students' high performance is found among the schools studied? (2) What characteristics and practices within these schools differentiate them from similar schools that are not performing at high levels? Using a mixed methodology of data analysis and case study methods, the researchers determined that all eight principals, although very different in their leadership styles, were all collaborative in their decision-making. For the most part, the researchers determined that these schools did not have flashy, publicity seeking principals, but had devoted individuals who cared deeply about the community and about establishing a culture of collaboration.

Family and Community Involvement

An elementary school in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, composed mostly of African American students (87%), was successfully maintaining and supporting strong school-community partnerships. In order to identify the factors that supported and maintained these relationships, Sanders and Harvey (2002) conducted an in-depth case study. In this study, four groups were interviewed using a semi-structured method—parents, students, the school principal, and the schools outside partners. The protocol of the interview was to determine how the partnership between the school and outside stakeholders developed, why the community chose to connect with the school, whether the partnership with the school had achieved the desired goals with the community, and the community partner's level of satisfaction with the school. Central to the findings of this study was a principal who had a high level of expectations and commitment to student achievement. This high level of commitment was evident and was perceived by community partners and stakeholders. Moreover, the principal's support for community involvement was found to be a central factor in the case school's success in

developing meaningful community connections. The principal's role as a positive resonator was noted as well. Community members felt that the positive attitude and approach towards the community by staff members in the school were a reflection of the principal's attitude towards the community. Finally, the researchers determined that the principal's ability to successfully conduct open and honest communication with the community supported and maintained a good relationship with the students and their parents.

In a similar study of five multiethnic schools showing successful student academic achievement in England, Walker and Dimmock (2005) through the research collected through a larger, broader study conducted by the Centre for Educational Leadership and Management and data collected through semi-structured interviews, data analysis of school documentation and statistical data related to the schools racial composition, found that the role of the principal in the process of connecting with a multi-ethnic student body is decisive. The principals in each of these schools regularly articulated that the school supported an agenda that was socially supportive and recognized cultural differences and not deficits. These principals challenged culturally biased approaches to teaching, denouncing a one-size-fits-all teaching style, and recognizing that students learn differently.

The literature conclusively shows that parental expectations have a positive effect on student achievement (Chavkin, 2000; Desimone; 1999). However, if the parental actions do not have the same intentions as the school expectations, then the results are not as beneficial (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard & Lintz, 1996). Framed in this way, it would appear that a delicate balance of parental and school expectations may be needed in order

to achieve optimal conditions between the teachers, parents, students, and the school principal. The balance between parent and school staff expectations might likely be the result of several factors occurring within schools, including relations that demonstrate mutual respect (Kannapel & Clements, 2005), engaging parents so that they feel affiliated with, or have a sense of membership in the school (Castaneda, 1997), and opening the doors of the school outside of normal school hours to meet the needs of parents who are either working in multiple job roles or need other services provided outside of academics for their children (Clark, Shreve, & Stone, 2004).

Effective Management

In a survey of 200 executives in businesses and corporations, Kotter (1990) asked these individuals to describe the actions of someone who was effectively managing those activities for which he or she was responsible. Kotter identified these responsibilities as the core of modern management. This core included: (a) planning and budgeting operationally defined as the process of setting goals and timelines for goal attainment and allocation of appropriate resources in order to meet the intended goals; (b) organizing and staffing, operationally defined as the process of establishing an organization and then staffing the existing structure with individuals competent to complete the jobs within the organization; (c) controlling and problem solving operationally defined as monitoring the results versus the intended outcomes by means of reports, data collection and supervision of others. Through collections processes problems may be identified and resolved as needed.

Even though Kotter's (1990) exploration into management was, in effect, an examination of business management, the responsibilities identified are not dissimilar to

those of school leaders, who must practice good school management to run an effective operation. Portin, Schneider, and DeArmond (2003), in a study attempting to identify what principals actually do, rather than gauge their effectiveness, identified a core leadership practice as managerial leadership which they defined as "Tending to the operations of the school (e.g., its budget, schedule, facilities, safety and security, and transportation)" (p. 60). In all schools within the study, the practices of managerial leadership was seen as critical to day-to-day operations within the school, but not an essential task that had to be performed by the principals. Fifty percent of the principals within the public schools studied identified the management domain of leadership as an area they would delegate to someone else within their school building. However, they also noted their desire for greater levels of autonomy in managing their school budgets and resources available. Similar to Kotter's (1990) management practice of organizing and staffing a business, Portin et.al (2003) identified a core practice of principals as the identification of needs within a school and then matching resources to those needs. Additionally, Gardner (1989) notes that leaders must often allocate resources, deal with budgets, and organize the enterprise in order to enable people to do the work necessary to move the organization toward its vision.

As the school principal moves a school staff towards the vision of successful student achievement, Donaldson (2001) warns against managing in a traditional method that is counterintuitive of current theories of school effectiveness. Donaldson (2001) notes that school administrators have traditionally buffered teachers from outside disturbances in an attempt to allow them to concentrate on the dual-importance of teaching and learning. By doing this, he warns educational leaders that they are also "lock

stepping" themselves into a traditional model of schools that is outdated and outmoded. He notes that "The net effect of this leave it to the administration" phenomenon is that many teachers and other school staff remain reticent to engage in organizational decision or challenges" (p. 29). Donaldson (2001) notes the organic nature of schools and learning, and implores school leaders to distribute management and decision making as much as possible to other members of the school staff.

Need for Study

The essential impact of these five domains of leadership on at-risk students were studied first by Powell (2004) at the elementary level, and then by Pamas (2006) at the middle school level. Powell (2004) reported the following conclusions:

- Vision of the principal is *paramount* for school success.
- The culture of the school must be as nurturing to teachers as it is to students.
- Teaching of curriculum should be foremost.
- Principals must protect instructional time.
- The principal is sometimes a "benign dictator" (p. 3) who makes decisions without teacher input.
- Primary role of principal must be instructional leader.

Pamas (2006) made similar discoveries at the middle school level through his study. He also reported a similar level of importance for the vision of the principal. Pamas' (2006) reported a slightly higher level of agreement within his study on the domain of Curriculum and Classroom Instruction noting "In Powell's study (2004), this domain focused on the instructional needs of the elementary level, such as an all day kindergarten program, a requirement for daily homework completion, and heterogeneous

grouping of students in class. Whereas, this study focused exclusively on the instructional needs of middle schools, such as the frequent assessment of students in class and the importance of assessment to the instructional process" (p. 78).

It is necessary to study the essential role of a principal as instructional, cultural, and managerial leader of the school. According to Heck (1992), strong principal leadership can result in improved student achievement, despite a variety of environmental problems such as low socioeconomic status, student backgrounds, and limited parental participation in a child's education. Through the principal's leadership, school goals are developed; expectations are set and communicated; classrooms are organized for instruction; necessary resources are allocated; teacher performance is evaluated; student progress is monitored, and a positive, encouraging, and orderly climate suitable for learning is promoted (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990).

This study explores the role of leadership in successful at-risk high schools. However, it expands on the work of Powell (2004) and Pamas (2006) by exploring the effect of moderating, school-based, contextual factors, on the domains of Leadership. In a recent paper on instructional and transformational leadership, Hallinger (2003) wrote:

> In our review of the literature on principal effects (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b), we concluded that it is virtually meaningless to study principal leadership without reference to school context. The context of the school is a source of constraints, resources, and opportunities that the principal must understand and address in order to lead. Contextual variables of interest to the principals include student background, community type, organizational structure, school culture,

> teacher experience, and competence, fiscal resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labor organization. (p. 346)

Thus, for this study, the school context factors of school location (rural versus urban), student SES (% of students receiving free and reduced lunch fees), student minority percentages (% of students per school classified as minority), and school academic performance (composite average of SOL results) will be explored in a causal-comparative format.

The statistics on SOL performance, student's minority percentages, and student SES percentages were all located on the VA DOE Web site. The data for identifying school type (rural versus urban) was retrieved through the U.S. Department of Education NCES website on December 4, 2007.

Summary

The chapter two review of the literature discussed the concept of at-risk, identified the at-risk student, and outlined the role of federal policy in meeting the needs of those students. One result of the federal government's decision to intervene and support underprivileged children was the effective schools movement. One particular area identified from the effective schools movement was the impact of effective leadership on the success of students. Effective leadership was identified in those schools where the principal leads with collaboration (Green, 2007; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Kanapel & Clements, 2005; Lambert, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2005; Spillane, 2005), shares his vision with others (Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Richardson, Lane & Flanagan, 1996, Short & Greer, 2002), identifies with the needs of his or her community and staff (Barth, 2006; Evans, 1996; Weissboard, 2003) , understands the curriculum and the value of

instruction (Anderson et al., 2004, Killion, 2002) and effectively manages his or her programs (Donaldson, 2001; Kotter, 1990).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Perceptions of principal leadership behaviors believed to influence student achievement through the mission, vision, and cultural impact of leadership (domain 1), through instructional leadership (curriculum and classroom instruction—domain 2), via collaborative leadership (collaborative and shared leadership—domain 3, by involvement in the community (family and community involvement—domain 4), and through effective management (domain 5) of school operations were addressed in this quantitative study.

Furthermore, this study analyzed school location as defined by the National Center for Educational Statistics (rural versus urban), student ethnicity as a percentage of the school's population (low versus high), student academic performance on Virginia Standards of Learning tests (SOLS) (low, medium, and high), and student socioeconomic (SES) status as a percentage of the school's population (low versus high) as dependent variables in attempts to answer the research questions.

Participants

Hallinger and Heck (1996a) suggested school level research was needed to explain the influence of the principal. Thus, for this study, participants in the initial population pool included high school teachers representing six public high schools in the State of Virginia.

Powell's (2004) method for population selection began with the selection of public elementary schools located in Virginia that met the requirements for Title I schools due to their poverty level. The schools she selected were also fully accredited, as

established by the Virginia Standards of Quality and determined by passing scores of the Virginia Standards of Learning Tests.

Procedure for selection of schools modeled Powell's study (2004) with some modifications. Powell's (2004) school selection criteria included: (a) at least 50% of students receiving free or reduced lunch rates; (b) minority student percentages at or above 50%; (c) elementary level schools with either pre-kindergarten, or kindergarten which did not exceed sixth grade, (d) and the principal who was located in the school for at least three years.

This study's sample selection process was similar to Powell's (2004), with some adjustments. First it was determined that this study would be conducted at the high school level. Because high schools are much larger, a different percentage was chosen (30% for free and reduced, and minority percentage of students), in order to gain a sufficient sampling of schools to begin selection. Just as the Powell (2004) study identified the principal having been in the school for three years, this study identified schools with the criteria as well. Finally, the schools that agreed to this study revealed interesting and useful criteria regarding their location, their academic performance, the percentages of minority students, as well as the percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunch rates, which made a causal comparative study possible. Powell's (2004) study was a qualitative study based upon the coding and analysis of a series of interviews, augmented with a survey to triangulate the results of her analysis of interviews collected.

The selection of the six schools for this study was determined through a process of implementing a series of filters to determine schools that met the criteria for this study. Initially, 22 public high schools throughout the State of Virginia met the study control

criteria. Permission was requested via email from all 22 high school principals to have a randomly selected group of their teachers participate in the study. by completing an online survey (See Appendix E). A formal letter was sent the following week to those principals who had not yet responded (See Appendix B). Permission was either granted directly by the principal or through a more formal process in their respective school system. Of the 22 public high schools, permission was granted by six of the schools. Several other school systems initially agreed, but for unexplained reasons, determined they did not want to participate.

Research Design

The design of this study was quantitative causal-comparative as it examined the perceptions of teachers when schools were compared by grouping them according to location, ethnicity, SES, and academic performance. The grouping of schools by location-rural compared to urban-was determined using data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) school data 2005-2006 (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/) which specifies the type of locality the school serves. The CCD is also used by NCES to select samples for national surveys.

Grouping of schools by percentage of students receiving federal free or reduced lunch fees, or a schools SES percentage, was determined using the Virginia Department of Education link to school free and reduced price lunch program eligibility data. (http://www.vdoe.vi.virginia.gov/) Data were used from the 2005-2006 school year. Schools were compared in two different categories: (1) low percentages (30-34%), and (2) high percentages (40-43%).

Grouping of schools based upon overall student academic performance, as

measured by the Virginia SOLS was determined using the Virginia Department of Education link to the individual school report cards (https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/). A mean average of performance during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years was determined using the reported accreditation adjusted pass rates for overall school performance in the four core subjects (English, mathematics, history, and science). The groups for comparison purposes were (1) low 82.2%-82.4%, (2) medium 83.4%-83.6%, and (3) high 85.2%-88.2%. It must be noted that the variance in these scores was minimal, but every attempt was made to gather a broader range of schools with a greater variance in performance. However, based on the sample collected, these were the variances applied to this study. These pre-existing differences served as the dependent variables upon the independent variables of the principal domains of leadership.

Data Collection

A web-based survey, conducted over the internet, was employed in this research. Data were collected through a survey, developed by Powell (2004), and delivered via internet teachers employment email addresses.

Electronic survey methods, including surveys through emails and the web, have emerged as innovative survey techniques. These survey methods have both advantages and disadvantages as compared to existing survey techniques. One of the strongest arguments for utilizing this method is the benefit of cost reduction. This reduction is mostly due to elimination of postage, mailing costs, and paper elimination (Dillman, 2000). Recent additions in the number of computer users have increased the use of email as a communications tool.

An online survey was linked to an introductory email which was directly delivered to respondents by the use of SurveyMonkey, an online fee-based tool for creating and collecting survey results. By clicking on the link sent with the survey, respondents could access the survey, and by clicking a submit button, the survey was submitted. Surveys were submitted once a week over a period of five weeks between March 5, 2007 and April 2, 2007.

Instrumentation

A survey was constructed to gather data respective to the research questions. This survey developed by Powell (2004), and based on the five domains or prevailing practices, was built primarily upon the conclusions and theories presented in the literature review as well as Powell's qualitative data collection. The survey consists of 65 questions within five domains: (1) Vision, Mission, and Culture, (2) Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, (3) Collaboration and Shared Leadership, (4) Family and Community Involvement, and (5) Effective Management. Within the demographic section there are two questions. Within the domain of school Vision, Mission, and Culture there are 17 questions; 15 questions under Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; eight questions within the domain of Collaboration and Shared Leadership; 15 questions under Family and Community Involvement, and 10 questions within the domain of Effective Management.

All items are Likert-scaled responses on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree with a neutral response of unsure, with one open-ended statement at the end of the survey that asks "I am attempting to identify key characteristics of successful at-risk

high schools. Please provide any thoughts or ideas that would help the researcher better understand your school and its successes."

Powell's instrument was also evaluated for instrument validity and reliability. Powell's rules for validating her study were applied. The validity of an instrument refers to the extent to which it provides data that relates to commonly accepted meaning of a particular concept (Babbie, 2005). In the summer of 2003, and prior to her study, Powell (2004) assessed the face and content validity of the survey instrument she created for appropriate domain, importance of question, and question clarity. This was completed with 13 members of a Virginia Tech Doctoral Cohort. Powell applied three rules to assess the results she received from respondents: (1) if 80% of those who responded marked Strongly Agree or Agree this is a good question, the question was used; (2) if multiple domains were selected on a question, the domain with 60% or above was used; and (3), if 33% of the respondents marked that the clarity of the question was only somewhat clear or needed revising, Powell used her professional judgment to either use the question as stated or revise it. After the initial process was completed, 76 questions remained out of the original 110, representing the five domains. Powell's final survey instrument had 16 questions representing domain 1, School Vision, Mission, and Culture; 22 questions under domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; 9 questions representing domain 3, Collaborations and Shared Leadership; 16 questions under domain 4, Family and Community Relations, and 13 questions under domain 5, Effective Management.

Powell's (2004) original survey was developed for the elementary school level. Many of the questions appeared universal in nature, but some of the items did not seem applicable to the high school population for this study. Therefore, the survey was re-

evaluated for face and content validity with 15 members of the Virginia Tech Doctoral Cohort in the fall semester of 2004, applying the same process as Powell, but with an extra statement asking respondents to assess whether they felt a question applied to the secondary level. Scrutinizing the final results and applying the same rules as Powell, the survey instrument to be used with this study was shortened to a total of 65 questions. Furthermore, Powell (2004) chose Cronbach's Alpha (α) to estimate the reliability of her data results. A reliability score of .9582 was calculated indicating high internal reliability of the instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

Online surveys were submitted beginning in March 2007, and respondents were asked to submit their responses prior to April 2, 2007. The faculty lists of each of the schools were transferred into an Excel document, numbered, and then randomly selected using a random number generator (retrieved September 23, 2006 at http://www.randomnumbergenerator.com). Three-hundred and ninety-five teachers were emailed, representing 90% of the total population of teachers in this study. They were sent an email requesting their participation with a link to the survey. Weekly reminders were sent to each teacher with a link to complete the survey. After three weeks, the response level of each school was analyzed, and the six high school principals were contacted and asked to encourage their staff's participation. Only two principals responded with a confirmation that they would correspond with their staff. SurveyMonkey required the insertion of a link allowing respondents to opt-out of the survey. Two of the respondents opted out.

A total of 169 teachers responded to the survey. This was a response rate of 39.4%. Although lower than some mail surveys, it is hard to say this response rate was due only to the online data collection method. Other factors might have included the time of the year the survey was administered. Teachers are focused on completing their respective curricula, as well as preparing students for Standards of Learning exams during the timeframe when these surveys were sent.

Furthermore, in efforts to maintain anonymity, the teachers were not contacted in any personal manner whatsoever other than their work email address. The data collected were directly imported from SurveyMonkey into a computer software version of jmp 7.0 which is desktop statistical software from SAS that is free-of-charge through Virginia Tech.

Research Questions

1. Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the schools are located?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving federal free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high)?
3. Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains of principal leadership vary significantly when schools are compared by student academic performance (low, medium, and high)?

4. Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly in each of the five domains of principal leadership when schools are compared by the percentage of minority students within the school?

Data Analysis

The results of the study were reported using descriptive and inferential statistics. Analysis and interpretation of the data followed the principles prescribed in Gay and Airasian (1996) *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application (6th ed.)* for causal-comparative analysis. These authors note that a causal comparative research study can be based on two or more groups that differ in some variable that constitutes an independent variable for a study (Gay & Airasian, 1996). The focus of this study was not only to explore the differences, but to use those differences as independent variables (school location, school SES, school performance) and determine if they significantly effected the dependent variable of teacher perceptions of their principal's leadership.

The raw scores from the survey indicated the perceptions of each participant, and these scores were subsequently grouped accordingly to answer the research questions. Means and standard deviations were determined for all responses.

Research question one examined group differences on the five domains of principal leadership when compared to the type of community in which the school was located. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine these differences. Post hoc tests (Tukey-Kramer) allowed the researcher to determine specific differences within the mean scores of the groups.

Research question two examined group differences on the five domains of principal leadership when schools were grouped according the percentage of students receiving federal lunch assistance (low SES versus high SES). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine these differences. Post hoc tests (Tukey-Kramer) allowed the researcher to determine specific differences within the mean scores of each group.

Research question three examined group difference in the same manner as question one and two, exploring the differences in each group's responses regarding their perceptions of their principal's leadership when schools were grouped according to school academic performance (low, mid-range, and high). Again, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine these differences. Post hoc tests (Tukey Kramer) allowed the researcher to determine specific differences within the mean scores of each group.

Research question four examined group difference in the same manner as questions 1-3, exploring the differences in each group's responses regarding their perceptions of their principal's leadership when schools were grouped according to school minority percentages (low, mid-range, and high). Again, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine these differences. Post hoc tests (Tukey-Kramer) allowed the researcher to determine specific differences within the mean scores of each group.

Assumptions and Limitations

An underlying assumption of this study was that principal leadership behaviors could be identified and understood using Powell's (2004) survey. It was assumed that each participant was honest, trustworthy, and able to understand and complete the instrument.

Gay and Airasian (1996) state "lack of randomization, manipulation, and control are all sources of weakness in a causal-comparative study" (p. 354). A method utilized to guard against this threat to external validity was to homogeneously group the schools with respect to the extraneous variable being tested (student SES, student academic performance, school location).

Another limitation to this study was the scope of the study. It was limited to only six schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Every effort was made to obtain more schools, but permission was granted by a limited number of schools.

The results of this study must be viewed with caution by any reader. The results reflect the perceptions of those 169 teachers who responded to the survey from six public high schools. The results may not be reflective of the perceptions of leadership in other similar high schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Because this type of study is not experimental, extraneous variables might affect the outcomes and thus provide a limited indication of cause and effect relationships.

Summary

In this study, teachers were selected to participate in this causal-comparative research to examine the relationship between school location, student SES, school performance, and their perception of their principal's leadership practices. Of the 429 teachers contacted to participate in this study, 169 agreed to participate and completed the survey. In chapter 4, the results of this study will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to compare the effects of student ethnicity, school location, school performance, and student SES to the teacher's perceptions of principal's leadership in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the schools are located?
2. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving federal free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high)?
3. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when schools are compared by student academic performance (low, mid, and high)?
4. Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when schools are compared by minority percentage (low, mid, high)?

This chapter will report the findings of research questions posed earlier. This chapter presents the characteristics of the population, characteristics of the schools, and the findings with regard to the research questions.

Population Characteristics

The number of years a teacher had been teaching in the surveyed school varied from school to school, as seen in Table 1. The majority (57.9%) selected 1-5 years of

experience within that school, while an equal number of teachers (18.3%) had 6-10 years or more than 15 years of experience within that school. So the majority of teachers surveyed had a more limited experience within their respective schools, even though they may have had 15 or more years of overall experience.

Table 1.
Years Teaching at the Study School

School	1-5 years N %	6-10 years N %	11-15 years N %	>15 years N %
School 1	17 50.0	2 5.8	1 2.9	14 41.1
School 2	25 75.7	6 18.1	2 6.0	0 0.0
School 3	19 65.5	5 17.2	0 0.0	5 17.2
School 4	14 51.8	7 25.9	2 7.4	4 14.8
School 5	4 40.0	3 30.0	1 10.0	2 20.0
School 6	19 52.7	8 22.2	3 8.3	6 16.6
All Schools	98 57.9	31 18.3	9 5.3	31 18.3

Note. N equals the sample size and the percent sign represents the percentage of the overall total.

The overall total number of years of teaching experience was collected from the sample as well. When teachers responded to this question a bivariate distribution resulted between the least number of years (1-5) of experience and the most experience (more than 15 years. These results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Total Years of Teaching Experience

School	1-5 Years N %	6-10 Years N %	11-15 Years N %	>15 Years N %
School 1	12 35.3	6 17.6	1 2.9	15 44.1
School 2	14 42.4	6 17.6	5 15.1	8 24.2
School 3	10 34.4	6 20.6	4 13.7	9 31.0
School 4	8 29.6	10 37.0	3 11.0	6 22.2
School 5	2 20.0	2 20.0	1 10.0	5 50.0
School 6	9 25.0	11 30.5	4 11.1	12 33.3
All Schools	55 32.5	41 24.2	18 10.6	55 32.5

Note. N equals the sample size and the percent sign represents the percentage of the overall total.

School level data was collected to determine groups for comparison in this study. The demographic information was located using the Virginia Department of Education website, specifically targeting the most recent available data for each school located within the State's nutrition program information for free and reduced information, the State's racial categorizations as reported by individual school districts for minority percentages, and the State's school report cards for membership, academic performance and total number of teachers. School location results were found using data from the

National Census Bureau. Definitions of school locations were located in Chapter two under definitions. Demographic information for the six schools is provided in Table 3.

Table 3.
Demographic Data of Study Schools

School	Minority %	SES% Student Total	Location	SOL Avg.	Total# Teachers
School 1	31.20%	30.00% 1,284	Rural/Inside CBSA	83.50%	101.0
School 2	62.98%	34.04% 1,333	Urban Fringe of Large City	85.12%	128.0
School 3	53.18%	31.00% 1,811	Large Central City	79.62%	114.0
School 4	60.60%	34.00% 1,508	Rural/Inside CBSA	75.75%	95.0
School 5	63.70%	41.30% 870	Small Town/Rural	83.50%	66.0
School 6	53.30%	30.00% 2,118	Urban Fringe of Large City	81.87%	142.0

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were collected on all survey items. These results are reported by the questions for each of five domains of principal leadership practices in Appendix F. The three highest means were found for survey question numbers 37, 13, and 22, and were 4.43, 4.37, and 4.31 respectively. The three lowest means were found for survey questions 17, 24, and 9, and were ranged from 2.27, 2.25, and 2.00 respectively. Item number thirty-seven “Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching curriculum” had an average mean response of 4.37, while items 13 “Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives” and 22 “Students are assessed frequently” had

average means of 4.37 and 4.31. The three lowest means ranged from a low of 2.00 for question 9, "Students participate in an extended year schedule," to 2.25 for item 24, "School staff members hold classes for parents," to 2.27 for item 17, "Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress." The standard deviations ranged from 1.330 (There is a discipline plan for student behavior that is effective) to .489 (School staff members hold classes for parents). The average mean was 3.512 and the average standard deviation was 1.099.

Inferential Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into JMP 7 software and analyzed for frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations with support provided by Johnson and Berk's manual (2000). Two-way and three-way ANOVAS were conducted to determine if there were any effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables of academic performance, school location, school percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch fees (SES), and school percentage of minority students. In order to further analyze the data, a Tukey-Kramer HSD was performed to gain clarification regarding mean averages between the groups for comparison.

Four research questions were developed to guide this investigation. The data were used to test the effects of the independent variable of principal leadership practices on the dependent variables of school location, school SES, population of minority students, and academic school performance.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared to the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the schools are located? In order to compare the schools based upon location (rural versus urban) and the five principal leadership practices, the responding schools were divided in groups based on location code and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Teachers responding from rural schools comprised forty-two percent of the respondents. The school groups comprising urban schools composed fifty-eight percent. Table 4A presents these analyses.

The analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between rural and urban schools in domain I, Mission, Vision, Culture; domain II, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction; domain III, Collaboration and Shared Leadership; and domain V, Effective Management. A Tukey-Kramer HSD analysis was done on the principal domains of leadership and urban-suburban and rural ANOVA results for those domains where significant differences were found using JMP 7software to further analyze the results. The F-Ratio can be thought of as a measure of how different the means are relative to variability within each sample. The larger the value, the greater the likelihood that the differences between the means are relative to something other than chance alone.

The Tukey-Kramer HSD is a type of test used for multiple comparisons (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). According to Johnson and Berk (2000) the Tukey-Kramer HSD uses a wider interval to compare all pairs of differences in a table, and at the alpha=0.05 levels, assures there is no more than a 5% risk that any of the comparisons are significant

Table 4A.
ANOVA Table for Rural and Urban Schools on the Leadership Domains

Leadership Domain	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
domain 1	Between Groups	17.061	1	17.061	47.328	.001*
	Within Groups	60.203	167	.3605		
	Total	77.265		168		
domain 2	Between Groups	4.649	1	4.649	22.186	.001*
	Within Groups	34.999	167	.209		
	Total	39.649		168		
domain 3	Between Groups	4.707	1	4.707	7.175	.008*
	Within Groups	109.55	167	.656		
	Total	114.265		168		
domain 4	Between Groups	.0004	1	.0004	.0014	.969
	Within Groups	49.058	167	.2937		
	Total	49.058		168		
domain 5	Between Groups	7.578	1	7.578	19.328	.0001*
	Within Groups	65.477	167	.392		
	Total	73.056		168		

p<.05

when they are not. Sall and Lehman (1996) note that when making multiple comparisons or when comparing a large number of means, it increases the chance of a type 1 error, or an error in calling something significant when it isn't. Because Tukey-Kramer HSD makes this comparison with a wider interval, it decreases the opportunity for this type of error. Table 4B shows the results from the Tukey-Kramer HSD analysis at the .05 level of significance. There was a significant difference between the group means on domains 1, 2, 3, and 5.

Table 4B.
Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of School Location Groups based on Leadership Domains

Domain	Levels	Difference	Mean Scores
1 (Mission, Vision, and Culture)	Rural Urban-Suburban	-0.26761 0.32768*	4.0767 3.5290
2 (Curriculum and Classroom Instruction)	Rural Urban-Suburban	-0.20208 0.02231*	3.9555 3.7675
3 (Collaboration and Shared Leadership)	Rural Urban-Suburban	-0.34402 0.00567*	3.6335 3.3450
5 (Effective Management)	Rural Urban-Suburban	-0.26802 0.18498*	3.8045 3.3992

p<.05

Research Question 2

Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving federal free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high)? In order to compare the schools based upon the percentage of students receiving federal free or reduced lunch rates per school and the five domains of principal leadership, the responding schools were grouped based on Virginia State Department of Education data of students receiving free or reduced lunch and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Teachers responding from schools with lower percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunches comprised seventy-five percent of the group. Those responding from schools with higher populations of students receiving free and reduced lunch populations were twenty-five percent. Table 5A presents these analyses.

Table 5A.
ANOVA Table for Student SES on the Leadership Domains

Leadership Domain	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
domain 1	Between Groups	.116	1	.116	0.252	.616
	Within Groups	77.149	167	.461		
	Total	77.265		168		
domain 2	Between Groups	.003	1	.003	.013	.906
	Within Groups	39.646	167	.237		
	Total	39.649		168		
domain 3	Between Groups	1.902	1	1.902	2.827	.094
	Within Groups	112.362	167	.672		
	Total	114.265		168		
domain 4	Between Groups	2.084	1	2.084	7.409	.007*
	Within Groups	46.974	167	.281		
	Total	49.058		168		
domain 5	Between Groups	.1252	1	.125	.286	.593
	Within Groups	72.931	167	.436		
	Total	73.056		168		

p<.05

The analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between low SES groups and high SES groups in domain 4, Family and Community Involvement. A Tukey-Kramer HSD was performed in domain 4 to compare the means. Table 5B reports this analysis.

Table 5B.
Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of Student SES Groups based on Leadership Domains

Domain	Levels	Differences	Mean Scores
4 (Family and Community Involvement)	Low SES	0.07004*	3.103
	High SES	-0.22582	3.358

p<.05

There was a significant difference between the group means on domain 4, Family and Community Involvement, and no significant differences between the groups on all other domains.

Research Question 3

Do teacher's perceptions of principals in each of the five domains vary significantly when groups of schools are compared by their performance on the Standards of Learning exams (low, medium, and high)? In order to compare the schools based upon student academic performance on the Standards of Learning exams and the five domains of principal leadership, the responding schools were grouped based on Virginia State Department of Education data, specifically using the State Report Cards from the 2005-2006 school year and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Teachers responding from groups representing schools classified as low-performance comprised 37.8 percent. Teachers responding from groups representing schools classified as middle-range performance comprised 26.0 percent, and those groups representing high performance schools comprised 36.6 percent. Tables 6A represent these analyses.

Table 6A.
ANOVA Table for Student Academic Performance on the Leadership Domains

Leadership Domain	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
domain 1	Between Groups	9.905	2	4.952	12.204	.0001*
	Within Groups	67.360	166	0.405		
	Total	77.265		168		
domain 2	Between Groups	1.448	2	0.724	3.146	0.045*
	Within Groups	38.201	166	0.230		
	Total	39.649		168		
domain 3	Between Groups	2.948	2	1.474	2.1985	.114
	Within Groups	111.316	166	0.670		
	Total	114.265		168		
domain 4	Between Groups	1.794	2	0.897	3.152	.045*
	Within Groups	47.263	166	0.284		
	Total	49.058		168		
domain 5	Between Groups	5.898	2	2.949	7.289	.0009*
	Within Groups	67.157	166	0.404		
	Total	73.056		168		

p<.05

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences between low, medium, and high performing schools in domains 1, 2, 4, and 5. There was no significant difference between the groups on domain 3, Collaboration and Shared Leadership. A Tukey-Kramer HSD was performed on this research question as well, in order to further analyze and summarize the differences in the means. Table 6B demonstrates these results.

Table 6B shows the results from the Tukey-Kramer HSD analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. There was a significant difference between the group means on domains 1, 2, 4, and 5. There was no significant difference between the group means of domain 3, Collaboration and Shared Leadership.

Table 6B.
Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of Student Academic Performance Groups based on Leadership Domains

Domain	Levels	Differences	Mean Scores
domain 1 (Mission, Vision, and Culture)	Low	0.21822*	3.562
	Medium	-0.32119*	4.076
	High	0.28478*	3.494
domain 2 (Curriculum and Classroom Instruction)	Low	-0.08241	3.815
	Medium	-0.24188*	3.955
	High	0.01358*	3.718
domain 4 (Family and Community Involvement)	Low	-0.22484*	3.299
	Medium	-0.06664	3.118
	High	0.00383*	3.069
domain 5 (Effective Management)	Low	-0.32071	3.333
	Medium	0.04190*	3.804
	High	0.17567*	3.466

$p<.05$

Research Question 4

Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when schools are compared by minority percentage (low, medium, high)?

The data used for this analysis was gathered from the Virginia Department of Education website which provides census data for each school. The reported data includes the total populations of the different ethnic groups which comprise the schools' student body. An average was gathered by dividing the total number of minority students which included the following groups: American Indian, Asian, Black, and Hispanic by the total population of the school. The schools selected clustered into three groups: low (schools

with 30-33% minority students), mid (schools with 50-53% minority students), and high (schools with 60-63% minority students).

To determine whether a significant difference existed between the three groups as they relate to the domains of principal behaviors and practices, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. To be able to infer the results from the sample population to the entire population, the following steps were completed.

The first step was to compare the output of the procedure to the alpha level of 0.05. Table 7A demonstrates the results of this procedure. When comparisons were made with the five levels of significance to the alpha level of 0.05, it was determined that the level of significance was less for all five domains. Based on this comparison, it can be said that minority student percentages and the teachers' perceptions of principal leadership had significant relationships.

Table 7A.
ANOVA Table for Minority Percentages on the Leadership Domains

Leadership Domain	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
domain 1	Between Groups	16.073	2	8.036	21.80	.0001*
	Within Groups	61.192	166	0.368		
	Total	77.265		168		
domain 2	Between Groups	4.389	2	2.194	10.33	.0001*
	Within Groups	35.260	166	0.212		
	Total	39.649		168		
domain 3	Between Groups	6.549	2	3.274	5.04	.0075*
	Within Groups	107.716	166	0.648		
	Total	114.265		168		
domain 4	Between Groups	2.558	2	1.279	4.56	.0117*
	Within Groups	46.499	166	0.280		
	Total	49.058		168		
domain 5	Between Groups	7.473	2	3.736	9.45	.0001*
	Within Groups	65.583	166	0.395		
	Total	73.056		168		

$p<.05$

Table 7B shows the results from the Tukey-Kramer HSD analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. There was a significant difference between the group means on all five of the leadership domains.

Table 7B.
Tukey-Kramer HSD Mean Score Comparisons for all pairs of Minority Percentage Groups based on Leadership Domains

Domain	Levels	Differences	Mean Scores
1	Low	-0.34825	4.07
	Mid	-0.05168	3.29
	High	0.46875*	3.82
2	Low	-0.26436	3.96
	Mid	0.12460*	3.93
	High	-0.19035	3.61
3	Low	-0.33122	3.52
	Mid	0.09520*	3.17
	High	-0.32202	3.59
4	Low	-0.00423	3.05
	Mid	0.02996*	3.06
	High	-0.21157	3.31
5	Low	-0.036053	3.85
	Mid	0.25818*	3.28
	High	0.00514*	3.54

p<.05

Table 7B shows the results from the Tukey-Kramer HSD analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. There was a significant difference between the group means on all five of the leadership domains.

Summary

The mean averages for teacher perceptions of their principal's leadership were gathered through an online survey. A series of ANOVAS was conducted to determine whether a significant difference in mean scores existed on the domains of leadership when schools were clustered according to similar characteristics. An overall summary of the individual school mean results seemed necessary to compare these mean scores between each school to append any existing correlations between the groups. Correlations

based upon mean results did appear between the positive perceptions of principal leadership reported by teachers in schools located in rural locations. Table 8 shows these results.

Table 8.
Summary Chart for Comparison of Means between Schools

School (POP)	SES (%)	Type	Academic (%)	Ethnicity (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	N[b]
School 1[a] 1,284	L	R	M	L	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.8	34
School 2 1,333	H	U	H	H	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.4	33
School 3 1,811	L	U	H	H	3.3	3.6	3.3	2.7	3.5	29
School 4[a] 1,508	H	R	L	H	4.0	4.1	3.6	3.2	3.7	27
School 5[a] 870	H	R	M	H	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.3	3.6	10
School 6	L	U	L	M	3.2	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.0	36

Note. "L" denotes low range or low percentages, "M" denotes mid-range or mid-percentages, and "H" denotes high range or high percentages.
[a]The three rural schools demonstrated more positive perceptions of principal leadership and are shown in red and underlined along with the highest mean averages.
[b]N represents the total population surveyed within the school for a total of 169.

Chapter 4 presented the data derived from the survey responses of 169 teachers out of 429 who responded for a 39.4% return rate. The data analysis was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and to compare these schools when grouped according to school location, ethnicity, SES and academic performance.

A series of ANOVAs and Tukey-Kramer HSD post-hoc analyses at the .05 level were conducted to analyze the data according to school location, ethnicity, SES, and academic performance in relation to teacher's perceptions of principal leadership. It was

evident that these perceptions varied at different levels and in different ways between the two groups. These differences will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RESEARCH FINDINGS

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of the moderating factors of school location (rural and urban), school SES (low and high), school minority percentages (low and high), and academic performance (low, mid-range, and high), on the five leadership domains in this study. Using statistical procedures, comparisons were made between these factors and the five domains. A summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research and practice follow. Principals work in an environment in which there are many contextual factors that may also contribute to the overall success or failure of students. These particular factors have been studied as pre-existing factors affecting student achievement, and pre-existing factors affecting principal leadership.

As No Child Left Behind legislation sets the mark of designated pass rates for all subgroups, it seemed reasonable and appropriate to include the contextual factor of students SES populations. As schools continue to close the gap between minorities and nonminorities, it was reasonable to include minority populations as a contextual factor. The addition of rural versus urban was not initially a contextual factor, but the location of the schools justified the need for exploring this contextual factor. Finally, academic performance was explored as a contextual factor comparing schools with low, medium, and high academic performance on the Standards of Learning Exams in Virginia.

The population for this study consisted on 169 teachers located in six public high schools in the State of Virginia. Data was gathered in the spring of the 2006-2007 school year. Several ANOVA and post-hoc tests were used to identify significant differences between all comparison groups on the domains of leadership.

Significant differences between comparison groups were shown on different domains within each of the groups compared. The findings of this study were interesting. Within each of the leadership domains, the effect of comparing schools on the basis of diverse school-based contextual factors demonstrated a variety of significant differences on the five domains. The findings are presented in order of the research questions. The five domains explored in this study included: (a) domain 1, Mission, Vision, and Culture; (b) domain 2, Classroom and Curriculum Instruction; (c) domain 3, Collaboration and Shared Leadership; (d) domain 4, Family and Community Involvement, and (d) domain 5, Effective Management. The research questions that guided this study were: (1) Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by the type of community (rural versus urban) in which the school is located? (2) Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high student SES)? (3) Do teachers' perceptions of principals vary significantly when groups of schools are compared by their performance on the Standards of Learning exams (low-range, mid-range, and high-range)? (4) Do teacher's perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly when schools are compared by minority percentage (low, mid, high)?

Findings

Research Question 1

Do teachers perceptions of principal leadership in each of the five domains vary significantly when compared by school location (rural versus urban)?

Finding 1*: Visibility of the principal was a positive component of domain 1, Mission, Vision, and Culture, regardless of school location.*

An F ratio of 47.32 indicated a significant difference between the two groups on domain 1. On domain 1, Mission, Vision, and Culture, both rural and urban groups were in lowest agreement with item (45), *The principal visits classrooms frequently*, with 65.0% of the rural group responding strongly agree or agree and 33.6% of the urban group responding strongly agree or agree on this item. However, item (62), *The principal is seen frequently throughout the building*, showed that the rural group strongly agreed or agreed 89.6% of the time, while the urban group strongly agreed or agreed 55.0% of the time. This indicated that while principals in all six schools may not have been seen frequently in the classrooms, they were frequently seen in the building. From this researcher's experience at the secondary level, this may be more common at the high school, as the high school principal may not be in classrooms as frequently, due to the sheer size and number of classrooms and teachers in a high school, but still understands the importance of being visible throughout the building.

The literature is concordant with the significant role of visibility for a principal to effectively run a school. Barth (1981) addressed visibility noting the need for mutual visibility and interdependence—allowing teachers and principals to develop "personal and professional associations" (p. 150). Students as well give high marks to principals

who make themselves accessible and visible as well, be it in the hallways or classrooms (Kojimoto, 1987). Visibility demonstrates personal commitment (Kellison, 2007), and can play an important role in the perceived effectiveness of a principal as well (Blaise, & Kirby, 2000). Visibility offers the principal the opportunity to model appropriate behavior and decision-making to students as well as staff (Whitaker, 1997), and has been shown to boost academic performance of students (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Thus, visibility was considered an important component of principal leadership according to teacher perceptions in domain 1, Mission, Vision, and Culture, regardless of school location.

Finding 2*: High school principals have established assessment and a focus on SOL objectives as an integral part of classroom instruction.*

An F ratio of 22.18 indicated a significant difference between the rural and urban groups. When rural and urban groups were compared on domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, the results revealed the rural group most frequently agreed with item (15), *Teachers frequently assesses students on SOL objectives*, with 100% of the group responding strongly agree or agree. The urban group most frequently agreed with item (39), *Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching curriculum*, with 98.0% of the group responding strongly agree or agree. This significant level of agreement indicated principals within the study high schools have created an environment focused on instruction.

The literature indicates the significant role of the principal as the instructional leader. In a study conducted in over 200 schools with over 2,500 teachers, Andrews, et al. (1986) and Andrews and Soder (1987) found that high achieving schools were positively

correlated with strong instructional leaders. Schools that have high student achievement not only have a principal who has a mission for the school, but also has a vision of what the school can become. They also have a way of getting others to accept that vision as their own and then acting on it for school improvement and student achievement (Marzano, 2005). However, within schools as large as high schools, a principal's influence as an instructional leader on student achievement is likely indirect (Hallinger, 2003).

When principals treat teachers as professionals, demonstrating trust and confidence in the work that they do, maintaining a comfortable and caring environment, demonstrating a willingness to allow teacher's to take risks, and to take risks themselves, student achievement is likely to increase (Chapman, 1998). Overall positive perception within all school groups may also be attributed to a principal's increased level of knowledge, curriculum, and assessment, and their involvement with curriculum, instruction, and assessment. If the school leaders in this study have become more directly involved in helping teachers design curricular activities, address assessment and instructional issues, and possess extensive knowledge about effective curricular, instructional, and assessment practices, and are providing guidance regarding effective classroom practices, then an increased academic performance should result from these efforts as well (Marzano et al., 2005). However, it is not enough to have the knowledge, skills, and resources to bring about positive change in student academic achievement. The reality of the current state of accountability in high schools is data-driven decision making for continued refinement of instructional methods. Schmhoker (1999) contends that schools need to move away from continually adopting innovations and instead

collectively focus on goals and regularly measure the impact of the methods applied. Finally, Sergiovanni (2004) states that educators must also have a heart, a passion for teaching and learning, and a feeling for what's right for children. Based upon the positive results of this study, these esoteric skills are likely present; however, they were not measured in this study.

Finding 3*: Principals need to focus staff development opportunities around curriculum and instruction.*

Further item analysis within domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, indicated that the next lowest agreement level for both groups was item (50), *Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development*. This indicated that the teacher's perceptions regarding staff development may need to be more focused on curriculum needs. National studies have revealed that this lack of focused and relevant professional development is most often due to lack of funds, lead time, planning, and expertise (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000).

Finding 4*: Principals in rural schools were perceived as being more collaborative than in urban schools.*

An F ratio of 7.18 indicated significant differences between the two groups on domain 3, Collaboration and Shared Leadership. On domain 3, Collaboration and Shared Leadership, responses seemed to reveal several differences between the two school groups, rural and urban. The urban schools' agreement within this domain varied with a 14.3% difference for item (5), *Teachers are leaders in this school*, with 72.0% responding strongly agree or agree in the urban schools compared to 86.3% responding strongly agree to agree in the rural schools. There was a 33.3% difference on item (57)

The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources with 44.0% responding strongly agree or agree in the urban schools and 86.6% responding strongly agree or agree in the rural schools.

Gerstner and O'Day (1994) suggest that "Shared leadership is a cultural phenomenon, inextricably linked with the values and customs of a group of people" (p. 123). This link may be a stronger attribute within the rural schools as two of the three rural schools are the only high schools located within their respective jurisdictions. This would likely create stronger associations as these individuals would possibly have more intimate knowledge and relationships with teachers, students, and community than their urban counterparts. The more positive effects from the rural schools could simply be a result of closer community relationships and smaller high schools that many rural communities enjoy and support.

Finding 5: *It is difficult for principals to hire minority teachers to support having a diverse staff that might reflect the diversity of the student body.*

An F ratio of 19.32 indicated significant differences on domain 5, Effective Management. On domain 5, Effective Management, both rural and urban groups indicated item (49), *The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body*, as the item they least agreed too. This isn't necessarily an issue of urban versus rural; rather, it is a part of a larger national trend of a limited number of minorities available to hire or selected for hiring into the teaching profession (Shure, 2001). Minority teachers may also serve a strong role within schools that are majority white as well providing diversity as well as appreciation for different cultures.

Research Question 2

Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly when compared by the number of students receiving free or reduced rate lunches (low versus high student SES)?

Finding 6*: Perceptions of communication with family members are more positive in low SES percentage schools than in higher SES percentage schools and, thus, the low SES percentage schools perceive a more positive climate for families.*

The Post- Hoc results indicated that teachers in schools with high percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunch rates have a more positive perception of their principal's leadership (Mean of 3.35 versus 3.10) within this domain than the school group with low percentages of students receiving free and reduced lunch rates. Further comparisons of the two groups on domain 4 revealed that the low SES% group most frequently agreed with item (56), *Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress*, with 93.0% responding strongly agree or agree to a low of 6.0% responding strongly agree or agree to item (26), *School staff members hold classes for parent.* The high SES% group most frequently agreed with item (41), *Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English*, with 90% responding strongly agree or agree to a low of 9.0% responding strongly agree to agree to item (26), *School staff members hold classes for parents*.

Within the schools reporting a higher percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, the perceptions of teachers were more positive about their individual principal's leadership in the domain of Family and Community Involvement. From this researcher's perspective, this would indicate that the principals within these schools may

be doing a better job of communicating and working with family members to meet the needs of students. Principals need to understand the dynamics of the neighborhoods in which their schools are located and the opportunities and challenges presented by the conditions within their communities (Manning & Rodriguez, 2000). Manning and Kovach (2003) point out that economic inequality in the United States is a dimension of the achievement gap, but note "growing evidence from schools across the nation shows poverty and race do not have to be impediments to high achievement" (p. 34).

The limited effect of SES percentage on the domains of Leadership may have been the result of minimal variance between the two groups. The low percentage SES group was 30-34% SES. The high SES group was 41-43%. It is possible that a greater significance between the two groups may have occurred had there been greater variance.

Research Question 3

Do teachers' perceptions of principals vary significantly when groups of schools are compared by their performance on the Standards of Learning exams (low-range, mid-range, and high-range)?

Finding 7: *On domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, a culture of teaching and learning was established by the principal in all three academic performance groups.*

Results were analyzed using a five by three ANOVA, between subjects design. The analysis for this research question revealed a significant effect for domains 1, 2, 4, and 5, F (1, 167), for domain 1, Mission, Vision, and Culture, $F = 12.20$; $p<.0001$; domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, $F = 3.14$, $p<.045$; domain 4, Family and Community Involvement, $F = 2.19$; $p<.045$; domain 5, Effective Management, $F =$

7.28, $p<.0009$. A Tukey Post-Hoc was conducted on each category where a significant difference was detected.

Further comparisons of all three groups on domain 2, Curriculum and Classroom Instruction, indicated that on items (15), *Teacher's frequently assess students on SOL objectives,* (33), *Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction,* and item (39), *Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum,* 80% or greater marked strongly agree or agree in all three groups studied. In each of the academic groups the highest level of agreement focused on either assessment or a focus on the objectives of the Virginia Standards of Learning. These findings confirmed the findings in the literature review. Achievement information can be useful for program improvement by providing teachers with the opportunities to reflect on the impact of their teaching and the degree to which students have met their goals (Guskey, 2000). Various studies have found that when schools have clear goals and standards of student performance, and teachers are provided with the opportunities to analyze and review information to inform themselves about their levels of success with their students in reaching those standards, achievement improves (Newmann, King, & Rigdon, 1997; Grogan, 2001).

Finding 8: *Principal's support of the school discipline plan was perceived as more supportive in the mid-range academic performance schools than in the low- and high-range academic performance schools.*

Further comparisons of all three groups on domain 5, Effective Management, found that the mid-range academic performance schools had an average of 20% more teachers who indicated strongly agree or agree on item (29), *The principal supports the schools discipline plan,* than the low- and high-range academic performance groups.

Additionally, the mid range academic performance schools had an average of 81.0% of teachers indicate strongly agree or agree on item (66), *There is a discipline plan for student behavior that is effective,* while the high range academic performance schools had an average of 53.5% of teachers indicate they strongly agreed or agreed with item (66). The low range academic performance schools had an average of 40.5% of teachers indicate strongly agree or agree on item (66).

Results for this finding are not fully consistent with the literature. It would seem logical that a school with a discipline plan that is effective and supported administratively would potentially be more academically successful. Indeed, established routines generally lead to the effective operation of a school. Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2005) indicate that order has a .25 correlation to student academic achievement. Marzano et.al, (2005) define order as "An established set of standard operating procedures and routines" (p. 43). These established procedures provide coherence for students that they might understand the established policies, norms, and practices within the school.

The literature review indicated the significant role the principal can play as an effective manager as well. Kotter (1999) maintained that leadership is the force behind successful change, and management is the force behind maintaining the status quo. Sergiovanni (1994) said that principals must lead by following, serving, and inviting others to share in the burdens of leadership. Morris (1999) indicated that educational leaders must have the ability to know the staff and successfully utilize staff members' resources. Levine and Lezotte (1990) said that effective leaders must supervise instructional practices, support teachers, have high energy, and effectively select and

replace teachers. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) suggested that effective leaders must provide teachers with the materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs.

Research Question 4

Do teachers' perceptions of principal leadership vary significantly when schools are compared by minority percentage (low, mid, high)?

Finding 9: *High school teachers perceive parent involvement as infrequent in the school, but believe their efforts to communicate with parents is frequent and strong.*

Analysis of the individual frequencies of item responses between the groups revealed attendance by parents at conferences or in after-school programs was perceived as infrequent by teachers in all three groups, while communication with parents was perceived as frequent and strong. This is concurrent with literature conducted by Epstein (2001) which reported large numbers of parents as having been excluded from the most common forms of communication with the school. Epstein (2001) concluded that (a) more than one third of all U.S. parents did not have a conference with a teacher during the school year, (b) over half of the parents had never spoken with a teacher by telephone, and (c) most parents reported that they had never been involved in deep or frequent conversations with teachers about their children's progress or programs. As if this were not disconcerting enough, Zill and Nord (1987) reported that as children grow older, parent involvement begins to decrease at home and school.

Conclusions

This study indicated that the variety of cultures and school contextual factors appeared to have some effect, or at minimum, detected differences in the perceptions of

leadership within public high schools. Barth (2002) noted "A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the school house than the president of the country, the state department of education, the superintendent, or the school board" (p. 13). Bates (1991) argued, "It is culture that gives meaning to life. Culture is the framework that connects beliefs, values, and knowledge with action in schools" (p. 25). Inherent in this study was the fact that every school culture was different, and yet every principal in this study was also required to meet the same state standards of performance, and each teacher is vital for the provision of necessary skills and learning opportunities for students to meet these standards.

Every principal must recognize and understand his or her own culture or the contextual factors that may influence the success of the school. As Barth (2002) stated "Show me a school where instructional leaders constantly examine the school's culture and work to transform it into one hospitable to sustained student learning, and I'll show you students who do just fine on those standardized tests" (p. 11).

Implications

In a comparison of this study with the implications listed by Powell (2004) in her elementary study utilizing the same survey, and Pamas (2006) study at the middle school level, common implications were identified across all three levels (elementary, middle, and high). The common implications identified were based upon the mean score results that were less that 3.50. These scores imply areas of improvement for principals to focus. They include:

- Principals need to visit classes more frequently (elementary, middle, and high school).

- Principals in at-risk schools must provide a welcoming culture that is supportive and inviting and be a partner to his or her community (elementary, middle, and high).
- Collaboration and shared leadership give teachers ownership of student success (middle and high).
- The curriculum and classroom instruction must be the major focus of the school (middle and high).
- A principal's paramount responsibility is to be the instructional leader (elementary, middle, and high).

What this study does confirm is that leadership does play a role in the success of schools, but is influenced by the variety of contextual factors in which principals practice leadership. In the introduction of this study, a conceptual framework (figure 4) was presented utilizing a group of dotted arrows, dissimilar and of different colors for clarity, indicating the relationship between the moderating school-context factors and the five domains of leadership. Figure 3 represents a revised position that demonstrates the data revealed in this study with colored arrows representing the relationships demonstrated through the data collected in this study.

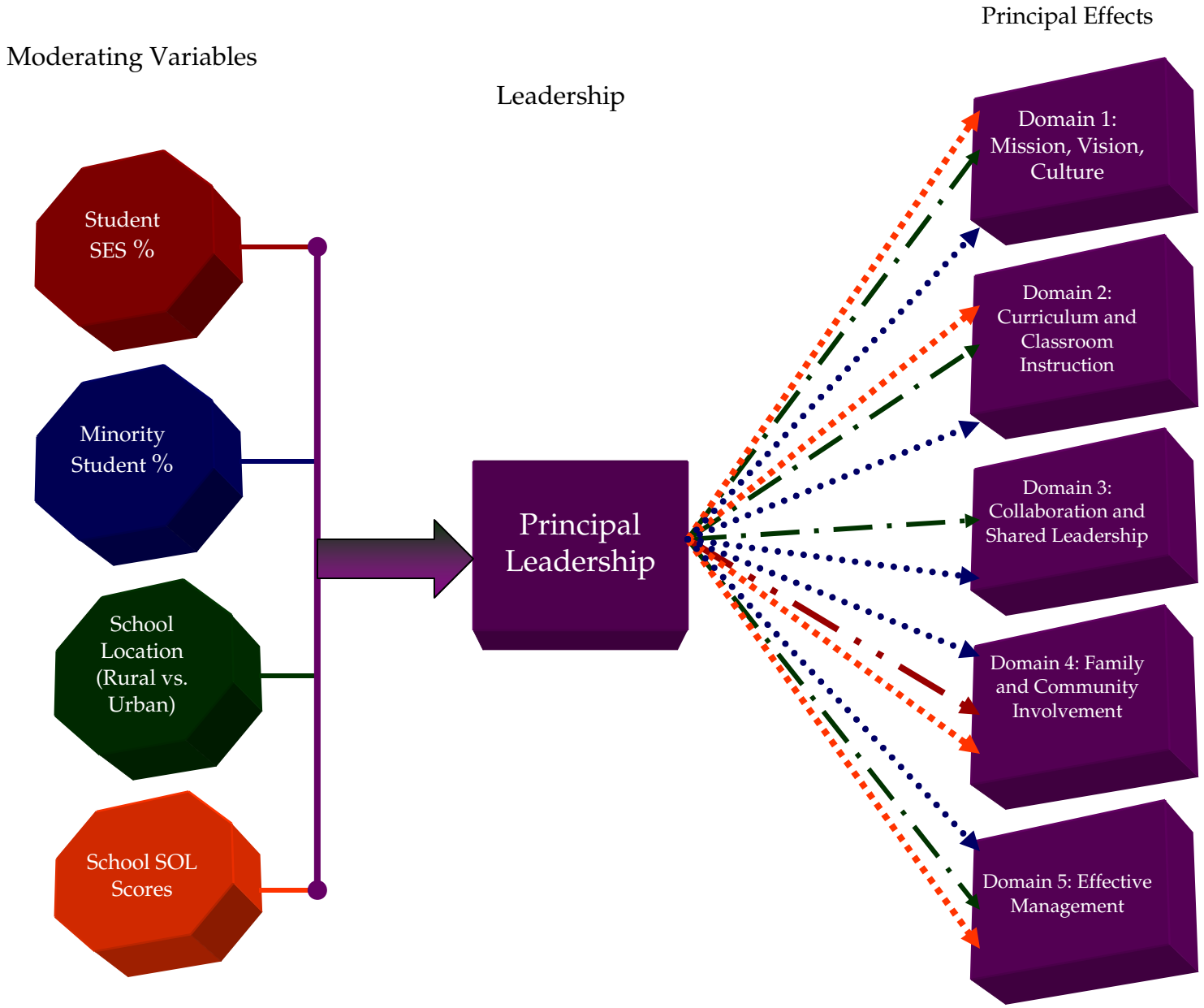

Figure 3: A Conceptual Model for Mediating Effects of Contextual Variable on Principal Leadership (Revised)

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study, supported by Powell's study (2004), and the study by Pamas (2006), provided a quantitative description of principals' behaviors and practices in six successful at-risk high schools. Based on the findings of this study and the educational literature, the following suggestions for further research may be of benefit:

1. Replicate this study to include at-risk high schools in all states with high numbers of low socioeconomic schools.
2. Conduct further studies with schools having a broad range of variance in academic performance indicators to identify differences in leadership that either contribute or do not contribute to academic success.
3. Conduct studies that would identify other contextual effects which might impact the successful practices of high school principals.
4. Conduct studies that address a broad geographic area of urban and rural Virginia high schools (i.e., Northern Virginia, Southwest Virginia) further exploring leadership practices within the context of two different school locations.
5. Conduct studies that add several continuous variables in order to conduct a path analysis between principal leadership and several contextual variables.
6. Conduct studies that explore more broadly and in more depth one particular domain from this study.

References

Anderson, B., MacDonald, D.S., & Sinneman, C. (2004). Can measurement of results help improve the performance of schools? *Phi Delta Kappa,* 85(10), 735-739.

Andrews, R., & Soder, R. (1987). Student achievement and principal leadership. *Educational Leadership,* 44(6), 9-11.

Andrews, R., Soder, R., & Jacoby, D. (1986). *Student achievement, principal leadership, and other in-school variables.* American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Babbie, E.R. (2005). *Basics of social research.* New York. Thomson Wadsworth.

Barr, R.D. & Parrett, W.H. (2001). *Hope fulfilled for at-risk and violent youth: K-12 programs that work.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Barth, R. (1981). The principal as staff developer. *Journal of Education*. 163 (2), 144 -163.

Barth, R. (2001) *Learning by heart.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Barth, R. (2001). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan.* 82(6), 443-449.

Barth, R. (2002). The Culture Builder. *Educational Leadership,* 59(8), 6-13.

Barth, R. (2006). Improving relationships within the schoolhouse. *Educational Leadership,* 63(6), 8-13.

Bates, P. (1991). Developing an equitable school culture. *Equity Coalition for race, gender, and national origin,* 2(1), 1-29.

Bennis, W. (1989). *On becoming a leader.* Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Bennis, W. (1995). Managing the dream: Leadership in the 21st century. *Training: The Magazine of Human Resource Development,* 27(5), 44-46.

Birman, B.F. Desimone, L., Porter, A.C., & Garet, M.S. (2000). Designing professional development that works. *Educational Leadership,* 57(8). 28-32.

Blaise, J. & Kirby, P.C. (2000). *What effective principals do.* Thousand Oaks, Corwin Press.

Borman, G. D. (2002). Title I: The evolution and effectiveness of compensatory education. In S. Stringfield & D. Land (Eds.), *Educating at-risk students* (231-247). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago press.

Borman, G.D. & D'Agostino, J.V. (1996). Title I and student achievement: A meta -analysis of federal evaluation results. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 4, 309-326.

Brock, K, J., & Groth, C. (2003). Becoming effective: Lesson's from one State's reform initiative in school's serving low-income students. *Journal of Education for Student's Placed At-Risk. 8(2), 167-190.*

Brodinsky, B. & Keough, K. (1989). *Students at risk: Problems and solutions.* AASA Critical issues Report. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Brosnan, M. (1997). *Against the current: How one school struggled and succeeded with at risk teens.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Castaneda, L. V. (1997). Alternative to failure: A community-based school program for Latino teens. *Education and Urban Society,* 30, 90-123.

Cavanagh, S. (2000). Voc. ed. pinched by state budgets, federal policies. *Education Week,* 23(9), 19-22.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Surveillance Summaries,* May 21, 2004.

MMWR 2004:52 (No. SS-2).

Chapman, J. B. (1998). *Professional treatment of teachers and student academic achievement.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Chavkin, N.F. (2000). Family and community involvement policies: teachers can lead the way. *The Clearing House,* 73(5), 287-290.

Clark, M.A., Shreve, K., & Stone, C.B. (2004). Taking stock in children: Collaborating to promote success for low-income secondary students. *NASSP Bulletin,* 88(641), 61 -73.

Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J, Mood, A., Weinfeld, F., & York, R. (Eds.). (1966). *Equality of Educational Opportunity.* Washington D.C. Government Printing Office.

Comer, J. (1975). Black education: A holistic view. *Urban Review,* 8(3), 162-175. F75.

Committee for Economic Development. (2000, December). *Measuring what matters most: Using assessment and accountability to improve student learning.* Retrieved March 5, 2005 from http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report_education.pdf

Corallo, C. & McDonald, D. H. (2002). *What works with low performing schools: A Review of research.* Charleston, WV: AEL, Regional Educational Laboratory, Region IVComprehensive Center.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches,* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, W.G., & Sanzo, T.D. (2002). Is high stakes testing harming lower

socioeconomic status schools? *NASSP Bulletin,* 86(631), 62-75.

Cuban, L. (2004). Meeting challenges in urban schools. *Educational Leadership,* 61(7), 64-69.

Deal, J.E., & Peterson, K. (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Desimone, L. (1999). Linking parental involvement with student achievement: Do race and income really matter? *The Journal of Educational Research,* 93(1), 11-30.

Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The tailor design method.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Donaldson, G.A. (2001). *Cultivating leadership in schools: Connecting people, purpose, and practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Dufour, R. (2001). In the right context. *Journal of Staff Development,* 22(1), 14-17.

Dufour, R. (2002). The learning principal. *Educational Leadership,* 59(8), 12-15.

Dufour, R. & Dufour, R. & Eaker, R. & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional communities at work.* Bloomington. National Educational Service.

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. *Educational Leadership,* 37(1).

Education Trust. (2001). *Youth at the crossroads: Facing high school and beyond.* 5(1). Washington D.C.: Haycock, K. Retrieved December 4, 2007 from http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/85897615-327E-4269-939A-4E14B96861BB/0/k16_winter01.pdf

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub L. No. 89-10, 79 Stat. 27 (1965).

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO. Westview Press.

Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fowler, Jr., F.J. (2002). *Survey research methods* (3rd ed. Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Gardner, J.W. (1989). The changing nature of leadership. *NASSP Bulletin,* 79, 94-97.

Gay, L.R. & Airasian, P. (1996). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application.* 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Merrill

Girstner, C. & O'Day, D. (1994). Cross-cultural comparison of leadership prototypes. *Leadership Quarterly,* 5, 121-134.

Government gives State education failing mark. (2007, August 23). *Richmond Times -Dispatch, p. A7.*

Gray, W.S. (1934). Evidence of the need of capable instructional leadership. *The Elementary School Journal,* 34(6), 417-426.

Green, R.L. (2007). New paradigms in school relationships: Collaboration to enhance student achievement. *Education.* 121(4), 737-742.

Grogan, M. (2001). Positive and not-so-positive effects of preparing students to pass standards of learning tests in Virginia's high school classrooms. *NASSP Bulletin.* 85(6), 24.

Guskey, T. R. (2003). How classroom assessments improve learning. *Educational Leadership,* 60(3), 6-11.

Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K. (1996). *What makes a difference? School*

context, principal leadership and student achievement. The National Center for Educational Leadership, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. (1996a). Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness: a review of empirical research, 1980–1995, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 32(1), pp. 5–44.

Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. (1996b). The principal's role in school effectiveness: a review of methodological issues, 1980–95, in: Leithwood, K., Chapman, J. Corson, D., Hallinger, P. & Weaver-Hart, L. (Eds). *The International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration* (Dordrecht, Netherlands, Kluwer).

Hallinger, P., Leithwood, K. (1998). Unseen forces: The impact of social culture on school leadership. *PJE. Peabody Journal of Education.* 73(2), 126-152.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education.* 33(3), 329-351.

Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2004). The seven principals of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership.* 61(7), 8-13.

Harris, A., & Lambert, L. (2003). *Building leadership capacity for school improvement.* Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Heck, R. (1992). Principal's instructional leadership and school performance: Implications for policy development. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis.* 14(2). 21-34.

Heck, R., Larsen, T., & Marcoulides, G. (1990). Instructional leadership and school achievement: Validation of a causal model. *Educational Administration Quarterly.*

26. 94-125.

Hinson, S. L., Spradlin, L. K., & Welsh, L. A. (2000). Exploring African American academic achievement: Ogbu and Brookover perspectives. *Journal of African American Men, 5(1), 17-32.*

Hoerr, T. (2008). What is instructional leadership? *Educational Leadership.* 65(4), 84-85.

Holcomb, E.L. (2004). *Getting excited about data: Combining people, passion, and proof to maximize student achievement (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Hord, S. (1997). Professional learning communities: What they are and why they are important. *Issues about Change,* 6(1). Austin, TX. Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory, 1-8.

Huffman, K.A. & Hipp, J.B. (2000). *How leadership is shared and visions emerge in the creation of learning communities.* American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED446359)

Johnson, T. & Berk, K.N. (2000). *Data analysis with JMP IN 4.* Pacific Grove, CA: Duxbury Thompson Learning

Kannapel, P.J., & Clements, S.K. (2005). *Inside the black box of high performing, high poverty schools:* Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence.

Kantrowitz, B., & Mathews, J., (2007). The role of the principal. *Newsweek.* 3(28). www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18754330

Kellison, M. (2007). Transforming a school into a community. *Principal.* 86(5), 58-59.

Killion, J. (2002). *Assessing impact: evaluating staff development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Kojimoto, C. (1987). The kids eye view of effective principals. *Educational Leadership,*

45(1), 69-74.

Kotter, J.P. (1990). *A Force for change: How leadership differs from management.* New York: The Free Press.

Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (1995). *The Leadership Challenge: How to get extraordinary things done in an organization* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Lambert, L. (2005). What does leadership capacity really mean? *Journal of Staff Development,* 26(2), 38-40.

Land, D. & Legters, N. (2002). The extent and consequences of risk in U.S. education. In S. Stringfield & D. Land (Eds.), *Educating at-risk students* (1-28). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago press.

Lapkoff, S. & Li, R.M., (2007). Five trends for schools. *Educational Leadership.* 64(6), p. 8-15.

Lashway, L. (2002). Data analysis for school improvement. *National Association of Elementary School Principals.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.ED471876) Levine, D.U., & Lezotte, L.W. (1990). Unusually effective schools: A review and analysis of research and practice. Madison, WI: *National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.ED330032)

Lovely, S.D. (2005). Making the leap to shared leadership. *Journal of Staff Development,* 26(2), 16-21.

Manning, J.B. & Kovach, J.A. (2003). The continuing challenges of excellence and equity. In B. Williams (Ed.), *Closing the achievement gap: A vision for changing*

beliefs and practices (pp. 25-47). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Manning, J.B., & Rodriguez, L (2000). *Community for learning: Connecting with community services.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Manning, M.L., &Baruth, L.G. (1995) *Students at risk*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action.* Alexandria, VA.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* Alexandria, VA. ASCD.

Mehan, H., Villanueva, I., Hubbard, L., & Lintz, A. (1996). *Constructing school success: The consequences of un-tracking low-achieving students*. Boston, MA: Cambridge University press.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub I No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) (2001). *At-Risk.* Retrieved February 28, 2005, from http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/atrisk/at5def.htm

O'Donnell, R.J. & White, G.P. (2005). Within the accountability era: Principal's instructional leadership behaviors and student achievement. *NASSP Bulletin,* 89(645), 56-71.

Owens, R.G. (2004). *Organizational behavior in education: Adaptive leadership and school reform (8th ed.).* Boston: Pearson.

Pamas, R. (2006) *Leadership and school success: The behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk middle schools.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic and State University.

Portin, B., Schneider, P., DeArmond, M. (2003). Making sense of leading schools: A study of the school principalship. *Journal of Education,* 184(1), 57-68.

Powell, S. (2004). *Leadership and school success: The behaviors and practices of principals in successful at-risk schools*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic and State University.

Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence. (2005, February). *Inside the black box of high-performing high-poverty schools* (Retrieved on February 28, 2005, from http://www.prichardcommittee.org/Ford%20Study/FordReportJE.pdf. Lexington, KY.

Purkey, S.C., & Smith, M.S. (1983). Effective schools: A review. *The Elementary School Journal.* 83(4), 426-452.

Richardson, M.D., Lane, K.E., & Flanigan, J.L. (1996). Teachers' perceptions of principals' attributes. *The Clearing House,* 69, 290-292.

Richardson, V., Casanova, U., Placier, P., & Guilfoyle, K. (1989). *School children at -risk.* Philadelphia PA: The Falmer Press.

Sagor, R. (1993). *At-risk students, reaching and teaching them.* Massachusetts: Waterspun Publishing Company Inc.

Sanders, M.G. (2000). *Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy, and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents.* Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sanders, M.G. & Harvey, A. (2002). Beyond the school walls: A case study of principal leadership for school-community collaboration. *Teachers College Record,* 104(7), 1345-1368.

Schmoker, M. (1999). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement, second edition.* Alexandria, Va. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schonlau, M., Fricker, R.D.J., & Elliott, M.N. (2002) *Conducting research surveys via email and the web.* Santa Monica: Rand.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (2004). *The lifeworld of leadership: Creating culture, community, and personal meaning in our schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (2005). *Strengthening the heartbeat: Leading and learning together in schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Short, P.M., & Greer, J.T. (2002). *Leadership in empowered schools.* Upper Saddle River, NJ. Merrill Prentice-Hall.

Shure, J.L. (2001). Minority teachers are few and far between. *Connecting education and careers,* 76(5), 18-22.

Spillane, J.P. (2005). Distributed leadership. *The Educational Forum,* 69, 143-150.

Sunderman, G.L., & Orfield, G. (2007). Do states have the capacity to meet NCLB mandates? *Phi Delta Kappan,* 89(2), 137-139.

Tanner, T. & McLeod, K. (2006). Educational leadership challenges: What principals say concerns them about their job. *International Journal of Learning,* 13(1), 19-23.

Terozzi, G.N. The principalship: School reform's missing imperative. *Education Week,* 48, 6.

Thornton, B, & Perreault, G. (2002). Becoming a databased leader: An introduction. *NASSPBulletin,* 86(630), 86-96.

United States Census Bureau. (2003). *Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in*

the United States: 2004. Retrieved September 23, 2007 from http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p60-226.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (1992). *National Adult Literacy Survey (NCES 2001).* Washington D.C.: Author. D.C.: Kirsch, Yamamoto, Norris, Rock, Jungeblut, & O'Reilly (Eds.). Retrieved, December 4, 2007, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001457_1.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *The condition of education (NCES 2000-062).* Washington D.C.: Author.

U.S. Department of Education (2007). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic minorities (NCES 2007-039).* Washington D.C. Retrieved December 4, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/minoritytrends/

U.S. Department of Education (2007). *Status of education in rural America (NCES 2007 -040).* Washington D.C. Retrieved December 4, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/ruraled/exhibit_a.asp

Virginia Code § 22.1-215.5B (2004). Retrieved March 7, 2005, from http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+22.1-212.5

Virginia Department of Education. (N.D.). Retrieved February 23, 2007 from http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/ForStudents/diploma-std.pdf

Virginia Department of Education (2001). Retrieved December 4, 2007, from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/suptsmemos/2002/inf010a.pdf

Walker, A. & Dimmock, C. (2005). Leading the multiethnic school: Research evidence on successful practice. *The Educational Forum,* 69(3), 291-303.

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30*

years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning.

Waters, J.T., Marzano, R.J., & McNulty, B.A. (2004). Leadership that sparks learning. *Educational Leadership,* 61(7), 48-51.

Weber, G. (1971). *Inner city children can be taught to read: Four successful schools.* Washington D.C. Council for basic Education.

Weissboard, R. (2003). Moral teachers, moral students. *Educational Leadership,* 60(6), 6-11.

Wells, S. (1990). *At-risk youth: Identification, programs, and recommendations.* Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.

Winerup, M. (2003). *New York Times,* September 3, 2003.

Whitaker, B. (1997). Instructional leadership and principal visibility. *Clearing House*, 70(3), 155-156.

Zill, N., & Nord, C.W. (1994). *Running in place: How American families are faring in a changing economy and an individualistic society.* Washington D.C.: Child Trends Inc.

Zimmerman, J.A. & May, J.J. (2003). Providing effective professional development: What's holding us back? *American Secondary Education,* 31(2), 37-40

Appendix A
Permission to Conduct Study

Office of Research Compliance
1880 Pratt Drive (0497) Blacksburg,
Virginia 24061 5401231-4358 Fax:
540/231-0959
E-mail: ctgreen@vt.edu
www.irb.vt.edu
FWA00000572(expires 7/20/08)
IRB # is IRB00000667.

DATE: October 12, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Walt Mallory
Scot Turner

FROM: Carmen Green

SUBJECT: IRB Exempt Approval: "Behaviors and Practices of Principals in Successful At-Risk Public High Schools" , IRB # 06-514

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. Approval is granted effective as of October 12, 2006.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.

2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

cc: File

Appendix B

Letter Requesting Participation

Dear (personalize):

As a doctorate candidate at Virginia Tech, my dissertation will address the relationship between the prevailing practices of school principals in successful at-risk public high schools across the State of Virginia.

There is no doubt that you have played a significant role in the success of your school. The professional literature on this subject indicates there are five areas of prevailing practices related to student achievement: (a) vision, mission, and culture; (b) curriculum and instruction; (c) collaboration and shared leadership; (d) family and community involvement, and (e) effective management. The purpose of this research is to determine the efficacy of the prevailing practices. My hypotheses state (1) the practices you are implementing in your school plays a role in the success of your students; and (2) that the strength of the relationship between your practices and student achievement can be determined, and (3) that the best predictors for student achievement can be identified.

I would greatly appreciate your permission to include your school in this research project which will consist of 1/2 of your four-core subject area teachers randomly selected filling out an online survey. This survey, which has been pre-tested, should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

As an assistant principal in a secondary school in Fairfax County, I am well aware of the many demands placed upon teachers' time; however, as you know for an instrument to be valid, it is important it be administered to a large population. Although the teachers will be asked to identify their schools, this will not be published in the dissertation. The

purpose of school identification serves only as a research indicator for variables in the study. Once again, all identifying information will be omitted in the dissertation. When completed, you may request any and all results of thus survey.

I believe the results of this study will offer valuable insight into the pre-eminent work you are doing within your school. I will contact you within the next two weeks to discuss your willingness to assist in this research and to answer any questions you may have related to this study and/or your staffs' involvement. You may also feel free to contact me at (703) 426-1181 or scot.turner@fcps.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of this request which is a necessary and valued criterion for my professional growth.

Sincerely,

Scot Turner
Assistant Principal
Lake Braddock Secondary School

Appendix C

Validation Survey

Statements Assessing the practices and behaviors of principals

Directions: Circle the number of the appropriate response.

Domains

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

Association Ratings:

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

Clarity Ratings:

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

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

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

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

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

43. Businesses form partnerships with the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
44. The principal participates in staff development.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
45. The principal spends more time in the classrooms than in the office.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
46. Medical services are available at the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
47. The principal knows the names of the students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
48. Students are assessed frequently.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
50. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
51. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
52. Assessment is perceived as a vital part of the instructional process.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
53. All staff members are responsible for the behavior of students in the building.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
54. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
55. The principal shares test scores with teachers.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
56. The principal recognizes the successes of children publicly.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
57. Students are on task throughout the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
58. The principal is the instructional leader of the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
59. The principal respects teachers' viewpoints.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
60. The principal supports the discipline plan.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
61. The principal understands good classroom instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
62. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

63. Students in the school are well-behaved.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
64. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
65. The staff makes decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
66. There is a discipline for student behavior that is effective.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
67. Teachers have enough supplies, books, and materials to deliver instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
68. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
69. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
70. Technology is perceived as an important resource for teaching.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
71. The culture of the school is conducive to learning.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
72. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
73. The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
74. School communication is printed in ore than one language.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
75. The staff plans the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
76. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
77. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
78. Frequent field trips enhance the curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
79. Homework completion is required daily	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
80. My school has a plan to ensure all students are successful.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
81. Teachers are free to be risk-takers.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

82. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision making.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
83. Community members volunteer at the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
84. The school is a safe place for students and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
85. This is a child centered school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
86. Saturday school is used to reinforce skills.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
87. Community members work with the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
88. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
89. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
90. School staff members hold classes for parents.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
91. Translators are provided fro parents who do not speak English.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
92. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
93. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
94. The school vision sets the stage for how the staff proceeds with instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
95. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
96. The staff enjoys working in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
97. Leadership in the school is shared among the principal and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
98. Most people believe all children can learn.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
99. Teachers participate in hiring staff.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
100. The curriculum is the primary focus of classroom instruction.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
101. Teachers interview potential staff members.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

102. Most staff members participate in staff development.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
103. Assessment results usually guide instruction of students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
104. Test taking strategies are taught.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
105. The school plan is developed by the principal and staff together.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
106. Teachers know how to obtain help for students' social and medial needs.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
107. The school is the social center of the community.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3
108. Teachers are free to try new teaching methods.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4	1 2 3

Appendix D

VALIDATED QUESTIONS FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The following rules will be used to validate questions asked:

1. Under the section "Rating the individual question to determine its importance," scores of 80% and higher combining "Strongly agree this is a good question" and "Agree this is a good question" will be used.
2. When multiple Domains are selected the Domain with 60% or above will be used.
3. Under clarity of question, a professional judgment will be made by the researcher to use the question as written or revise. The question will be revised if over 33% of the respondents marked "somewhat clear/ revise."

School Vision, Mission, Culture-	17
Curriculum and Classroom Instruction	15
Collaboration and Shared Leadership	8
Family and Community Relations	15
Effective Management	10
Total	65

SCHOOL VISION, MISSION, CULTURE

Vision and mission

1. The school vision sets the stage for how staff members proceed with instruction.
2. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.
3. My school has a plan to ensure that all students are successful.
4. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.
5. Most people in the school work for the success of all students.
6. The vision for the school is the key for school change in my school.

Culture

7. The needs of the children come first in our school.
8. There is a feeling of respect among and between staff members and students.
9. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.
10. The school is a happy place for learning.
11. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.
12. The principal knows the names of the students.
13. The school is a safe place for students and staff.
14. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.
15. The principal visits classrooms frequently.

16. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.
17. Teachers in our school are free to try new teaching methods.

CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Curriculum

1. The curriculum is the primary focus of all classroom instruction.
2. Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching the curriculum.
3. Frequent extra-curricular programs enhance the curriculum.

Classroom instruction

4. Test taking strategies are taught.
5. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.
6. Direct instruction teaching methods are used.
7. The principal understands and recognizes effective classroom instruction
8. Teachers address the individual academic needs of students.
9. Students participate in an extended year schedule.
10. Students are on task throughout the school day.

Assessment

11. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.
12. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.
13. Assessment is perceived as a vital part of the instructional process.
14. Students are assessed frequently.

Staff development

15. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.

COLLABORATION AND SHARED LEADERSHIP

Collaboration

1. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.
2. Staff members plan the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.
3. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.

Shared Leadership

4. Staff members make decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal.
5. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision-making.
6. Teachers are leaders in the school.
7. The school plan is developed by the principal and staff together.
8. Staff members participate in the hiring process.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Family

1. Family members are encouraged to come to school.
2. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.
3. Parents are frequently seen in the school.
4. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.
5. School staff members hold classes for parents.
6. The web and/or email are used for communication between school and home.(Revised)
7. After school programs are well attended by parents.
8. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.
9. Family members feel comfortable in the school.
10. School communication is printed in more than one language.
11. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.

Community

12. Community members volunteer at the school.
13. The school is the center of the community.
14. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.
15. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Resources

1. The principal manages funds to ensure that the school has the best resources to teach the students. (Revised)

Hiring

2. The principal is able to hire the best candidate for the job.
3. The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body.

Discipline

4. There is a discipline plan for student behavior that is effective.
5. The principal supports the school's discipline plan.

Time for Learning

6. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.
7. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.
8. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.

Medical/Social

9. Teachers know how to obtain help for students' social and medical needs.
10. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.

Appendix E

Internet Survey

Dear Teachers:

I am a doctorate candidate at Virginia Tech studying successful at-risk high schools in Virginia. You work at one of the high schools that I have identified as being successful by my criteria. I need your help with my study. This survey will be utilized to assist educators in finding factors that contribute to the success of schools like your's. I estimate it will take about 15 minutes for you to complete this survey and can be done without interfering with your instructional time. I have obtained the approval of your school district and/or principal to administer this survey.

Please answer the questions as they pertain to your school only. Your responses are confidential. Your school name has been asked on the survey only as a control mechanism and it will not show up in my study or be released to anyone else. Data will be collected by the school unit, not by individual respondent.

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

Part I - Please select your school (Drop-Down Menu):

1. How many years have you been teaching at this school?
   A. 1-5 years
   B. 6-10 years
   C. 11-15 years
   D. More than 15 years

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

A. 1-5 years
B. 6-10 years
C. 11-15 years
D. More than 15 years
E.

Part II –Please respond to the following statements about your school by clicking on one of the buttons marked, “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”, or “not sure”.

3. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

4. Family members feel comfortable in the school.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

5. Teachers are leaders in the school.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

6. The principal manages funds to ensure that the school has the best resources to teach the students.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

7. Teachers in our school are free to try new teaching methods.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

8. School communication is printed in more than one language.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

9. Students are on task throughout the school day.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

10. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

11. Students participate in an extended year schedule.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

12. My school has a plan to ensure that all students are successful.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

14. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

15. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

16. Staff members participate in the hiring process.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

17. Test taking strategies are taught.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

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

19. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

20. The curriculum is the primary focus of all classroom instruction.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

21. The web and/or email are used for communication between school and home.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

22. Community members volunteer at the school.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

23. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

24. Students are assessed frequently.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

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

26. School staff members hold classes for parents.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

27. Parents are frequently seen in the school.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

28. Staff members plan the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

29. The principal supports the school's discipline plan.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

30. The school is a safe place for students and staff.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

32. The school is the center of the community.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

PART III -- Continue answering statements.

33. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

35. The principal is able to hire the best candidate for the job.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

36. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

37. The school vision sets the stage for how staff members proceed with instruction.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

38. The school is a happy place for learning.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

39. Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

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

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

43. Direct instruction teaching methods are used.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

44. There is a feeling of respect among staff members and students.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

45. The principal visits classrooms frequently.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

47. Most people in our school work for the success of all students.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

48. After school programs are well attended by parents.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

49. The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

51. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

52. Assessment is perceived as a vital part of the instructional process.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

53. The vision for the school is the key for school change in my school.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

54. Frequent extra-curricular programs enhance the curriculum.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

55. The principal understands and recognizes effective classroom instruction.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

56. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

58. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

59. Staff members make decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

60. The principal knows the names of the students.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

61. Family members are encouraged to come to school.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

62. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Not Sure

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

64. Teachers address the individual academic needs of the students.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

65. Teachers know how to obtain help for students' social and medical needs.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

66. There is a discipline plan for student behavior that is effective.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

67. The school plan is developed by the principal and staff together.
    - ☐ Strongly Agree
    - ☐ Agree
    - ☐ Disagree
    - ☐ Strongly Disagree
    - ☐ Not Sure

68. I am attempting to identify key characteristics of successful at-risk high schools. Please provide any thoughts or ideas that would help the researcher better understand your school and its successes.

Appendix F
Frequency Table for all Respondents to Survey Questions by Domain

Question	Response							
Domain I-Mission, Vision, and Culture	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
37. The school vision sets the stage for how staff members proceed with instruction.	8 (4.7)	24 (14.2)	17 (10.1)	106 (62.7)	14 (8.3)	169 (100.0)	3.56	.993
3. Most people in this school believe all children can learn.	2 (1.2)	15 (8.9)	4 (2.4)	104 (61.5)	44 (26.0)	169 (100.0)	4.02	.866
12. My school has a plan to ensure that all students are successful.	4 (2.4)	21 (12.4)	12 (7.1)	101 (59.8)	31 (18.3)	169 (100.0)	3.79	.963
31. The school staff embraces the vision of the principal for school success.	14 (8.3)	21 (12.4)	13 (7.1)	87 (51.5)	34 (20.1)	169 (100.0)	3.63	1.179

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
47. Most people in our school work for the success of all students.	1 (.6)	11 (6.5)	6 (3.6)	101 (59.8)	50 (29.6)	169 (100.0)	4.11	.798
53. The vision for the school is the key for school change in my school.	12 (7.1)	20 (11.8)	31 (18.3)	82 (48.5)	24 (14.2)	169 (100.0)	3.51	1.097
42. The needs of the children come first in our school.	3 (1.8)	20 (11.8)	13 (7.7)	87 (51.5)	46 (27.2)	169 (100.0)	3.91	.989
44. There is a feeling of respect among staff members and students.	11 (6.5)	31 (18.3)	13 (7.7)	94 (55.6)	20 (11.8)	169 (100.0)	3.48	1.119
14. Successes are celebrated frequently by the principal.	3 (1.8)	29 (17.2)	6 (3.6)	100 (59.2)	31 (18.3)	169 (100.0)	3.75	1.005
38. The school is a happy place for learning.	5 (3.0)	33 (19.5)	13 (7.7)	104 (61.5)	14 (8.3)	169 (100.0)	3.53	.994

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
46. Most people in our school believe the principal is an ethical leader.	11 (6.5)	20 (11.8)	24 (14.2)	66 (39.1)	48 (28.4)	169 (100.0)	3.71	1.187
60. The principal knows the names of the students.	3 (1.8)	16 (9.5)	35 (20.7)	83 (49.1)	32 (18.9)	169	3.74	.934
30. The school is a safe place for students and staff.	2 (1.2)	16 (9.5)	6 (3.6)	109 (64.5)	36 (21.3)	169 (100.0)	3.95	.858
18. Teachers in our school are free to be risk-takers.	17 (10.1)	39 (23.1)	10 (5.9)	84 (49.7)	19 (11.2)	169 (100.0)	3.29	1.227
45. The principal visits classrooms frequently.	17 (10.1)	55 (32.5)	14 (8.3)	60 (35.5)	23 (13.6)	169 (100.0)	3.10	1.275
62. The principal is seen frequently throughout the building.	6 (3.6)	36 (21.3)	11 (6.5)	71 (42.0)	45 (26.6)	169 (100.0)	3.67	1.184

Domain II Curriculum and Classroom Instruction	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
20. The curriculum is the primary focus of all classroom instruction.	8 (4.7)	16 (9.5)	7 (4.1)	97 57.4)	41 (24.3)	169 (100.0)	3.87	1.038
39. Teachers focus on SOL objectives when teaching curriculum.	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	3 (1.8)	88 (52.1)	77 (45.6)	169 (100.0)	4.43	.563
54. Frequent extra-curricular programs enhance the curriculum.	8 (4.7)	34 (20.1)	16 (9.5)	82 (48.5)	29 (17.2)	169 (100.0)	3.53	1.134
17. Test taking strategies are taught.	6 (3.6)	15 (8.9)	9 (5.3)	100 (59.2)	39 (23.1)	169 (100.0)	3.89	.976
23. Teaching methods and programs are based on research.	5 (3.0)	17 (10.1)	12 (7.1)	106 (62.7)	29 (17.2)	169 (100.0)	3.81	.938
43. Direct instruction teaching methods are used.	0 (0.0)	3 (1.8)	9 (5.3)	118 (69.8)	39 (23.1)	169 (100.0)	4.14	.580

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
55. The principal understands and recognizes effective classroom instruction.	7 (4.1)	16 (9.5)	18 (10.7)	91 (53.8)	37 (21.9)	169 (100.0)	3.80	1.021
64. Teachers address the individual academic needs of the students.	0 (0.0)	11 (6.5)	9 (5.3)	105 (62.1)	44 (26.0)	169 (100.0)	4.08	.756
11. Students participate in an extended year schedule.	39 (23.1)	83 (49.1)	28 (16.6)	18 (10.7)	1 (0.6)	169 (100.0)	2.00	.924
9. Students are on task throughout the school day.	17 (10.1)	44 (26.0)	11 (6.5)	87 (51.5)	10 (5.9)	169 (100.0)	3.17	1.180
7. Teachers in our school are free to try new teaching methods.	3 (1.8)	14 (8.3)	8 (4.7)	82 (48.5)	62 (36.7)	169 (100.0)	4.00	.756
33. Teachers use assessment data to plan instruction.	4 (2.4)	9 (5.3)	10 (5.9)	96 (56.8)	50 (29.6)	169 (100.0)	4.06	.884

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
14. Teachers frequently assess students on SOL objectives.	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	7 (4.1)	90 (53.3)	71 (42.0)	169 (100.0)	4.37	.594
52. Assessment is perceived as a vital part of the instructional process.	1 (0.6)	7 (4.1)	6 (3.6)	101 (59.8)	54 (32.0)	169 (100.0)	4.18	.737
24. Students are assessed frequently.	2 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	3 (1.8)	99 (58.6)	64 (37.9)	100 (100.0)	4.31	.656
50. Curriculum needs determine the type and frequency of staff development.	15 (8.9)	44 (26.0)	22 (13.0)	76 (45.0)	12 (7.1)	169 (100.0)	3.15	1.155

Domain III Collaboration and Shared Leadership	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
63. Leadership in the school is shared between the principal and staff.	14 (8.3)	31 (18.3)	11 (6.5)	79 (46.7)	34 (20.1)	169 (100.0)	3.52	1.235
28. Staff members plan the program for the school in collaboration with the principal.	19 (11.2)	38 (22.5)	20 (11.8)	83 (49.1)	9 (5.3)	169 (100.0)	3.15	1.168
57. The staff gives the principal input on the purchase of resources.	2 (1.2)	23 (13.6)	18 (10.7)	96 (56.8)	30 (17.8)	169 (100.0)	3.76	.940
59. Staff members make decisions concerning teaching and learning with the principal.	11 (6.5)	42 (24.9)	22 (13.0)	79 (46.7)	15 (8.9)	169 (100.0)	3.27	1.126

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
34. Teachers are encouraged to participate in decision making.	17 (10.1)	31 (18.3)	10 (5.9)	88 (52.1)	23 (13.6)	169 (100.0)	3.41	1.222
5. Teachers are leaders in the school.	10 (5.9)	18 (10.7)	4 (2.4)	99 (58.6)	38 (22.5)	169 (100.0)	3.81	1.085
67. The school plan is developed by the principal and staff together.	15 (8.9)	23 (13.6)	23 (13.6)	85 (50.3)	23 (13.6)	169 (100.0)	3.46	1.155
16. Staff members participate in the hiring process.	24 (14.2)	43 (25.4)	25 (14.8)	66 (39.1)	11 (6.5)	169 (100.0)	2.98	1.217

Domain IV Family and Community Involvement	1 Strongly Disagree Number (%)	2 Disagree Number (%)	3 Not Sure Number (%)	4 Agree Number (%)	5 Strongly Agree Number (%)	Total Number (%)	X	SD
61. Family members are encouraged to come to school.	4 (2.4)	26 (15.4)	23 (13.6)	91 (53.8)	25 (14.8)	169 (100.0)	3.63	.992
41. Translators are provided for parents who do not speak English.	5 (3.0)	23 (13.6)	53 (31.4)	61 (36.1)	27 (16.0)	169 (100.0)	3.49	1.012
27. Parents are frequently seen in the school.	30 (17.8)	75 (44.4)	13 (7.7)	47 (27.8)	4 (2.4)	169 (100.0)	2.53	1.145
19. Most parents attend conferences concerning student progress.	46 (27.2)	72 (42.6)	15 (8.9)	32 (18.9)	4 (2.4)	169 (100.0)	2.27	1.126
26. School staff members hold classes for parents.	33 (19.5)	76 (45.0)	46 (27.2)	12 (7.1)	2 (1.2)	169 (100.0)	2.25	.489
21. The web and/or email are used for communication between school and home.	4 (2.4)	19 (11.2)	2 (1.2)	100 (59.2)	44 (26.0)	169 (100.0)	3.95	.969

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
48. After school programs are well attended by parents.	34 (20.1)	69 (40.8)	28 (16.6)	33 (19.5)	5 (3.0)	169 (100.0)	2.44	1.107
56. Teachers are honest with parents concerning student progress.	1 (0.6)	7 (4.1)	7 (4.1)	103 (60.9)	51 (30.2)	169 (100.0)	4.16	.735
4. Family members feel comfortable in the school.	2 (1.2)	11 (6.5)	23 (13.6)	102 (60.4)	31 (18.3)	169 (100.0)	3.88	.822
8. School communication is printed in more than one language.	18 (10.7)	53 (31.4)	38 (22.5)	34 (20.1)	26 (15.4)	169 (100.0)	2.98	1.251
36. There is a parent liaison to assist parents.	7 (4.1)	36 (21.3)	35 (20.7)	64 (37.9)	27 (16.0)	169 (100.0)	3.40	1.114
22. Community members volunteer at the school.	14 (8.3)	32 (18.9)	27 (16.0)	88 (52.1)	8 (4.7)	169 (100.0)	3.26	1.082
32. The school is the center of the community.	14 (8.3)	49 (29.0)	26 (15.4)	65 (38.5)	15 (8.9)	169 (100.0)	3.11	1.165

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
25. Members of civic or social organizations volunteer in the school.	15 (8.9)	46 (27.2)	47 (27.8)	53 (31.4)	8 (4.7)	169 (100.0)	2.96	1.065
10. Outside organizations support the school monetarily.	11 (6.5)	37 (21.9)	42 (24.9)	64 (37.9)	15 (8.9)	169 (100.0)	3.21	1.085

Domain V Effective Management	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
6. The principal manages funds to ensure that the school has the best resources to teach the students.	8 (4.7)	17 (10.1)	17 (10.1)	77 (45.6)	50 (29.6)	169 (100.0)	3.85	1.100
35. The principal is able to hire the best candidate for the job.	5 (3.0)	33 (19.5)	36 (21.3)	73 (43.2)	22 (13.0)	169 (100.0)	3.44	1.040
49. The staff reflects the ethnic makeup of the student body.	22 (13.0)	55 (32.5)	12 (7.1)	65 (38.5)	15 (8.9)	169 (100.0)	2.98	1.040
66. There is a discipline plan for student behavior that is effective.	21 (12.4)	46 (27.2)	10 (5.9)	65 (38.5)	27 (16.0)	169 (100.0)	3.18	1.330
29. The principal supports the school's discipline plan.	12 (7.1)	25 (14.8)	7 (4.1)	73 (43.2)	52 (30.8)	169 (100.0)	3.76	1.237
58. Instructional time is protected from interruptions.	13 (7.7)	48 (28.4)	6 (3.6)	81 (47.9)	21 (12.4)	169 (100.0)	3.29	1.222

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not Sure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Total		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	X	SD
13. The principal keeps the teacher-student ratio low.	23 (13.6)	48 (28.4)	8 (4.7)	79 (46.7)	11 (6.5)	169 (100.0)	3.04	1.251
51. There are uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction.	4 (2.4)	27 (16.0)	4 (2.4)	99 (58.6)	35 (20.7)	169 (100.0)	3.79	1.023
65. Teachers know how to obtain help for students' social and medical needs.	1 (0.6)	27 (16.0)	20 (11.8)	101 (59.8)	20 (11.8)	169 (100.0)	3.66	.906
40. A nurse on staff addresses the medical needs of students.	4 (2.4)	13 (7.7)	14 (8.3)	77 (45.6)	61 (36.1)	169 (100.0)	4.05	.984