CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE: THE WORKLIFE OF A PRINCIPAL IN AN ACHIEVING URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

A CONTEXT FOR INQUIRY

Introduction

Urban school principals often face challenges that are not encountered by their peers in rural or suburban environments. The day -to-day realities of educating poor students in urban school districts have become increasingly challenging for school administrators. To meet these challenges for urban schools, effective leadership is needed. The purpose of this study is to increase understanding of a principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school. The methods of one principal dealing with everyday problems associated with leading in an urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk learners achieving academic success is examined.

School administrators who work in America's cities face the daily challenge of educating children who are poor, usually minority, and often-labeled disadvantaged. When the public tries to assess the performance of urban schools, it finds that the achievement is invariably lower for students who are labeled poor or minority. Often, the initial reaction is to blame the schools, specifically principals and teachers.

Morra (1994) reports that General Accounting Office (GAO) analysis of demographic characteristics of school age children during the 1980's shows that poor and at-risk children are the concern of many of the nation's inner cities. At-risk students are those who, while not necessarily poor, face significant obstacles to achieving academic success in school.

Many of our schools will have to work differently to meet the special needs of a changing population while at the same time strive to set higher standards to meet academic success. Bamburg (1994) notes the following:

> …. children who attend urban schools do possess the capacity to learn. Entire schools can be found in which the majority of students experience academic success (p. 1).

Over the last twenty years, efforts to improve the quality of education at the school level have focused on the principal as one of the most important figures in school reform (Brookover & Lezotte,1979 ; Edmonds,1979).

Caught between the external demands of constituent groups and the needs of teachers and students, as well as the community, administrators at the building level have a difficult role to fulfill. The National Association of State Boards of Education produced a study that states, "The school principal—the leader—is a critical force in determining school culture and instructional practices. When schools are effective it is largely because they have effective principals" (NASBE, 1994, p. 11).

Urban school districts are impacted by the social implications of increasing numbers of at-risk students more than any other setting. Students attending urban schools represent the most imperiled group of our increasing number of students at risk for failure. The American public school is failing to provide the type of education that will enable all students from at-risk backgrounds to succeed (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). Without intervention, this population will have a negative impact on the quality of the labor force and the economy, poverty, crime rates, higher education, and the cost of public service (Levin, 1989).

Public school administrators will be expected to undertake changes that are directed toward achieving higher levels of learning for all children (Clift, Schacht, & Thurston, 1993, p. 259). What appears to be the traditional role of the principal is changing relative to the substantial changes and school-wide reforms that are beginning to take place in schools (Christensen, 1992). Change-oriented leadership is inherently tied to the nature of relationships among school principals, school staffs, school culture, and the community the school serves. "There seems to be agreement that with strong leadership by the principal, a school is likely to be effective, without capable leadership it is not" (Barth, 1990). A skilled principal has the capacity to create conditions that facilitate positive outcomes for teachers, students, and parents. Barth (1990) further states the following:

> It is much easier to mention such elements as leadership and community than it
> is to define them for purposes of either research or practice. And it

is easier to define them than it is to know how to produce them through training or transfer them from one person or organization to another. Lack of specific knowledge about the skills which principals need in order to be effective school leaders exists at a time when many principals are facing dramatic changes in their roles… the stress that principals face has increased with the number and variety of their problems (p. 64).

The background established in the first section of Chapter 1 serves to support the statement of problem and purpose of the study. A review of literature covering principal leadership behavior from a transformational leadership perspective forms a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is the basis of five research questions that guide this study.

Background

The context of school restructuring has changed dramatically over the last several decades following two national waves of educational reform. Throughout the late 1970's and 1980's, public schools were called upon to reform and become more effective in and accountable for accomplishing their educational goals. In a first wave of reform, many large urban districts and state legislatures responded by increasing bureaucratic controls over curriculum and teaching (Rowan, 1990). Initiatives focused on increased use of direct instruction, increased supervision of instruction, higher levels of basic skills achievement, minimum standards to be met by all students, and widespread testing of outcomes (Furhman, Clune, & Elmore, 1988). The mid-1980s represent a second wave of school reform. The "restructuring movement" formed which advocated decreased bureaucratic controls replaced by working conditions that enhance teachers' commitment and expertise (Rowan, 1990).

Emerging from the restructuring movement of school reform was a view of the principal as a critical element in school improvement and reform (Fullan, 1991). Over the past two decades schools have been recognized as organized workplaces. The social organization of a school is a factor that distinguishes effective schools from others (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Little, 1981; Rosenholtz, 1985, 1989; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979).

There is a critical need to improve the education of children who are poor and whose families are essentially alienated from the schools (Maehr & Parker, 1993). At-risk students refer to those students who are unlikely to succeed in school because their home experiences and resources are largely incompatible with the expectations embraced with the traditional framework of school practices (Waxman, Walker deFelix, Anderson, & Baptiste, 1992).

Such students are heavily concentrated among minority groups, immigrants, single-parent families, and the poor. Cultural influences impact behaviors of students and may contribute to failure in schools for at-risk students. At- risk students begin school without many of the basic skills upon which curriculum and assessment are based. As these students move through school, they drop farther and farther behind in the academic setting.

Today's changing demographics demand that we create schools where every child can and will learn. The demands of modern society are such that America's public schools must now provide what they have never provided before, a first-rate academic education for all students (Schlechty, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

In recent years a number of significant changes have occurred in our public schools including shifting federal program priorities, adoption of state curriculum standards, and the implementation of site-based decision-making. These changes come at a time when schools are also experiencing significant changes in the ethnic and socioeconomic composition of their student body and when many families are struggling to meet challenges arising from poverty or job requirements. Attention has been given to the impact these changes are having on teachers, parents, and students. Little attention has been given, however, to the impact of these changes on principals.

Many principals experience stress, which is the result of a complex set of demands, facing them and their schools. Principals today inhabit schools faced with political, social, economic, and demographic changes which introduce unparalleled opportunities, unexpected crisis, and seemingly intractable problems (Murphy, 1990).

Properties associated with what principals do on a daily basis have important implications for the selection and training of principals. Without understanding, selection and training of administrators for inner-city schools may remain unfocused and counter-productive to facilitating positive school outcomes in these schools.

Researchers currently focus attention upon important issues including the social restructuring of schools (Liebermann, 1988) and appropriate leadership strategies for achieving comprehensive changes (Leithwood, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1990). Principals remain key individuals within the school. Therefore, it is important to hear principals' voices on how leading in schools experiencing programmatic and societal shifts affect their worklife and ultimately, school outcomes.

Focus of Inquiry

Understanding one principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school was the focus of this study. This was a single case study representing a "unique case" (Yin, 1994, p. 39) of one elementary school principal working in an achieving urban elementary school.

This was an account of how: (a) the principal's worklife is influenced by the work environment of the school; (b) how the principal's personal characteristics affect the principal's worklife; (c) how the principal's worklife affects the educational program within the school, and how the educational program within the school affects the principal's work life; and, (d) how the principal's worklife affects school outcomes.

Significance of the Study

This study adds findings to a growing body of qualitative data on principal leadership behavior. It will be useful to principals seeking to implement educational strategies designed to increase achievement in schools with a large number of at-risk students. The results of this study will be useful for establishing criteria for the evaluation and development of principals in urban schools with a large number of at-risk students. Prospective principals may find the results useful for identifying behaviors, beliefs, and values that could advance the development of a school that is effective in facilitating the achievement of at-risk students. Finally, this study was intended to raise

awareness of personal and professional characteristics of a leader that promote educational change in urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students.

<u>Research Questions</u>

Research questions for this study include (1) What is the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school? (2a) What is the work environment of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school?

(2b) How does the work environment affect the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school? How does the principal affect the work environment? (2c) How does the culture of the school affect the worklife of the principal? (2d) How does the school's characteristics affect the worklife of the principal? (2e) What external factors affect the worklife of the principal?

(2f) How do external factors affect the worklife of the principal? (3) What are the personal characteristics of the principal? How have these affected the work life of the principal? (4) How does the worklife of a principal affect the educational program of an achieving inner-city elementary school? How does the educational program affect the worklife of the principal? (5a) What are the outcomes of an achieving urban elementary school? (5b) How does the worklife of the principal affect these outcomes? How do these outcomes affect the worklife of the principal? These questions come from a conceptual framework referenced throughout the study. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework.
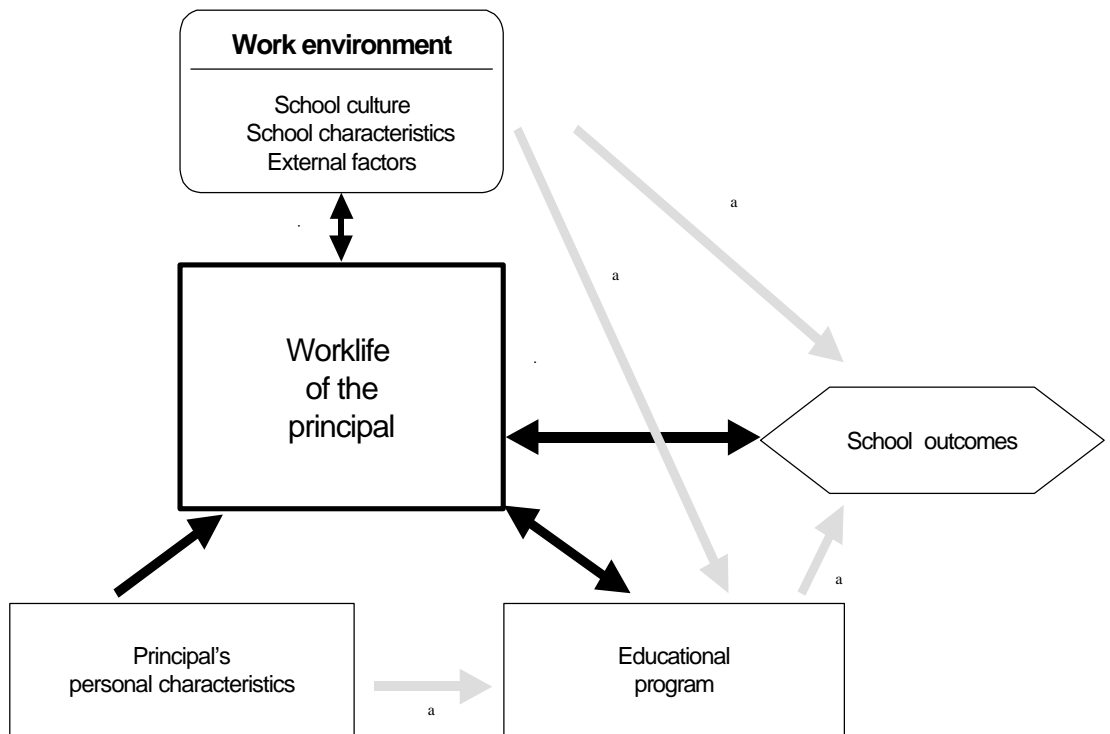
Figure 1. **A model for understanding a principal's worklife.**

aThese relationships were not explored in this study.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study (Figure 1) is a model for understanding a principal's worklife, and it is shaped by four assumptions. The assumptions follow: (1) The worklife of a principal or how a principal experiences the job of principal, including the principal's actions and beliefs has some determinable pattern, which, when discovered and understood, can affect outcomes of schools. (2) Different types of student characteristics are associated with more crises and create more problems for a principal. (3) The socio-economic composition of the student body can affect the way a principal exercises leadership. (4) Increased diversity of school populations significantly increases the complexity of administrative responsibilities. The basis of understanding in this study revolves around several key elements.

Table 1 is a list of elements and definitions. The actions and beliefs of the principal at school comprise the worklife that was studied. Other significant relationships in the worklife of a principal in an urban elementary school were also examined.

Additional links in the principal's work life include: (1) the work environment and work life of the principal; (2) the principal's personal characteristics and the worklife of the principal (3) the worklife of the principal and the educational program; (4) the educational program and the principal's worklife; and, (5) the worklife of the principal and school outcomes (Figure 1).

The role of the elementary school principal is complex and multi-faceted. In a single day a principal may function as an instructional leader, as an innovator, as a public relations specialist, as a liaison between school parents and community leaders, and as the inspirer of faculty and student commitment.

Table 1

Table of Definitions

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Element	Definition
Urban Elementary School	An elementary school located in a southeastern Virginia city of 185,000 people. The area makes up the 28th largest market in the United States and the largest located between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. Total elementary school age population is 17,479.
Achieving	Reading achievement of 66% of second grade at or above grade level as measured by the Degrees of Reading Power Reading Assessment. Reading achievement of second grade students higher than elementary schools in the school division of similar demographics. Improving attendance rates over the last five years.
Worklife	How a principal experiences the job of principal, including the principal's actions and beliefs.
Actions	Behaviors of a principal related to the job.
Work Environment	School culture, school characteristics, and community interactions, expectations, policies, and procedures.
School culture	A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learns as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1985, p.12). School culture exists at three levels: the artifacts level, the values and beliefs level, and the underlying assumptions level.

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Table 1

Table of Definitions (Continues)

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Element	Definition
School Characteristics	School demographic, achievement, and attendance data.
Personal Characteristics	A principal's philosophical base, values, attitudes, tools, and preferences.
Educational Program	School wide initiatives.
School Outcomes	School performance on school division and state assessments of reading and achievement. Daily student attendance.

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<u>Review of Literature</u>

Some research has focused separately on the relationships between leadership and school culture, school culture and achievement, and leadership and achievement. Little research has been found which was directed toward the influence of a principal's worklife on educational programs, school culture, and school outcomes. There are many frameworks for examining the principalship. Some descriptions of the elementary school principal focus on role expectations, others, describe job functions (Mintzberg,1973). While both may be useful approaches, they miss features of the actual work of principals in specific work environments.

The lens for focusing this inquiry into principal worklife behavior is transformational leadership. In looking through this lens, the researcher hopes to build a bridge between transformational leadership behavior and principal leadership behavior in an achieving urban elementary school. The researcher will look for specific evidence in the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x, the language of others, and the principal's actions, feelings, and beliefs. In the next section, various studies are reviewed that support linking successful school improvement change strategies of principals with the concept of transformational leadership.

The focus of these studies identifies the type of strategies school administrators use to promote positive school outcomes. Each study is an examination of identified strategies as they relate to an association with transformational leadership.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

<u>Antecedents of Transformational Leadership</u>

The concept of leadership has been defined in many ways by researchers studying it (Bass, 1990 ; Yukl, 1989). Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is traced to Burns' (1978) introduction to the construct. Burns conceived transformational leadership as one of two forms that leadership can take, the other form being transactional leadership. Bass (1985) modified Burns' conception of leadership as a choice between two styles at opposite ends of a continuum and proposed that

transformational leadership augments the effects of transactional leadership on the efforts and effectiveness of subordinates.

The transformational leader strives to change the organization's core values, basic philosophy, and its technical, financial, and humanistic concerns, while the transactional leader is satisfied to work within the status quo of the existing system. Nevertheless, a number of situational factors relating to the external environment and the internal organizational environment influence whether transformational or transactional leadership will emerge within an organization (Bass, 1985). The external social and economic environment will to some extent effect the processes that arise within an organization including the leadership style. Transformational leadership is more likely to emerge during times of social trouble, rapid change and discontinuity, and unstable economic market-places requiring leaders to "provide new solutions, stimulate rapid response, develop subordinates, and provide reasons for coping" (Bass, 1985, pp. 156-157).

Bass' conceptualization of transformational and transactional leadership offers an important vehicle by which to study leadership in educational settings. Though the study of transformational leadership as conceived and operationalized by Bass (1985) in education particularly K-12 school settings, "is clearly in its infancy" (Leithwood, 1993, p.39), studies reviewed in the next section reported findings supportive of critical components of Bass' leadership theory applicable to education.

The early presence of transformational leadership in education was demonstrated in Kendrick's (1988) reflective study that provided a description of how one principal developed transformational leadership strategies over time. Adopting Sergiovanni's (1990) four-stage value-added leadership model for obtaining extraordinary performance in schools, Kendrick described the transition of her leadership behavior from transactional to transformational. Particular attention incorporated by principal's to empower teachers and nurture their commitment dominated Kendrick's focus.

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More specifically, Kendrick reviewed the historical progression of that school's culture from one concerned almost exclusively with safety and security to one concerned with the developmental and social growth of young adolescents as well as academic needs. A sequential transition from transactional to transformational leadership behavior was suggested with certain skills and actions serving as prerequisites for subsequent levels of more sophisticated behavior. According to Kendrick, to become a transformational leader requires training, "to process and facilitate activities which result in the creation of shared vision, collaboration, ownership, increased levels of professionalism, and empowerment" (p. 131).

Kendrick's study produced important findings for implementation of transformational leadership constructs in educational settings. First, numerous leadership strategies cited supported Bass' descriptions of factors comprising transformational leadership; this served to demystify the transformational leadership construct. Second, more clarity was gained concerning Kendrick's individual developmental process and leadership purposes. Third, consistent with Bass' conception, Kendrick reported that transactional leadership functioned to accomplish lower-order objectives though higher-order objectives were achieved through a transformational leadership orientation. Finally, Kendrick's exercise of transformational leadership positively affected the school's culture increasing organizational effectiveness as a consequence.
This latter finding suggests that the search for accomplishments of transformational leadership strategies may be reflected in the school's culture.

Most recently, Kirby (1992) reported that transformational leadership was perceived as more effective over transactional leadership concerning leaders' performance by a group of school administrators who rated their immediate supervisors. In Kirby's (1992) study of leadership in education, the purpose was to determine the extent to which educational leaders are perceived to use transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. For this study, practicing administrators consisting of 88 principals and 8 assistant principals from six different school districts completed

Bass and Ovoilio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire with reference to their immediate supervisors. Using a stepwise regression procedure that entered transactional factors first into the regression model followed by transformational factors, Kirby found that transformational leadership accounted for an additional percentage of variance beyond that of transactional leadership alone concerning perceptions of leaders' effectiveness performance. Kirby interpreted the results as providing evidence for the existence of transformational leadership in education and teachers increased preference for the use of it by their principals.

Kirby (1992) designed a separate qualitative study to further increase understanding of extraordinary leadership in education. A sample of 58 graduate students enrolled in an introductory class in school leadership included public teachers (60%) and administrators (40%) from 15 different school districts in one southern state. They were asked to think of an extraordinary leader in education with whom they had worked and to describe an event in which they had participated that best exemplified that person's leadership. Then students were asked to complete Likert-scale items assessing their difficulty in identifying an extraordinary educational leader. A total of nine students rated the principal with the highest score possible on all questions. These same students completed a narrative description identifying the characteristics of an extraordinary leader in education. To determine the behaviors and characteristics of these educational leaders phrases, sentences, or sentence groups in the narratives were coded into themes: setting, events, goals, leader behaviors, leadership characteristics, and outcomes. Data were analyzed by examining within and across coding categories to discover themes and patterns of responses.

Based on qualitative analyses, Kirby concluded that those educators who easily identified an extraordinary educational leader were able to indicate specific attitudes and behaviors that made such leaders unique. Kirby's quantitative and qualitative studies both supported the conclusion that transformational leadership can be found in educational settings, a finding common to Kendrick's (1988) work.

Several years prior to Kirby's work, King (1989) conducted a study for the purpose of exploring the relationships of transformational and transactional leadership as a means of enhancing organizational effectiveness in education. Transformational leadership factors as operationalized on Bass and Avolio's (1988) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, were examined for any augmentation effect in perceived effectiveness beyond that accounted for by transactional leadership factors. The variable, effectiveness, constituted a sub-scale of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

The sample was drawn from graduate students of a large urban state university in the South, who were also employed in the field of education and from the membership roll of a regional chapter of an academic organization in the field of education. Membership for this chapter represented individuals largely involved in higher education in institutions both public and private, large and small, college, and university. Eight individuals drawn from each source voluntarily participated.

Using a stepwise regression procedure, King (1989) initially entered transactional leadership factors into the model and then added the factors representing transformational leadership. Regression analysis of the data confirmed King's hypothesis that the transformational leadership factors accounted for an additional percent of the variance in perceptions of the leader's effectiveness. Nevertheless, King recommended that alternate measures of effectiveness and broader school outcomes be used in future tests for transformational and transactional leadership in education.

Relevance of Transformational Leadership in Education

Transformational leadership emerged relatively recently as a supportive and developmental leadership approach toward group members (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Initially recommended for corporate leaders to successfully transform or restructure their businesses to achieve greater productivity (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kanter, 1983; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Peters & Waterman, 1982), Bass' model of transformational leadership has offered a range of leaders behaviors shown to promote change and desired outcomes in varied settings (Bass, 1985; Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987;

Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Educational leaders particularly in "effective" or "innovative" K-12 schools have also been identified as transformational leaders (Leithwood, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1990). Sergiovanni proposed that practicing value and value-added leadership (based on transformational leadership principles) together "provides the bridge between helping teachers and students meet basic expectations and achieving levels of performance and commitment that are extraordinary"
 (pp. 4-5).

Hallinger (1992) noted that the role of principals has gradually shifted with the decentralization of authority from the school district to the school site and with expanded decision-making roles for teachers and parents. He emphasized that the principal as a transformational leader evolved from concerns over the compatibility of principals as instructional leaders with emerging conceptions of teacher leadership and professionalism. Therefore, the new leadership role requires problem finding and problem solving which essentially describes the work of a transformational leader. As Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990) summarized:

> An emphasis [on instructional leadership] was wholly appropriate and timely to build school leadership in the early 1980s when the term gained a widespread following. But 'instructional leadership' conveys a meaning that encompasses only a portion of those activities now associated with effective school leadership (p.10).
> Leithwood (1993) contended that transformational strategies for school

leadership were especially important for the challenges facing schools now. He based his reasoning on the belief that school restructuring will continue as a pressing necessity for some time for the future and on the belief that the role of the instructional leader, the single most preferred image of K-12 school leadership, is not adequate for addressing such challenges. Leithwood's arguments supporting transformational leadership as more effective in restructuring efforts were developed around the following premises: (a) the means and ends for school restructuring are uncertain, (b) school restructuring requires both first- and second-order changes, and (c) the professionalization of teaching is a centerpiece of the school restructuring agenda.

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Transformational leadership strategies also reflect change tactics recommended in early interpretations of school effectiveness literature (Purkey & Smith, 1983) to achieve successful innovations. "The general strategy", reported Purkey and Smith, "is best characterized as one that promotes collaborative planning, collegial work, and a school atmosphere conducive to experimentation and evaluation" (p. 442). More recently, Leithwood and Jantzi (1991) demonstrated that transformational leadership fosters the development of collaborative school cultures and linked the purposes of transformational leadership with the effects of collaborative school cultures on teachers and students. They described the connection as follows:

> A transformational leader helps build shared meaning among members of the school staff regarding their purposes and creates high levels of commitment to the accomplishments of these purposes. Such leaders foster norms and beliefs among staff members about the contributions one's colleagues may make to one's practices. They also encourage openness to new ideas and practices based on their own merits. Both individual and group reflection on purposes and practices and how they might be continuously improved are stimulated by the leader, including encouragement to periodically identify and assess the basic assumptions on which are founded these purposes and practices. These are purposes typically associated with the effects of collaborative school cultures, as well. (p. 8)

<u>Transformational Leadership and School Outcomes</u>

For the purpose of this study, outcome is defined as increasing reading achievement over five years and improving attendance over the same period of time for exiting second graders in an inner-city elementary school. School effectiveness research has offered descriptions and lists of indicators that illustrate what an effective school looks like. Much time and effort has been spent by educational researchers trying to gain a better understanding of the characteristics that distinguish one school from another in terms of student educational attainment. Research suggests that even when serving similar populations some schools compared to others have been more effective in educating students (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Clarke, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984; Edmonds & Fredrickson, 1978; Weber, 1971).

Early literature reviews (Austin, 1981; Edmonds, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980) reduce disparate school effectiveness literature to simpler recipe-like lists of variables

believed accountable for and potentially able to guide school improvement efforts. This research has been carried out largely in elementary schools and describes the specific features appearing in effective schools. More recent integrative reviews attempt to combine lists of variables into explanatory frameworks (Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Cohen (1981) interprets accumulated research on schooling practices that contribute to student achievement. He emphasizes that existing summaries are useful to a point but that the presentation of only lists of variables failed to provide insight into (a) the inter-relatedness of the variable, (b) the ability to implement such variables, and (c) the production effects. Cohen concluded that effective schools differ from most other schools because of the following:

a) better management, (b) work is more freqently directed toward appropriately limited shared goals, and (c) instructional practices are more advanced and consistent with the most recent research.

Little (1981) demonstrates how social organization changes initiated by the principal may lead to greater effectiveness. Her study of the implementation of mastery learning in Denver city schools provides insight as how such changes take place through successful staff development. Six urban, desegregated schools were selected three of which were elementary, while three were secondary schools. They represented a range in school-wide staff development projects and a range in student achievement. Little (1981) documented how principals worked with teachers to change norms of behavior and programmatic routines by: (a) announcing expectations for shared work and conversation, (b) allocating resources and rewards for working jointly, and (c) providing daily opportunities for interaction among teachers. In particular, Little found that more successful schools were distinguished from less successful ones by the prevailing patterns of approved and disapproved interactions in each school. Of all the collegial interactions observed, Little suggested that discussion of classroom practice, mutual observation and critique, shared efforts to design and prepare curriculum, and shared participation in the business of instructional improvement appeared most crucial in achieving continuous professional development. These four classes of critical

practice occurred widely throughout the school building and were discussed in greater frequency and regularity in more successful schools.

Research in this section points out that principal leadership behavior and school culture remain a focus of current school restructuring research. In particular, research demonstrates that one principal's transformational leadership behavior can impact school effectiveness when a school's culture changes to promote more collaborative principal-teacher relationships. As teachers and principals work together collaboratively, new norms for schools develop creating potential for whole new roles, relationships, and expectations among teachers. An empowering, inclusive type of leadership practice is demonstrated consistently by principals across various effective schools (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1992; & Rosenholtz, 1989). Result of this literature review support that principals most capable of bringing about school reform improvements appear to employ transformational leadership strategies.

Transformational Leadership and Schools With a Large Number of At-risk Students

Who are at-risk students? Factors such as family background, personal characteristics of the students, school context, and school culture along with academic performance variables will be used in this study to define at-risk status. Traditional research, according to Wehlage and Rutter (1986), has tended to identify characteristics of at-risk students least amenable to change. The focus of new research, the authors say, might be better directed toward
understanding the institutional character of schools and how this affects at-risk students.

The number of at-risk students continues to increase, presenting an increasing challenge to educators. In 1987, Lieberman and Rosenholtz reported the case study of Cityside, an urban inner-city school in a large metropolis, where organizational conditions had been modified to facilitate more collegial relations among teachers and the principal. Organizational conditions studied included the principal's vision; the principal's building a core support group of teachers; and the principal's consistent, long-term strategy for change. Lieberman and Rosenholtz concluded that the process by which a school becomes "effective" is quite complex. In summary, these authors

state their belief that the principal's vision and behavior aided in clarifying for school personnel which priorities were of greatest concern.

<u>Principal's Transformational Leadership Behavior</u>

Hallinger (1992) recounts the evolution of the principalship in the United States over the past 30 years. He presents the principal's role as program manager, instructional leader, and transformational leader. Each role is examined on the basis of the role and its relationship to the demands for leadership that emerged from policy makers within the school environment.

The period of 1920-1960 represents a span of time when principals assumed the role of administrative manager. During this time, there was a nationwide trend toward school consolidation. Corporate management was the model this trend was designed to emulate. During the 1960s and 1970s, a new role emphasis emerged for American principals. This time is marked by an increase in management of federal dollars for public school administrators. Programs such as those serving special need students, compensatory education, and bilingual education required implementation support from school based administrators. The infusion of federal money into school districts also gave rise to an increase in curriculum development activities. Math and science curriculum development fostered innovation in both academic areas. By the mid-1970s curriculum development and program management dominated as the primary responsibilities for building level administrators.

The impetus for curriculum and program management was the driving force of change and school improvement. The principal's role as program and curriculum manager was oriented toward school improvement and change. Principal as instructional leader dominated the educational arena during the 1970's decade. Principals assumed functions that ranged from monitoring compliance with federal regulations to assisting in staff development and providing direct classroom support to teachers (Hallinger,1992).

In 1979, Edmonds' published a landmark article in which he stated that strong administrative leadership was a characteristic of instructionally effective schools.

Edmonds conclusion gave rise to calls for principals to engage more actively in leading the school instructional program with a focus on staff and student outcomes.

Policy makers, administrators, teachers, and parents recognized that the system of the 1980s was not adequately preparing students for future challenges in a competitive market place. This lead constituents of American schools to re-examine the assumptions that underlie school practices. The Carnegie Report on Education and the Economy (1986) concluded that fundamental changes were needed in the organizational structure, professional roles, and goals of American public education.

During the early 1980's education authorities sought to reform the principalship based on the perception of effective schooling (Barth, 1986). This reform focused on reshaping the role of principal as "manager" to principal as "instructional leader". The early 1990's represent a wave of educational concerns de-emphasizing the role of principal as instructional leader but emphasizing more the compatibility of the principal with teacher leadership and professionalism.

School reform currently focuses on the decentralization of authority over curricular and instructional decisions from the school district to the school site; new roles for teachers and parents which include participation in decision-making; and increased interest on instruction as active learning.

Underlying this wave of reform is the assumption that those adults who are closest to students are in the best position to make decisions about changes needed in the educational program of the school. Other proponents of school restructuring support a shift in school governance structures that reflect a more sophisticated approach to teaching and learning. Effective teaching encompasses more than the original thoughts presented by Edmonds (1979). Current themes of restructuring include teaching and schooling which specify instructional behaviors of teachers as part of a process of decision-making and leadership, administrators as leaders of leaders, students and parents as customers, and instructional activities as knowledge work (Schlechty, 1997).

Leithwood and Jantzi (1991) studied the strategies principals used to develop more collaborative school cultures. Their sample consisted of nine elementary and three

secondary schools from ten different boards of education widely distributed across southern Ontario. Results from this study suggested that principals used six strategies to shape their school's culture and to encourage greater collaborative: (1) strengthening the culture; (2) use of a variety of bureaucratic mechanisms to stimulate and reinforce cultural change; (3) promoting staff development; (4) communicating cultural norms, values and beliefs; (5) sharing power and responsibility; and (6) expressing cultural values through symbols. On the whole, Leithwood and Jantzi (1991) suggest that these strategies constituted transformational leadership. Additionally, the researchers found support indicating that principals' actions were a significant part of the restructuring process. They emphasized the principals' access to transformational strategies that provide for the development of collaborative school cultures by affecting staffs understanding. These enhanced understandings enveloped purposes and practices that increased capacity to solve future professional problems. The results of this study supported the researchers' premise that transformational leadership is associated with strategies most likely to foster the development of collaborative culture.

The researcher has chosen to define current reform initiatives through transformational leadership strategies. The challenges of school restructuring have been cited as reasons for advocating a move from instructional leadership to transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1993), especially for those in administrative roles such as principals. The study of the meaning and utility of such leadership in schools is still in the early stages of development. It is unclear what skills and capacities school principals engage in as transformational leaders. "There is a need for more case studies and ethnographies" (Lincoln, 1989). Transformational changes must be counted among the most important practices making contribution to the changing role of the principal in today's schools.

The intent of a study by Leithwood, Jantzi, and Dart (1991a) was to develop a more coherent conception of policy implementation processes based largely on commitment strategies in the context of school reform. To develop a conception of policy implementation processes, this data was sought to provide insight into the in-

school leadership actions taken to foster a policy developed by the British Colombia Ministry of Education and what the actions' relationship was to policy implementation outcomes. The policy was intended to reform educational practices for student's first three years of elementary school. The sample included twelve schools evenly divided across three districts.

The results provided the researchers three insights about leadership that fostered teachers' commitment to change. First, such leadership is frequently distributed across several roles including teachers, principals, and consultants. Second, based on their expertise, those with formal school leadership authority must assume a significant amount of the school's leadership. Third and most importantly, leadership practices for change that emerge from this study were associated with four transformational leadership dimensions from Bass (1985): vision, group goals, individual support, and intellectual stimulation. The most exciting prospect emerging from this study, states Leithwood, Jantzi, and Dart (1991a), was the possibility of forging the findings into a coherent theory of leadership for change.

Two variables are cited consistently in current restructuring literature. Principal leadership behavior and school culture, specifically, the impact that principals' transformational leadership behavior can have on school effectiveness when a school's culture is changed to promote more collaborative principal-teacher relationships is a theme pertinent to this study. As teachers and principals work collaboratively, new norms for schools develop creating potential for new roles, relationships, and expectations among teachers. An empowering, inclusive type of leadership practice is demonstrated consistently by principals across various effective schools (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1992; & Rosenholtz, 1989). Consequently, it may be concluded that principals most capable of bringing about school reform improvements appeared to employ transformational leadership strategies.

Transformational Leadership and Principal's Methods of Dealing with Problems

Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) investigated group problem solving processes that principals used with their staffs. Three theoretical constructs were used to direct the

researchers' search for evidence of transformational leadership in the specific practices of effective principals. Evidence of transformational leadership was sought in the means used by principals: (1) to generate better solutions to school problems; (2) to develop teachers' commitment to implementing such solutions; and (3) to foster long-term staff development. The sample consisted of four elementary principals designated as "expert" and five designated as "typical".

Evidence was found that expert principals used specific problem solving practices consistent with the concept of transformational leadership. The researchers pointed out that the everyday act of group problem solving offers principals many opportunities for exercising transformational leadership but typical principals do not make use of these opportunities. They concluded that practices associated with transformational leadership were particularly clear in the solution processes of expert principals. Expert principals exemplified open-mindedness, honesty, care, and attention to the group's needs and though processes which contrasted starkly to the solution processes of typical principals who tended to rely on less collaborative models of problem solving. Findings from Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) supported the notion that expert principals used group problem solving practices that are transformational leadership strategies.

<u>Transformational Leadership Behavior and School Culture</u>

The inclusion of school culture in this conceptual framework is important because, as Goodlad's study (1984) points out, "Alike as schools may be in many ways, each school has an ambience (or culture) of its own and, further, its ambience suggest to the careful observer useful approaches to making better schools" (p.81). The attitudes and beliefs of those in the school create mental models of what schooling is and how others in the school should and will respond to events and actions. It is from these attitudes and beliefs that the culture of the school is created.

For Schein (1992), leadership is critical to the creation and maintenance of culture. Bass (1985) suggested that while transactional leaders work within their organizational culture, transformational leaders change them. Tichy and Ulrich (1984)

think that the transformational leader needs to understand and realign the organization's culture as a way of providing meaning by making sense of symbols and events.

Culture is an expression that tries to capture the informal side of social organizations such as schools. Schein (1992) delineates the context of culture:

1. Observed behavioral regularities when people interact.
2. The norms that evolve in working groups.
3. The dominant values espoused by an organization.
4. The philosophy that guides an organization's policy toward employees.
5. The informal rules of the game for getting along with the organization.
6. The feeling that is conveyed in an organization by the physical layout and the way which the members of the organization interact with other outsiders, (p. 6).

Schein asserts, one is likely to see a constant interplay between culture and leadership. Understanding cultural issues in organizations is necessary to identify what may be the priority issues for leaders and leadership. Leadership is the source of beliefs and values that get a group moving and dealing with its internal and external problems. One of the most decisive functions of school leadership may well be the creation of culture. Leaders create mechanisms for the internalization of culture.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen this definition as the definitive explanation for school culture. Schein's definition of culture follows:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 12).

Schein (1992) suggests organizational culture exist at three levels: the artifacts level, the values and beliefs level, and the underlying assumptions level.

Artifacts include the visible products of the group such as the architecture of the school. Within schools artifacts can be observed in hallways, offices, classrooms, lunchrooms. The language of bulletin boards and notices to parents and teachers publish important information about the school. Observable rituals and ceremonies include daily written and oral announcements, assemblies, and programs. This level of

culture includes all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when encountering the school.

Espoused values are at the conscious level of the organization. Much of the behavior that is observed at the artifactual level is predicted through espoused values. Within a school espoused values are observed in written form as the mission statement and goals. The school slogan or motto also represents espoused values.

Basic underlying assumptions are unconscious beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Basic assumptions tend to be those neither confronted nor debated. A basic assumption is observed in a school as general routines and procedures followed by the principal and teachers.

In this study the school's culture will be studied at three levels—the level of its artifacts, the level of its values, and the level of its basic assumptions. The pattern of basic assumptions operating within the school will be used to interpret artifacts and analyze articulated values. The essence of the school's culture is its pattern of shared, taken-for-granted basic assumptions, observable artifacts and shared espoused values, norms, and rules of behavior.

Schein's three-level representation of culture is not static. The values and beliefs that guide daily interaction (second level) or the artifacts that define the most visible elements of culture (first level) may shift. They may become part of the third, or more hidden, level of culture.

Culture is created in the first instance by the action of the leader, i.e., when a principal is assigned to a school. School culture is also embedded and strengthened by principals. Principal leadership behavior can be observed through the function of managing culture. It is the function of manipulating culture that provides the most difficult challenge to principals.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The core of this research review examines six variables of principal leadership behavior through the lens of transformational leadership. These variables include the following: (1) relevance of the transformational leadership construct in education, (2)

transformational leadership and school success, (3) transformational leadership and schools with a large number of at-risk students, (4) transformational leadership behavior of principals, (5) transformational leadership and principal's methods of dealing with problems, and (6) transformational behavior and school culture. Research indicates that transformational leadership practices are consistent with change strategieS recommended in school effectiveness literature. Prevelance and specific evidence of these variables in the school selected for this study will be summarized in the findings. In the next chapter, the five research questions identified earlier in this chapter guide investigation into the worklife of one principal in an achieving inner-city elementary school.

CHAPTER 2

EMERGING DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

Methods and procedures used to investigate research questions guiding this study are presented in this chapter. In particular, the following topics are discussed: (a) research design, (b) selection of the case , (c) general description of the case, (d) procedures for data collection , and (e) procedures for data analysis.

<u>Research Design</u>

The context of research findings from the literature review and the conceptual framework guided this study. According to Lincoln and Guba(1985), the purpose of a qualitative study is to "accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to an understanding" (p.227). A qualitative research approach was selected for this study to explore one principal's work life in an achieving inner-city elementary school. The design of the research allowed involvement with the principal during daily activities within the school. This level of involvement, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) "allows for deeper understanding of experience from the perspective of the participant" (p.44).

In order to approach this study in a way that would allow discovery during the early stages of data collection and data analysis, the emergent design as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) was followed. This design requires beginning the study with questions and ideas that maintain the focus of the study. However, the emergent design also allows for refinement of questions in order to pursue other ideas and issues during the data collection and data analysis process.

There were several components built into the research design that increase the trustworthiness of research (Maykut and Morehouse,1994). Multiple methods of data collection were used. "Convergence of a major theme or pattern in the data from interviews, observations,and documents lended strong credibility to the findings" (p. 146). Interviews, observations, and the results of the MLQ were triangulated as part of data analysis to confirm themes as patterns. An "audit trail" to include the researchers' journal, original transcripts and interview notes will be maintained.

<u>Limitations</u>

The most apparent limitation for this study was that it focused on one principal in one school. The worklife of the principal as perceived by self and others was examined within the confines of the setting of the school. Research focused on the actions, beliefs, and personal characteristics of the principal. Also included in the examination of the worklife of the principal – school, school characteristics, school outcomes, and educational program. Examination of the worklife of the principl through comparison and contrast was not conducted.

<div align="center"><u>Selection of the Case</u></div>

"The approach to purposefully select people and settings for a study acknowledges the complexity that characterizes human and social phenomena…" (Maykut and Morehouse, p. 56). The case for this study included one elementary school and the principal of that school within an urban Virginia school division. The school and principal were selected purposefully. The researcher knows of the school by it's reputation among educators, national recognition and awards, and personal knowledge.This is a unique case of a principal's exemplary leadership within one school with a high number of at-risk students achieving academic success.

<div align="center"><u>General Description of the Case</u></div>

<u>Demographic Data</u>

The school serves approximately 380 kindergarten through second graders in an inner-city community where health, nutritional, economic, safety, and academic concerns exist. Appendix A is a narrative description by staff of Riversedge Elementary School (1995). One of twenty-six elementary schools in the school division, the school has the second largest at-risk population with ninety-two percent of the student population considered disadvantaged based on their eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch. The student body is 98 percent African American, 2 percent Caucasian, and less than one percent Asian, or Hispanic youngsters. Students are children of severe poverty who enter school with limited literacy and background experiences. Single female households make up 70 percent of the families of the school, 18 percent of the

students reside with both parents, the remaining percentage of students reside with fathers only, foster parents, grandparents, or guardian. A summary of demographic information is in Table 2. A summary of school division enrollment data for elementary schools and the percentage of enrollment eligible for free and reduced-price lunch is in Table 3.

There are approximately an equal number of males and females attending Riversedge Elementary School. Special Education students are served in resource and self-contained classrooms and make up 17 percent of the school's enrollment.

Riversedge Elementary School is one of four locations within the city, which house an elementary program for talented and gifted students (TAG). Riversedge Elementary School is located in a residential neighborhood of single family homes, public housing projects, and apartments. A small number of students walk to school daily from locations within two to three blocks of the school. The largest percentages of students ride school busses from within the school zone. Some special education and TAG Enrichment students are bussed from other school zones.

<u>Academic Indicators</u>

Children served enter school with limited literacy and background experiences. The implications of these factors cannot be underestimated. Children are learning and are achieving in a school environment that has been carefully designed to foster success. As shown in Table 4, the percentage of students at or above grade level in reading has increased over the past five years as measured by the school's performance on the Degrees of Reading Power assessment. Students at Riversedge Elementary School exit second grade reading comparable to other students attending schools of similar demographics in the school division.

Table 2

Demographic Data on Students at Riversedge Elementary School

Variables	N	%
Total enrollment	343	100
Gender		
Male	172	50
Female	171	50
Ethnicity		
American Indian	0	0
Asian	0	0
Black	337	98
Hispanic	1	<1
White	4	1
Special Education		
Resource	38	11
Self-contained	21	6
Talented and gifted	27	8
Free and reduced-price lunch	315	92

Source: School Division Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1998).

Table 3

Enrollment and Free or Reduced-price Lunch Status by K-5 School

School	School Enrollment	Percentage of students receiving Free or reduced-price lunch
1	502	87
2	665	63
3	538	29
4	356	97
5	575	26
6	776	55
7	802	33
8	688	44
9	339	33
10	502	57
11	806	45
12	799	50
13	426	87
14[a]	374	92
15	624	71
16	746	31
17	773	59
18	456	59
19	763	31
20	552	43
21	595	52
22	600	47
23	468	77
24	613	69
25	429	56
26	475	40
School Division	17479	50

[a]Riversedge Elementary School. Note: Shaded lines represent schools of similar demographics.
Source: School Division Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1993-1998).

Table 4

Percentage of Students Scoring at or Above Grade Level on Degrees of Reading Power, Grade 2, by School, 1993-94 – 1997-98

		School Year			
School	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
1	32	54	56	65	77
2	66	70	77	62	69
3	86	78	88	84	82
4	19	31	41	41	49
5	89	89	93	84	64
6	70	67	78	53	66
7	75	71	66	68	71
8	79	81	86	74	81
9	87	76	77	75	70
10	62	65	63	45	53
11	57	63	66	64	60
12	14	71	75	82	61
13	41	67	80	73	70
14 [a]	55	35	62	65	66
15	55	53	68	75	81
16	84	81	80	75	72
17	na	na	na	57	67
18	60	69	72	62	77
19	75	73	78	68	71
20	82	86	63	72	83
21	61	54	57	59	61
22	74	60	77	77	84
23	64	49	29	35	48
24	68	44	69	74	68
25	81	53	66	57	73
26	76	78	81	93	72
Division Average	64	70	67	68	66

[a]Riversedge Elementary School. Note: Shaded lines represent schools of similar demographics. Source: School Division Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1993-1998).

The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) is a measure of reading comprehension. Each DRP test is composed of at least eight non-fiction selections on a variety of topics that are ordered by increasing difficulty. Each passage has seven deleted words. The task which students must perform is to choose from five possible choices the one word that most appropriately fits in each blank.

The Degrees of Reading Power scale is referred to as DRP units that provide a common measure of the readability level of students. A student's DRP scores are intended to estimate the difficulty level of reading materials the student can comprehend independently or with instruction. In the school and school division where this study is being conducted, DRP results are reported as the percentage of students who are reading at or above grade level. Students in second grade at Riversedge Elementary School demonstrate reading comprehension skills higher than the overall percentage for minority students throughout the school division (Table 4). Additional information on the performance of Riversedge second grade students on the DRP is presented in Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7.

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

School attendance is defined as being present at school. For the purpose of this study, school attendance is measured by counting the number of days each student enrolled in Riversedge Elementary School was absent from school ten days or less. This method of accounting for student attendance is taken from the Virginia Department of Education Outcome Accountability Project Summary Report (OAP, 1997). The percentage of students absent 10 days or less for twenty-six K-5 schools is shown in Table 8. The percentage of students absent 10 days or less from Riversedge Elementary School is shown in Table 9. The data in both tables are based on attendance data from OAP reports over five years. While the division-wide attendance rate is higher, Riversedge Elementary School over the past five years shows improving school attendance.

Table 5

Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level on Degrees of Reading Power, School
Division and Riversedge Elementary School Grade 2, 1993-94 – 1997-98

School year	School Division	Riveredge Elementary School	Difference
1993-94	61	55	- 9
1994-95	70	35	- 35
1995-96	67	62	- 5
1996-97	68	65	- 3
1997-98	66	66	- 0

Source: School Division Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1993-1998).

Table 6

<u>Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level on Degrees of Reading Power, School Division and Riversedge Elementary School, Results Disaggregated by Ethnicity, Grade 2, 1993-94 - 1997-98</u>

School year	School division Disaggregated by Ethnicity		Riversedge Elementary School Disaggregated by Ethnicity		Difference	
	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Black</u>
1993-94	61	53	55	55	-6	+2
1994-95	70	61	35	35	-35	-26
1995-96	67	58	62	62	- 5	+4
1996-97	68	61	65	65	- 3	+4
1997-98	66	58	66	66	- 0	+8

Source: Public School Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1993-1998).

Table 7

Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level on Degrees of Reading Power, School Division and Riversedge Elementary School, Results Disaggregated by Disadvantaged and Non-disadvantaged, Grade 2, 1994-95 - 1997-98

School year	School division Disaggregated by Disadvantaged and Non-disadvantaged		Riversedge Elementary School Disaggregated by Disadvantaged and Non-disadvantaged		Difference	
	Disad	Nondisad	Disad	Nondisad	Disad	Nondisad
1994-95	51	77	29	*	-22	*
1995-96	57	77	62	*	+ 5	*
1996-97	61	78	63	*	+ 2	*
1997-98	58	76	63	*	+ 5	*

*Less than 10 students included in subgroup. Source: Public School Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles.

Table 8

Percentage of Students, K-5, Absent 10 Days or Less by School, 1993-94 – 1997-98

School			School year		
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
1	54	64	64	63	65
2	53	73	78	77	68
3	79	78	86	88	81
4	39	52	70	72	68
5	85	86	84	82	84
6	59	78	82	78	69
7	84	87	86	87	78
8	70	76	84	86	83
9	80	83	87	87	82
10	74	79	80	78	68
11	80	74	80	80	75
12	94	92	92	90	77
13	51	72	72	74	69
14 [a]	59	69	73	70	68
15	87	83	85	82	79
16	90	83	86	82	79
17	na	na	76	71	74
18	74	76	82	80	75
19	86	85	87	88	84
20	51	75	78	80	75
21	80	79	78	75	72
22	84	81	88	87	77
23	71	63	65	72	59
24	74	73	79	79	67
25	74	77	81	76	67
26	87	79	88	84	81
Division Average	78	78	79	78	75

[a]Riversedge Elementary School. Note: Shaded lines represent schools of similar demographics. Source: School Division Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles.

Table 9

Percentage of Students Absent 10 Days or Less, Riversedge Elementary School,
1993-94 – 1997-98

School year	School division: Absent 10 days Or less		Riversedge Elementary School: Absent 10 days Or less		Difference	
	All	Black	All	Black	All	Black
1993-94	78	75	59	58	- 19	-17
1994-95	78	71	69	65	- 9	- 6
1995-96	79	76	74	74	- 5	- 2
1996-97	78	75	68	67	- 10	- 8
1997-98	75	72	68	68	- 7	- 4

Source: Demographic and Student Achievement Profiles (1993-1998).

<u>Data Collection</u>

Data were collected that relate to the focus of inquiry. School division permission was sought to conduct the study. Data were gathered through (a) Bass and Avolio's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x (b) individual interviews, and (c) observations. Data were analyzed for themes and patterns, then, results were triangulated and provided answers to research questions.

<u>Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5x)</u>

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x (MLQ) is describes as a full range assessement of leadership. The Rater and Self-rating versions of the MLQ are identical in format except for the rewording of items for respective respondents. Raters indicate the frequency the leader exhibits a particular behavior or evoke a certain response. The response options range form "not at all" to frequently, if not always."

The 45 item MLQ Form 5x contains the following twelve scales: (1) idealized influence (attributed), (2) idealized influence (behavior), (3) inspirational motivation, (4) intellectual stimulation, (5) individualized consideration, (6) contingent reward, (7) management-by-exception (active), management-by-exception (passive), (9) laissez-faire, (10) extra effort, (11) effectiveness, and (12) satisfaction.

Transformational leaders display behaviors associated with four transformational styles: idealized behaviors--living with your ideals, inspirational motivation--inspiring others, intellectual stimulation--stimulating others, and individualized consideration--coaching and developing. Attributed to them is a fifth characteristic called idealized attributes--respect, trust, and faith--based on these four transformational styles.

Transactional leadership is a process of gaining compliance from others through contracts with the leader. Transactional leaders display behaviors associated with constructive and corrective transactions. The constructive style is labeled contingent reward and the corrective style is labeled management-by-exception which can be either active or passive. One subscale represents the leadership charactieristic laissez-faire, or, nonleadership.

Transformational and transactional leadership are related to the success of the group. Success is measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x by how often raters perceive their leaders to be motivating, how effective raters perceive their leaders to be at different levels of the organization, and how satisfied raters are with their leaders' methods of working with others.

Item Selection for the MLQ Form 5x

Two factor analyses, Partial Least Squares and LISREL, were used to select 45 items to include in the MLQ Form 5x (Bass & Avolio, 1997). There were four items selected for each leadership factor, which best represented the content of the construct and also ones that exhibited the best fit with the overall theoretical model.

The MLQ assesses five components of transformational leadership, three components of transactional leadership, one component of nontransactional leadership, and three outcome components.The scales and number of items per scale are shown in Table 10. The scales have been found to be internally consistent . The key factors measured by the MLQ have now been empirically linked to individual and organizational success in three independent meta-analyses (Gaspar,1992; Lowe, 1996; Pattterson, 1995).

Reliability of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Scales for the MLQ Form 5x have been found to be internally consistent. Reliabilities for MLQ Form 5x are shown in Table 11 for all items in each scale. These scale scores are based on ratings by others evaluating a target leader. No self-ratings are included. Bass & Avolio (1990) recommend using followers' descriptions of leaders for research purposes due to the higher reliabilities and leaders' tendency to inflate their ratings by comparison with those of their followers.

The range of Spearman Brown reliability coefficients was from .81 to .96. Nine research investigations resulted in 2,080 associates rating leaders from business, health care, military, and government organizations. This researcher assumes that widespread applicability of the MLQ Form 5x applies to education as well. All of the

Table 10

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x: Number of Items Per Scale

Scale	Number of items
Transformational leadership	
Idealized influence (Behavior)	4
Idealized influence (Attributed)	4
Inspirational motivation	4
Intellectual stimulation	4
Individualized consideration	4
Transactional leadership	
Constructive transactions	
Contingent rewards	4
Corrective transactions	
Management-by-exception (Active)	4
Management-by-exception (Passive)	4
Nontransactional leadership	
Laissez-faire	4
Outcome factors	
Satisfaction with the leader	2
Individual, group, and organizational effectiveness	4
Extra effort by associates	3
Total	45

Note: From Full Range of Leadership Development: Manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (p. 13), by B.M. Bass and B.J. Avolio,1997, Palo Alto:Mind Garden, Inc. Copyright 1997 by Mind Garden, Inc. Adapted with permission.

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for MLQ Form 5x , N = 2080

Scale	M	SD	Spearman-Brown Reliability
Attributed charisma (AC)	2.56	0.84	0.90
Idealized influence (II)	2.64	0.85	0.91
Inspirational motivation (IM)	2.64	0.87	0.94
Intellectual stimulation (IS)	2.51	0.86	0.93
Individualized Consideration (IC)	2.66	0.93	0.93
Contingent Reward (CR)	2.20	0.89	0.91
Mananagement-by-exception (Active) (MBEA)	1.75	0.77	0.81
Management-by-exception (Passive) (MBEP)	1.11	0.82	0.87
Laissez-faire (LF)	0.89	0.74	0.88
Extra Effort (EE)	2.60	1.16	0.94
Effectiveness (EFF)	2.62	0.72	0.94
Satisfaction (SAT)	2.57	1.28	0.94

Note: Each scale varied from 0 = "not at all" to 4 = "frequently, if not always."
From Full Range of Leadership Development: Manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (p. 53), B.M. Bass and B.J. Avolio,1997, Palo Alto: Mind Garden, Inc. Copyright 1997 by Mind Garden, Inc. Adapted with permission.

Validity of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Validity of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was established by Bass and colleagues, then further supported through research in educational settings (Bass, 1990). The key factors measured by the MLQ have now been empirically linked to individual and organizational success in three independent meta-analyses (Gaspar, 1992; Lowe, 1996; Patterson, 1995).In validating the instrument, Bass (1985) used data from 104 military officers who had completed an early form of his leadership questionnaire describing their superiors and performed a principal components factor analysis.Two subsequent factor analyses using a later version of the leadership questionnaire, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 5, were carried out. Bass and Avolio (1990) commented that:

> …the factors comprising the MLQ have been conceptually and empirically derived from two independently conducted factor analyses (Bass, 1985) using the principal components methods with varimax rotation, and they have maintained almost the same structure in two replications of the original factor analyses. (p. 19).

In this study Spearman-Brown's estimated reliability was calculated for each of the scales. Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for MLQ 5x are shown in Table 11 for all items in each scale. The scores indicate that all the scales' reliabilities were generally high. The MLQ 5x reliably measures each leadership factor with some minor deviations.

The latest version of the MLQ Form 5x, has been used in nearly 200 research programs, doctoral dissertations, and masters theses around the world for over the last four years. MLQ Form 5x has been translated into several languages for use in various research projects. MLQ Form 5x items were pooled from several sources.

Items for the MLQ Form 5x were developed using a five step method. First, a series of factor analyses were completed using the MLQ 5R. This provided a base for selecting items that exhibited the best convergent and discriminant validatities. Second, Howell and Avolio's (1993) preliminary results with an earlier version of MLQ 5x (MLQ 5x Form 10) were used to select items for inclusion in MLQ 5x. Third, new

items for MLQ 5x were developed using recent literature on distinguishing charismatic from transformational leadership. Fourth, six scholars in the field of leadership received an earlier version of the MLQ 5x (MLQ Form 10) and made recommendations for modifying or eliminating items based on the conceptual model for the full range of leadership development (Bass & Avolio, 1991). They judged also whether items were about behavior or impact, guided by the full range of leadership behaviors and styles. These recommendations were included in the final development phase of the MLQ 5x.

<u>Administration and Use of theMultifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x</u>

The questionnaire was administered as part of an individual interview. Participants marked ratings directly on the answer sheet. The principal completed the Self-Rating form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x. Teachers completed the Rater Form.

Forms were scored using the guide provided by the publisher of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire for Research. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x scores were used during data analysis to account for the principal's leadership behavior as perceived by self and others.

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

Interviews were conducted with the principal and assistant principal, one third of the current teaching staff,and two parents who serve as volunteers within the school. The principal was interviewed to determine work life characteristics and the association of these characteristics with various functions of the school. Specific behaviors associated with problem solving and managing the educational program of Riversedge Elementary School were determined through interviews. All participants were interviewed individually. Four interview guides were constructed to collect data, one for each of the groups to be interviewed (Appendix B).

<u>Development of the Interview Questionnaires</u>

The conceptual framework, literature review, and research questions were the basis for selection of domains. Each interview guide has three domains: work life of the principal, work environment, and school outcomes. The domains and related interview

questions for each of the guides are in Table 12. The domain analysis for interview questions indicated that each participant was asked questions about work life of the principal, work environment, and school outcomes. Each interview guide had questions related to the research question of the study (Table 13).

<u>Content Validity</u>

Validity was assessed by a group of educational administrators. Participants were given a copy of the interview guide for principal, assistant principal, teaching staff, and parent volunteers. After a brief introduction, which included background information about the study, participants were asked to read and categorize each question from the guide according to the domain where it best fit (Appendix C). Responses were compiled and used to determine content validity of questions. Responses of the group are illustrated in Table 14.

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

<u>Domains for Data Collection During Observations</u>

A domain analysis for observations was completed to determine events, setting, and artifacts for data collection. Results of a domain analysis for observations is shown in Table 15.

Observations were conducted in order to collect data pertaining to principal leadership behavior and school culture within the elementary school.

<u>Data Collection During Observations</u>

The principal was observed in the following locations: main office,classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and auditorium. Notes taken during the observation period will include comments on the setting and interactions during the school activites. The principal was observed during faculty meetings, during daily activities of academic and administrative detail, during school-based staff development activities, and school activities involving parents and volunteers.

Table 12

Domains and Related Interview Questions in the Interview Guides by Groups

		Domains											
		Work life of the principal				Work environment				School outcomes			
	Questions	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV
1a	Tell me how you came to be principal here?	x											
1b	If I were a new parent visiting your school, what is important for me to know about this school? How did it get this way?		x				x				x		
1c	If I were a new parent visiting your school, what is important for me to know about this school? How did it get this way?				x				x				x
1d	If I was a new parent visiting this school, what is important for me to know about this school? How did it get this way?			x				x				x	
2a	Describe your motivation to be a school administrator.	x											
2b	Tell me about your daily work. What is a typical day like?						x						
2c	Describe the principal's work in this school.				x				x				
2d	Tell me about your daily work in the school. What is a typical day like?			x							x	x	
3a	Describe your training as a school administrator.	x											
3b	How do you view the work of the principal in this school?		x				x				x		
3c	Describe an event in which you have participated that best												

Note. P = principal; T = teacher; AP = assistant principal; and PV = parent and volunteer. Respondents for interviews questions: a = principal interview b = teacher interview guide; c = parent and volunteer interview guide; d =assistant principal interview guide. Taken from Appendix B.

Table 12 (Continues)

		Domains											
		Work life of the principal				Work environment				School outcomes			
		P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV
	illustrates the principal's leadership.				x								
3d	Tell me about the work of the principal in this school.			x				x				x	
4a	Describe the influence of mentors in your training as a school administrator.	x				x							
4b	Describe an event that best exemplifies the principal's leadership.		x				x				x		
4c	What makes this school unique?			x					x				x
4d	What is there about the principals work that makes a difference in this school?			x				x				x	
5a	Describe memorable administrators or other significant people or events while training as an administrator	x											
5b	What is the school's mission and vision? How was this information relayed to you?		x					x					x
5c	Do you think the school is successful? Why?			x				x					x
5d	Describe an event that best exemplifies the principal's leadership.			x									x

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Table 12 (Continues)

		Domains												
		Work life of the principal				Work environment				School outcomes			
		P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV
6a	If I were a new parent visiting your school, what is important for me to know about this school? How did it get this way?	x				x				x			
6b	What daily routines are observed at this school?		x				x				x		
6c	What outside factors related to school operations affect what the principal does daily, i.e., central administration, school board, business, community, etc.				x				x				
6d	What daily routines are observed at this school?			x				x				x	
7a	Talk to me about yourself as principal. How would you describe to me as if I was meeting you (perhaps at a professional conference)?	x				x				x			
7b	How were these routines established within the school?		x				x						
7c	What do you see the principal doing in the community? When do you see the principal involved outside the school?				x								x
7d	How were these daily routines established within the school?			x				x				x	
8a	Talk to me about your daily work. Tell me what a typical day is like. How do you feel after a day at work?	x				x				x			
8b	When do you have celebrations at this school? Tell me about them.												

Table 12 (Continues)

		Work life of the principal				Work environment				School outcomes			
		P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV
	What is the principal's role in these celebrations?		x				x				x		
8d	Do you think the school is successful? Why?				x				x			x	
9a	Let's talk about your role as principal. How do you want others to view you?	x				x				x			
9b	Do you think the school is successful? Why?		x			x					x		
9d	What makes the school unique?			x				x					x
10a	What problems do you face as principal in your school?	x				x				x			
10b	What is important to teachers in this school? Administrators? Parents? Students?						x				x		
10d	What programs have been started at this school since the principal has been here?			x				x					x
11a	What do you do when you respond to problems?	x				x							
11b	What makes this school unique?		x				x				x		
11d	What has been the principal's role in these programs?			x				x					x
12a	How do you feel abut the problems you face daily?	x											
12b	What is the principal's role in developing the school's unique qualities?												

Table 12 (Continues)

		Domains												
		Work life of the principal					Work environment					School outcomes			
		P	T	AP	PV		P	T	AP	PV		P	T	AP	PV
12d	What outside factors related to school operations affect what the principal does daily , i.e., central administration, community, school board, etc?			x					x						
13a	Do you think the school is successful? Why?	x					x					x			
13b	What priorities has the principal established in this school?		x					x					x		
13d	What is there about the principal that affects dealing with external factors?			x											
14a	What vision and mission is established for this school? How did it get this way?						x					x			
14b	What outside factors related to school operations affect what the principal does daily, i.e., central administration, community, school board, etc.		x					x							
15a	Describe your behavior as it relates to relaying to staff priorities that are of greatest concern to the school.	x					x								
16a	What makes this school unique?						x					x			
17a	What do you celebrate at this school? When do you have														

Table 12 (Continues)

		Domains											
		Work life of the principal				Work environment				School outcomes			
		P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV	P	T	AP	PV
	celebrations?	x				x				x			
18a	How do you feel about your work?	x											
19a	What programs have been started at this school since you became principal? (b) What has been your role in these programs?	x				x				x			
20a	What do you do that affects the learning of students?	x				x				x			
21a	What is there about you that makes a difference in this school?	x											
22a	What do you think are the important outcomes of your school? (b) How does what you do affect these outcomes?	x				x				x			
23a	What external factors affect what you do daily in the school?	x				x				x			
24a	What is there abut you that affects how you deal with external factors?	x											

Note.   P = principal; T = teacher; AP = assistant principal; and PV = parent and volunteer. Respondents for interviews questions: a = principal interview b = teacher interview guide; c = parent and volunteer interview guide; d =assistant principal interview guide. Taken from Appendix B.

Table 13

Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research questions		Interview questions			
		Principal Interview guide (a)	Teacher Interview guide (b)	Parent & Volunteer Interview guide (c)	Asst. Principal Interview guide (d)
1	What is the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school?	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
2a	What is the work environment of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school?	4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	1, 2, 5, 6, 7,11,12	2, 4	1, 2, 3, 5, 6 7, 8
2b	How does the work environment affect the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school, and how does the principal affect the work environment?	6, 9, 12	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13,	2, 7	3, 4, 7, 10, 11
2c	How does the culture of the school affect the worklife of the principal?	4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11	1, 4, 5	1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10
2d	How do the school's character-istics affect the work life of the principal?	4, 6, 8, 9,12	1, 2, 3, 6, 11,	1, 4,	1, 2, 6, 9

Note. The numbers refer to questions on interview guides a – d.

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Table 13 (Continues)

Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research questions	Interview questions			
	Principal Interview guide (a)	Teacher Interview guide (b)	Parent & Volunteer Interview guide (c)	Asst. Principal Interview guide (d)
2e What external factors affect the work life of the principal?	23, 24	4, 14	6, 7	12, 13
2f How do external factors affect the work life of the principal?	10, 23, 24	2, 6, 10, 12, 14	6, 7	12, 13
3 What are the personal characteristics of the principal, and how have these affected the worklife of the principal.	1, 2, 3, 5, 7,	1, 4, 5, 8, 14, 16	2, 3, 4, 5 9, 11	1, 3, 4, 8
4 How does the worklife of a principal affect the educational program of an achieving urban elementary school?	7, 9, 13, 15, 17	1, 3, 9, 12	1, 4	1, 2, 3, 7, 8

Note. The numbers refer to questions on interview guides a – d.

Table 13 (Continues)

Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

5a What are the outcomes of an achieving urban elementary school?	12, 13, 15, 17	1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	1, 4, 5	1, 7, 8, 9
5b How does the worklife of the principal affect these outcomes, and how do these outcomes affect the worklife of the principal?	13, 14, 16, 17 20, 22	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12	1, 4, 5	1, 8, 9

Note. The numbers refer to questions on interview guides a – d.

Table 14

Content Validity: Domain Analysis of Items on Interview Quides, N=10

Interview guide and domains								Interview questions										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Principal interview guide (a)																	
Principal worklife	/////	/	//	/	////// ///	/////	///// ///	///// ///	//	//	///// //		//////	/////	////	///// //	///// //
School culture				/////		////		////	/////	////		/////	//////		///		////
School outcomes						////		////////	/////	///// ////		//////	//////		/////	///	///// ///
Teacher interview guide (b)																	
Principal worklife	//////		/////	////		//////	////	/////	/////	///	////						
School culture	///// ////	///// ///			/////	//////	////	//////	/////	///	////// ///						
School outcomes						//////		//////	////// //	////// ///	////						

Note: One tally mark represents one participant.

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Table 14 (Continues)

Content Validity: Domain Analysis of Items on Interview Quides, N=10

Interview guide and domains	Interview questions																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Parent and volunteer Interview guide (c)																	
Principal worklife	/////	///// /////	///// ///	/////	/////												
School culture	///// //	//		///// //	////												
School outcomes	/////		///	////	///// //												
Assistant Principal Interview guide (d)																	
Principal worklife	/////	////	///// /////	/////	///// /	/////	////	/////	///// /								
School culture	///// //	///// //	///	///	///// ///	/////	/////	///// ////	///								
School outcomes	///// /	///	////	////	///// //	///	///// //	///// //	/////								

Note: One tally mark represents one participant.

Table 15

Domain Analysis of Observations

Setting	Work life of the principal	Work Environment	School Outcomes
Public places			
Main office	x	x	
Classrooms	x	x	x
Cafeteria	x	x	
Auditorium	x	x	
Hallways	x	x	
Events			
Faculty meetings	x	x	
Inservice sessions	x		x
Assemblies	x	x	x
Classroom observation	x	x	x
Artifacts			
Logos		x	x
School newsletters	x	x	x
Faculty memos	x	x	x
Bulletin boards		x	x

The following activites were observed for components of the work environment of the school: Interactions between teachers and administrators – during assemblies;daily announcements, faculty meetings, and teacher committee meetings. Artifacts were examined for components of school culture. Samples of the following items were reviewed: school newsletters, bulletin boards, and awards.

Researcher as Participant Observer

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) provide a description of the role participant observer used for the purpose of this study:

> Participant observation by definition, requires the researcher to be in the field or present in the natural setting where the phenomenon under study takes place.The participant oberserver attempts to enter the lives of others, to indwell, in Polanyi's term, suspending as much as possible his or her own way of viewing the world. In the broadest sense the participant observer asks the questions: What is happening here? What is important in the lives of the people here? ….The task is one of listening hard and keenly observing what is going on among the people in a given situation, organization, or culture in an effort to more deeply understand it and them (p.69).

In this study participant observation simultaneously combined interviewing and observation. Observations included participation in and direct observation of identified activities. Participation and observation was combined as necessary to become capable of understanding the principal and school as an insider while describing the program for outsiders (Patton,1990, p. 28).

The researcher was known to staff within the school as an observer collecting data for the purpose of a study on principal leadership behavior. The researcher observed settings and events which occurred in the school on a daily basis. Building tours and site visits were scheduled in advance to observe faculty meetings and school programs. Additional site visit dates and times were unannounced. Written observations of interactions, artifact examination, and principal leadership behavior were recorded in a journal by the researcher according to the domain where it best fits.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Analysis began by using "analytic practices" from across different qualitative research types (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis process included coding data by category, comparing meanings within and across categories, refining categories, exploring relationships and patterns across categories, and integrating the data to develop an understanding of the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school.

The leadership of the principal is an important factor in the effectiveness of a school. The first research question focused attention on the leader by asking about the principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school. Data to answer questions were collected in two ways: The principal and all teaching staff completed the MLQ Questionnaire Form 5x. The principal, assistant principal, and a random selection of teachers participated in a face to face interview with the researcher.

The roster of current teachers was used in the random selection of one-third of teaching staff for interviews. Each teacher was assigned a random number. Names were placed in a lottery drawing and pulled randomly by a non-participating staff member. Selected teachers were contacted and consent requested prior to taped interviews.

The data was compared in six ways (Table 16) for purposes of triangulation: (1) principal's interview –teacher interview (2) principal's MLQ – teachers' MLQ (3) principal's MLQ – principal's interviews (4) teachers' interviews – principal's MLQ (5) principal's interviews – teachers' MLQ (6) teachers' MLQ – teachers' interviews. The summary is the best judgement between numbers and words. A summary of triangulation results in shown in Appendix D.

Table 16

MLQ and Interview Data: Six Areas of Triangulation

Interview data

	Principal	Teachers
Principal	(1) Principal's interview ←→	Teachers' interviews
Data	(2) Principal's MLQ (3) Principal's MLQ – Principal interview	(4) Teachers' interviews- Principal's MLQ
MLQ	(5) Principal's interview- teachers' MLQ Teachers' MLQ	(6) Teachers' MLQ – teachers' interviews
Teachers		
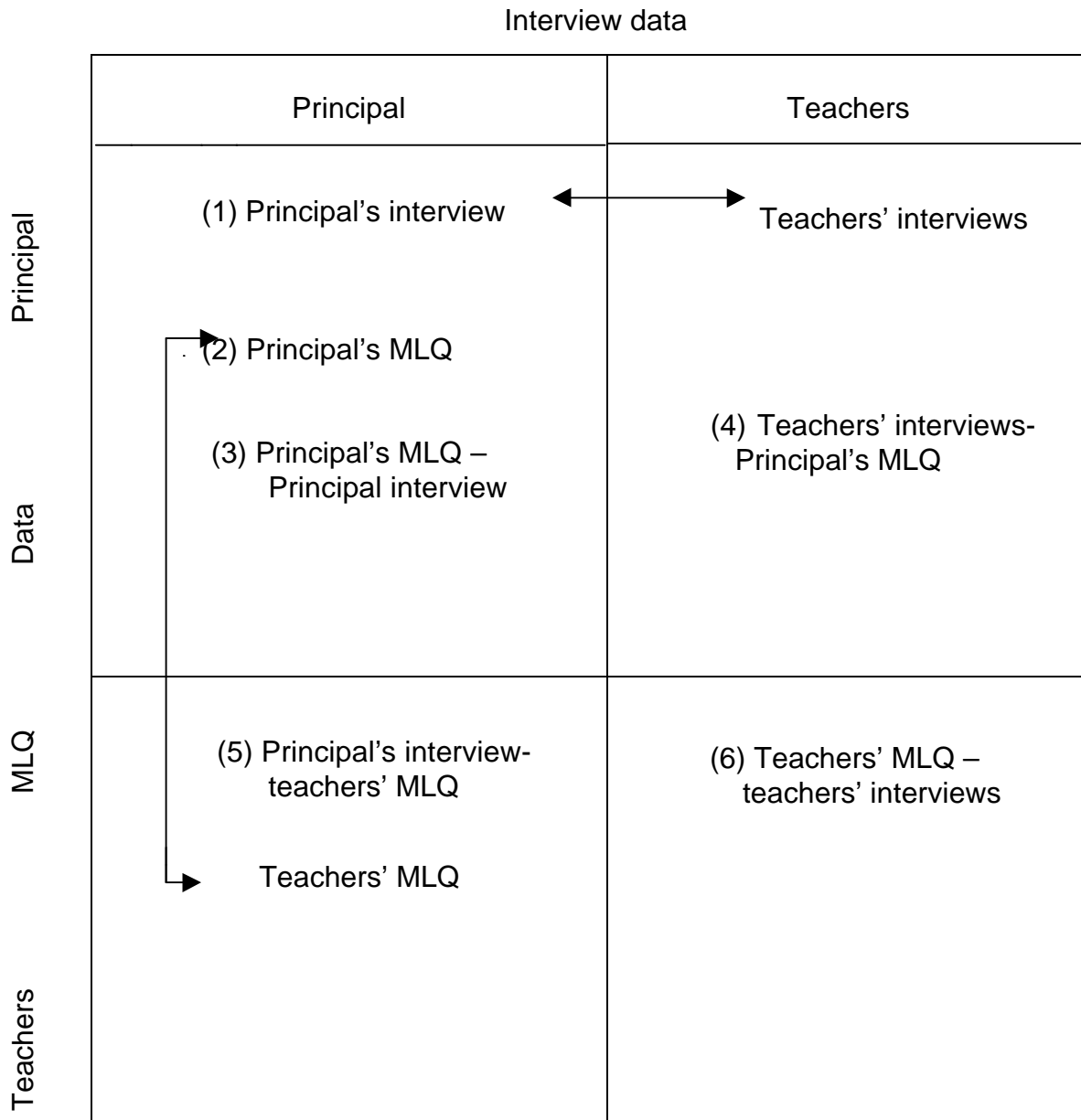
MLQ Form 5x

        The principal and other ratings on the MLQ were the first comparison. The principal and other ratings indicate the strength of the leadership behaviors of the principal in three areas: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Ratings of three outcomes at the school--extra effort of teachers and staff, the principal's leadership effectiveness, and the satisfaction of the principal, teachers, and staff with the leadership of the principal is reported in Chapter 3.

        Differences in the principal's and others' rating were calculated. The principal's own ratings were higher than teachers' (Bass & Avolio 1997). Both the principal and teacher's ratings were higher on the transformational scales than the transactional and laissez-faire scales.

        Because the school was considered an exemplary case of leadership effectiveness in a school with a large number of at-risk students, the researcher was interested in obtaining the level of transformational leadership at the school. It was expected that the principal would score high (above the 70th percentile) on all MLQ measures except Laissez-faire leadership.

Interviews

        Interview data and MLQ data is compared as follows. First, the interview data for each question was read and color-coded to denote emerging themes. Reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews and looking for recurring words or phrases will identifies themes. Secondly, themes from interview data will be compared to MLQ data categories. When matches occurred, data from MLQ and the qualitative data (actual quotations) from the interviews were compared for triangulation.

Observations

        Each observation was recorded in a field journal and transcribed. Phrases, sentences, or sentence groups from observation transcripts were coded. The researcher read the transcribed observational data and hand coded consistencies and

emerging themes. Data was analyzed by examining within and across coding categories. Within these categories additional themes that emerge will be recorded.

<u>Triangulation of Emerging Themes</u>

In addition to narrative explanation, raw data matrices were used to summarize findings. Raw data on school culture is reported based on Schein's (1992) three components of culture (artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions). Raw data was analyzed for themes and sub-themes within each major category.

A narrative summary of the data will be written. Likenesses of response determine the answers to research questions. Chapter 3 is a report of case study findings A statement of personal reflection, recommendations, and implications for further study will be drawn from the data and provided in

Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

PREAMBLE

Our students are so young, yet they cope with so much…I know the community has difficulties. It is very heartbreaking. The question, how can any child come to school with some of the situations they have to deal with, and keep focused on learning?
There's not much I can do from three in the afternoon to eight in the morning…but I can change a child's life from eight in the morning to three in the afternoon. It is critically important that I make school the best it can be for all the students who attend. … the school is like a haven, a little Mecca, a place where people respect each other and a place that is very safe. Although things might be happening at home, students know they can come here and be loved, be fed, and can be taken care of while learning.

Principal, Riversedge Elementary School

Introduction

The principal of Riversedge Elementary School takes seriously the responsibility of providing the best possible education for all children. The principal of this school is adamant in the conviction that every child counts and that every child can learn.

Narrative summaries contained in this chapter describe a school and the principal of that school. Collectively, these narrative summaries create a story of the principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school. The report of case study findings tells a story that intends to increase understanding of a principal's work life in an achieving urban elementary school. The conceptual framework and research questions served as a guide during data analysis. Results of the MLQ, interviews, and observations provided information for answering the research questions posed by this study.

Additional information in this chapter includes: themes and patterns discovered during data analysis; likenesses of responses presented as triangulated results; answers to research questions presented in thematic format; and results of the rating scale completed by the leader and others in the school. Specifically, MLQ results provide statistical and narrative data about the principal's leadership behavior.

Triangulation Results

Triangulation occurs when likenesses of responses emerge throughout various data sets. Triangulation points materialized while comparing sub-themes from interview data, MLQ data, and observation data recorded in field study notes. Appendix D contains summary information of sub-themes. Triangulation points represent indicators. These indicators provide answers to research questions in list format. Table17 contains research questions aligned with indicators.

Research Questions

Narrative explanation of answers to research questions follows. Answers to research questions and narrative explanation guide the remaining discussion in this chapter.

Research Question 1: The Principal's Worklife

"What is the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students?" This principal's worklife has similarities to principals of other schools. The unique characteristics of the school create an opportunity for the principal to show compassion and vision. The principal describes the school and her vision in the following way:

> We are a school with a breakfast and lunch program serving a student body of 92 percent free and reduced price lunch. People perceive our students as lower achieving because of the school has a high poverty level. There are social adversities surrounding the school but the school is a safe place and students learn. If needed, we provide supplies for grooming and clothes to families. We take care of necessities if necessary and then get down to the business of teaching children.

> I love the children attending school here. It took time for me to understand the structure within many of the families and the impact those dynamics have on children within the school setting. It took a while for me to understand the unbelievable circumstances many of them live under once they leave school daily….

> My beliefs grow out of passion for these students. I want students coming to a school where they are cared about and where they are safe. When students come to this school, classes will be exciting and inviting with developmentally appropriate curriculum" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Table 17

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators

1. What is the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school?
 	
  Actions
 	
  Beliefs
	In addition to characteristics similar to other elementary principals, the worklife of the principal is….
	
	▪ Demanding
	▪ Time consuming
	▪ Intense
	
	The principal must be….
	▪ Positive
	▪ Flexible
	▪ Responsive
	▪ Innovative
	▪ A buffer to staff form external factors
	▪ A conduit of information form outside the school
	▪ A facilitator
	▪ An active participant in monitoring instructional programs within the school
	▪ Visible
	▪ A leader
	▪ A good manager of time
	
	The principal believes in….
	▪ Respecting others
	▪ Mentoring others
	▪ Instilling a strong sense of team and a strong sense of purpose
	▪ Writing for professional journals
	▪ The importance of culture
	▪ Celebrating culture and affirming children
	▪ Professional development for self and others
	▪ Using the school's mission to broaden understanding and to promote cooperation among others
	▪ Emphasizing shared outlooks and viewpoints

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
2. What is the work environment of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students? Characteristics Beliefs Assumptions	*The work environment of the principal has….* ▪ A positive school climate ▪ Students who attend regularly ▪ Parents who rely on the support of the school ▪ Numerous educational programs ▪ Church and community agency involvement ▪ A strong academic focus ▪ Ongoing staff development ▪ A high school spirit ▪ A change orientation ▪ Afterschool activities that align with educational programs and family needs ▪ Safety as a major priority ▪ celebrations for academic improvement, academic achievement, and improved attendance ▪ High expectation for academic achievement and student conduct ▪ A child centered academic focus ▪ A defined mission
2b. How does the work environment affect the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students? How does the principal affect the work environment?	*The work environment causes the principal to….* ▪ Reorganize and reprioritize tasks ▪ manage frequent interruptions ▪ Work extended hours beyond the school day and school week ▪ Manage time efficiently ▪ Maintains academic focus

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
2b. (continues) How does the work environment affect the work life of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school? How does the principal affect he work environment?	▪ Maintain high academic focus ▪ Exert strong leadership ▪ motivate others *The principal affects the work environment by….* ▪ Motivating others ▪ Maintaining strong academic focus ▪ Maintaining culture ▪ Providing opportunities and resources for celebrations ▪ Linking educational programs to student needs and the needs of the community served ▪ providing strong leadership
2c. How does the culture of the school affect the work like of the principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students?	*The culture of the school causes the principal to…* ▪ Respond to a daily routine of intense work ▪ Respond to frequent interruptions or disruptions ▪ maintain involvement with community agencies, churches, and civic groups ▪ Work hours beyond school day and week ▪ Be responsive to parent or family emergencies that may be non-school related but impact student ability to attend school or perform well ▪ Take work home ▪ Reorganize and reprioritize work ▪ Emphasize the importance of safety on a daily basis ▪ Keep abreast of best practices in the field of educating young at-risk students

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
2d. How do the school's characteristics affect the work life of the principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students?	*The characteristics of the school cause the principal to…* ▪ Support students, staff, and parents ▪ Participate in meetings with church and civic groups ▪ Align educational programs with community needs ▪ Advocate within the school for educational programs based on performance data ▪ Articulate a positive vision of the future for the students of the school ▪ Encourage teachers to teach using effective instructional strategies ▪ Encourage teachers to model effective instructional strategies for other teachers within the school ▪ Serve as an agent of change within the school ▪ Communicate with others outside the school what is important to know about the school

2e. What external factors affect the work life of the principal?
 	
External factors
   Administrative
 	
External factors
   School characteristics
	External factors affecting the worklife of the principal are…
	
	▪ State and local school board policies
	▪ Central office request for information
	▪ Community involvement
	▪ State accreditation and testing standards
	▪ School division achievement standards
	▪ Poverty
	▪ Illiteracy
	▪ Family dynamics

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
2f. How do external factors affect the worklife of the principal?	*External factors cause the principal to…* ▪ Spend time in meetings away from the school ▪ Work by a schedule but be flexible enough to change plans if necessary ▪ Serve as a liaison between external information sources, external resources, and the staff ▪ Keep abreast of trends, issues, and best practices related to educating young at-risk students
3. What are the personal characteristics of the principal? How have these affected the worklife of the principal?	*The personal characteristics of the principal are…* ▪ Helper ▪ Mentor ▪ Mentee ▪ Intuitive ▪ Motivator ▪ Advisor ▪ Developer ▪ Organizer ▪ Affirming ▪ Enthusiastic ▪ Nurturing *The personal characteristics of the principal are associated with the principal's…* ▪ Ability to instill a strong sense of team ▪ Vision ▪ Resourcefulness ▪ Facilitative leadership ▪ Respectfulness ▪ Caring attitude ▪ Commitment to educating children

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
3. (continues) What are the personal characteristics of the principal? How have these affected the worklife of the principal?	▪ Proactive approach when dealing with everyday challenges ▪ Involvement ▪ Responsiveness
4. How does the worklife of the principal affect the educational programs of an achieving urban elementary school? How have these affected the worklife of the principal?	*Educational programs cause the principal to…* ▪ Implement programs based on need of students and the community served by the school ▪ Attend workshops and conferences with teacher on topics that assist with planning and implementing successful school programs ▪ Introduce change gradually ▪ Visit classroom regularly *Educational programs affect the principal's worklife by…* ▪ Allowing for shared decision-making ▪ Including teachers as leaders in the implementation of new programs
5a. What are the outcomes of an achieving urban elementary school?	*Outcomes for an achieving urban elementary school indicate…* ▪ A safe and orderly school ▪ Low teacher turnover ▪ Students attend school regularly

Table 17 (Continues)

Research Questions and Indicators

Research questions	Indicators
5a. (continues) What are the outcomes of an achieving urban elementary school?	• Sixty six percent of second grade students exit program reading at or above grade level • Increased parental involvement in such activities as after school reading and homework clubs, extra-curricular activities such as PTA, and school volunteer programs • Student achievement and citizenship is recognized during celebrations • Celebrations occur formally and informally • Community agencies, civic groups, and church groups support school needs
5b. How does the worklife of the principal affect these outcomes? How do these outcomes affect the worklife of the principal?	*Outcomes cause the principal to…* • Increase visibility and participation in school educational programs • Coach teachers and others working with students • Work with teachers and community groups to identify and implement other programs • Engage in a cycle of continuous school improvement • Reorganize and reprioritize goals as other goals are accomplished *Outcomes affect the principal's worklife by…* • Increasing the number of hours spent at the school • Providing intense day to day work • Fueling a desire to work hard on behalf of making a difference for students

The principal's worklife is demanding and time consuming. The principal works with students and parents, collects information from outside the school and communicates it to teachers and staff, instills a strong sense of teamwork and culture in the school, mentors others, and occasionally writes articles for publishing.

The principal uses the mission of the school to bridge the gap created by diversity and dissonance. The principal uses the mission of the school to emphasize shared outlooks and viewpoints as a means to broaden understanding and to promote cooperation among others.

When asked about her worklife as it relates to leadership, the principal responded, "…I see myself responsible for setting a positive tone in the building, making certain a good mission is developed and maintained; to help with developing appropriate goals for the school; and to get staff to buy into mission and goals….I see myself as a leader of leaders. Teachers are autonomous and creatively solve problems in the classroom and school. If teachers adhere to the mission of the school and other guidelines, then do not have a problem with autonomy" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

> "…what describes her leadership is facilitator. She guides, extends, and helps in any way possible" (Teacher interview, 6/99).

An important part of the principal's worklife is developing and maintaining the culture of the school. Evidence of this component emerged during interviews with teachers. The following patterns of behavior emerged during data analysis: instills a strong sense of teamwork in the faculty and staff; instills a strong sense of purpose to guide the school; instills a strong sense of importance of culture within the school; and instills a strong sense of caring for the children. The principal emphasizes respect for others and affirms the culture of children through activities during the school day.

> "….We always start our morning announcements with the school motto, I believe I can learn, I can learn, I will learn. I can make the right choices, I will make the right choices" (Principal interview 5/99).

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When asked to describe her leadership behavior related to developing school culture, the principal listed the following actions and beliefs:

1. Knows environmental limitations
2. Seeks resources to overcome specific limitations
3. Engages in strategic planning for the school
4. Aligns resources with specific needs of the school
5. Recruits involvement based on a strategic plan
6. Leads by example
7. Nurtures
8. Takes into account the social condition of the school
9. Actively participates in everything that goes on in the school
10. Actively participates in community activities involving students
11. Is visible

One parent commented during an interview, "The principal's character traits and leadership style appear to blend into an effective match for this school with a unique population of students" (Parent Interview, 6/99).

Research Question 2: The Principal's Work Environment

2a. "What is the work environment of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school?" The data shows that the work environment within the school has many of the same characteristics of other elementary schools. However, student and community characteristics create the potential for more crises and problems during the school day. Specific problems of greater intensity and rate as reported by the principal include:

1. Interruptions during the school day
2. Safety issues
3. Impact of family dynamics
4. Lack of resources in the home
5. Limited literacy of the parents

When asked about the work environment the principal responded:

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.the poverty of the children is a major constraint. You want them to do so many things, but they do not have the resources at home. Our school must provide so much. The PTA's of other schools provide funding for extra supplies. Fund raising and picture sales do not provide the return for our PTA funds to grow… we do the best we can even though our parents do not have much money. I won't say it inhibits us at all, I will just say it frustrates me" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

2b "How does the work environment affect the worklife of the principal in an achieving urban elementary school?" Unique school characteristics require varied responses from the principal. Responses associated with dealing with problems arising within the school include:

1. Reorganizing work
2. Representing school positively during school-division, community, and
3. Social events
4. Promoting daily school attendance
5. Encouraging parent participation in adult education opportunities
6. Building community and business partnerships
7. Focusing staff in one direction

The following excerpt comes from the principal's response about the impact of the work environment on her worklife:

"Can I read a book to you? A student asks as he approaches my door. Students know they can visit with me throughout the day. I invite them to come in and read to me, then at the end of the day I acknowledge them on the afternoon announcements….At 9:00 a.m. I begin visiting classrooms. I try to go by every classroom daily. I walk in for thirty seconds to a minute. Students ask me to come over to their desks or join an exciting activity. It is a very positive time of the day. This takes about an hour to an hour and a half if I am not interrupted with "Ms. _____, you are needed in the office". The interruption can be a parent coming in or on the way out or an important call.

Then, I have paperwork. This is also opportunity for me to meet with the administrative assistant. I leave my door open the entire day. Teachers stop in and say, "may a have a minute" and of course it turns into a couple of long minutes but I believe in an open door policy…. I feel it's important to let teachers know that I'm available for them" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

2c "How does the culture of the school affect the worklife of the principal?" Culture maintenance is one of the primary, yet, indirect activities the principal engages in daily. Celebrations are a natural part of the day beginning with morning announcements and ending the school day with "principal's proud moment" acknowledgement during afternoon announcements.

"Today, boys and girls, you all did a great job welcoming preschool visitors from another school. I saw students behaving nicely, students working well with their teachers, and students making good choices. Students were using good Riversedge manners. Nice job!" (Excerpt from Principal's Proud Moment Announcement, 5/27/99).

Celebrations occur formally and informally. Families attend celebrations scheduled during day or evening hours. The principal's role during celebrations is very active. Generally leading the activity, the principal identifies the specific outcome and sets the tone for the event.

The following narration describes an evening celebration to recognize students at the end of the school year.

> The auditorium is bright and decorated with balloons and banners. "Congratulations Riversedge Super Stars…Yeah!" The principal greets a full auditorium of parents and students by saying, "your happy faces are good to see tonight. We are here to recognize students who attended school every day this school year and students who missed no more than five school days this year. Parents, we are also recognizing student achievers tonight. Before I turn the awards presentation over to our reading teacher, I would like to say that all students are winners here. Students at this school work hard to follow the rules, respect teachers, and do their work. Everybody, give each other a hand for a job well done" (applause)…

> At the end of the meeting, the principal returns to the podium and thanks parents for their involvement in the school. "Our PTA membership is the best it's ever been. We received an award from the district chapter recognizing the growth in membership. You did it, thanks." The evening program concludes with an announcement by the principal about door prize winners (gift certificates for groceries). Lastly, the principal asks for cooperation from everyone present. "Ice cream, cookies, and drink are available in the cafeteria. To help serve you safely, we must dismiss one side of the auditorium at a time. There is plenty of ice cream for everyone, gallons of ice cream. So do not worry we won't run out".

In minutes, the auditorium emptied. Meanwhile, in the cafeteria, parents greeted each other as children tugged at each other and hugged teachers. "Hey, how are you doing, says one parent to a teacher". The principal makes her way through the crowd from the auditorium. "Ice cream flavors galore, cones, cups, or sprinkles… what will you have" asks the principal as she dips into a container.

The cafeteria that evening resembled an old-fashioned ice cream social or family gathering. There was a warm feeling a sense of community that existed among those gathered. As the evening ended, families made way toward the door – everyone left with something. If not a certificate, book, door prize, or other award the smiles and contented looks let the observer know, everyone was leaving satisfied" (Fieldnotes, 5/20/99).

Planning events takes time and consideration. Typically, other staff members work along with the principal to plan events. The principal knows and understands cultural issues pertinent to the community served. School activities and events reflect cultural practices of the community served. Complete with food and music, evening programs, specifically, are planned family events. In addition to school celebrations, the principal attends evening and weekend events sponsored by church and civic organizations that serve students and families from the school.

2d "How do the school's characteristics affect the worklife of the principal?" The school serves kindergarten through second grade students from the surrounding community. Community difficulties intensify the need for close collaboration between school, social service agencies, and other organizations that provide support to youth and families in need of services. Community support as viewed by the principal is strong. The principal says, "when we call on the community they are always willing to help. Department stores donate clothing items and toys at Christmastime. Our business partners respond generously to request for assistance. If parents come to us needing assistance with utility bills, we know what churches we can send them to for assistance. We work closely with social services and other community agencies".

Because of the school's characteristics, the principal's time is impacted the greatest. The principal states, "I stop whatever I am doing when students or parents

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come with need. It is not always a school related need, but I stop because to them it is the only thing that is important at that time" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Teachers and others associated with daily school operations are encouraged to participate in decision-making. School committees are the most available means to offer input into decision-making. Less informal means include individual conferences with the principal or writing letters or memos to the principal. The principal seeks input from others regarding implementation of new programs or other school activities. A school improvement committee agrees upon school improvement efforts. Information is relayed to staff by memo, announcement, or in staff meeting. Much of the principal's time involves getting the message to others about matters of importance to the school. The response of one teacher indicates how the principal relays information within the school

> "….she made certain I had the chance to work with another teacher who knew the school routine. New teachers work with veteran teachers as their mentor. This is a great way to learn about school routines and expectations. Consistency in daily routines is also another way of sharing information. Daily announcements provide reminders about implementation of the school-wide discipline plan, schedules, rules, and student responsibilities. Hearing the principal speak daily about expectations helps staff remain focused on school goals. As a new person, I really appreciate the daily reminder to students. It helps me too" (Teacher Interview, 5/99).

2e "What external factors affect the worklife of the principal?" The principal acknowledges the presence of two types of external factors. Administrative factors include requests for information from content area supervisors, directors, and other central office staff and generally require response based on a deadline or immediate turn around. "Pressing deadlines or quick turn-around affect my time the most", states the principal. State accreditation standards, local achievement standards, and state and local school board policy are also among administrative external factors that affect the principal's worklife. Subtler, yet demanding external factors stem from school characteristics. Poverty, illiteracy, and family dynamics create additional stress on the worklife of the principal. The principal remains available for immediate needs in the school despite external demands. "Typically, I do not start administrative paperwork

until after morning announcements, classroom visits, or the end of the day. This type of work often goes home with me or I come in on the weekends to complete it" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Teachers know that requests received by the principal from central office staff require immediate attention and timely response. Teachers perceive the principal as effective in meeting deadlines and requests for information. While parents recognize the existence of external constraints, they do not sense negative impact on what the principal does on behalf of the school. During an interview, one parent commented, "I do not notice matters with others from outside the school interfering with the work of the principal. What I do observe is the principal cooperating with community and church leaders to provide services for the school" (Parent Interview, 6/99).

2f "How do external factors affect the worklife of the principal?" The principal responds to requests for information in a timely manner. Report deadlines provide guidance for information in a timely manner. Report deadlines provide guidance for decision-making about scheduling and use of time.

> "I know that state and local school board mandates affect what we all do….but I feel the principal makes meaningful decisions about what to bring to staff. The principal does a great job balancing requests from outside the school and inside the school"
> (Teacher interview, 5/99).

 Certain prescheduled tasks require rescheduling as the result of an externally imposed deadline. Following is a description of the principal's response to a request from central office. "Most requests come with plenty of notice. Because many other things must also receive immediate attention, I may not get to a report until 2:00 p.m. on the day the information is due by a 4:30 p.m. meeting. I am often under self-imposed pressure because of other priorities. Deadlines are usually reasonable" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Research Question 3: The Principal's Characteristics

"What are the personal characteristics of the principal, and how have these affected the work life of the principal?" Strong character and leadership traits describe the principal's personal characteristics as perceived by others. Teachers and

parents see a principal who is warm and caring with "a big heart for children" (Teacher interview, 6/99). According to teachers and parents, the principal values and respects the feelings of others. Additional personal characteristics reported by others include:

1. Integrity
2. Humorous
3. Innovative
4. Creative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Empathy

> "The principal is very kind…when walking through the hallway, it is always with a smile. The principal is approachable, respected, caring, and loving" (Teacher interview 5/99).

When asked about the principal's personal characteristics, the assistant principal replied, "…it goes back to what I believe is one reason our students do so well. The principal cares so much about for children and their families" (Assistant Principal Interview, 5/99).The assistant principal illustrated this point by telling a story about how the principal transformed a very sad and perceived negative event into a positive remembrance. Following is an excerpt of that conversation with the assistant principal:

> The principal cares about our students and their families. She always looks for positive ways to support families especially during times of sorrow. Our students, perhaps more often than other children, may experience grief as the result of a tragedy in the family or community.
>
> Several years ago, we had a parent whom every day walked his children to school. He showed interest in all the students and was a real friend to the school. He was a good man. A laborer- an ordinary man who cared about his children and their school. His life ended abruptly on a street corner in this neighborhood. Headlines in the paper called it the first fatality of the year. This act of violence touched our students, their families, and our staff as a loss of a father and true school supporter.
>
> The principal wrote an editorial to the local newspaper describing the man and the dedication he displayed to his children, the school, and community. The principal bought a positive light and a ray of hope into to the lives of those touched by the tragedy. The editorial prompted a youth service organization from the city to dedicate an annual award for parent volunteers in the name of this father and supporter" (Assistant Principal Interview, 5/99).

MLQ, observation, and interview data support the presence of these personal characteristics. The principal reported the following personal characteristics:

1. Open

2. Positive

3. Energetic

4. Caring

The principal cited the following as significant events,

> "Dear Principal:
> ….I hope you know that I am thankful that you provide wonderful and special things for us at school. I just wanted you to know how special and wonderful you are"
> (Taken from student letter to principal 2/99)

people, and beliefs as worklife influences: (1) twenty-three years of successful teaching at the primary school level; (2) influence of positive mentors; and (3) a strong vision to make a difference in the lives of students. The principal cites two reasons she decided to become an administrator: (1) empathy for the social circumstances students face and (2) need for implementation for developmentally appropriate curriculum within the K-2 setting.

The principal described herself in the following way: "I like people, care about children deeply, advocate for students passionately, and support this school" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

The effect of these personal characteristics as reported by self and others on the principal's worklife appears positive. The principal further reports feeling successful because of devoting much personal time and energy into leading the school.

<u>Research Question 4: The Worklife of the Principal and Educational Programs</u>

How does the worklife of the principal affect the educational programs of an achieving urban elementary school, and how does the educational program affect the worklife of the principal? The School Improvement Committee is responsible for planning and implementing educational programs for the school. The principal is a member of this decision-making team whose membership includes teachers and parents. The team meets regularly to discuss school needs, to examine school performance data, and to make program recommendations.

The principal understands the school improvement process and the principal is confident with shared decision-making. The principal provided the following information when asked about her role as a member of the School Improvement Committee. "Plans for scheduling and conducting School Improvement Team meetings is the responsibility of the chairperson. I receive notices and sub-committee assignments the same as other committee members. Occasionally, the chairperson requests that I provide specific information or arrange services that as an administrator I can do more readily." One function of the school improvement team is to ensure that educational programs align with action steps that address the greatest concerns for the school. The following account is a summary of one School Improvement Team meeting.

> The chairperson of the School Improvement Team called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Another teacher reviews minutes from last month's meeting. The business portion of the meeting started with a suggestion for the team to consider. Mr. Jones represented third grade. Members of the grade level suggested that a SOL question be asked on the morning announcements. More information is needed along with an implementation plan. Mr. Jones will collect additional information and ideas from third grade teachers and present information at next month's meeting.
>
> The meeting continued with discussion of agenda items. One committee member asked the principal a question regarding the funding of an after school club. Comments given by the principal included directions on writing a school-based grant that should include purpose, target group, and budget. The after school club can meet on Saturday if approved according to the principal. The principal volunteered to take care of operations such as opening the building, custodial coverage, and security.
>
> The closing remarks of the chairperson included reminding the team of upcoming school events. The principal was asked to continue use of morning and afternoon announcements to recognize individual classrooms for use of daily agenda books. The meeting concluded with a reminder about the next meeting date. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. (Fieldnotes, 5/3/99).

Collegial relationships and teamwork yield positive suggestions for programs. In addition to having a positive impact on the team planning school improvement, these attributes influence positively during implementation of programs or strategies.

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Educational programs in the school drive the principal's existence in the school. The principal's worklife is busy and intense. There exists a strong alignment between community needs and school program components. The principal advocates for this alignment. The principal maintains individual focus and the focus of others on the vision and mission of the school. Taken together, there is a codependent relationship between the principal's worklife and the educational program of the school. Both are effective because of what the other provides. The worklife of the principal as described by the principal follows:

> My hours official hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. I never keep those hours unless I am sick. Five minutes after I get to school, a child may come in the door. They are not supposed to be in the building during this time, but they come and I stop what I am doing to listen to whatever circumstance causes the child to walk into school alone.

> The bell rings signaling the start of school at 8:00 a. m. I greet students in the hallway. I know almost every student by name. My greeting hello includes their name. I monitor breakfast (all students must eat breakfast) and soon start morning announcements. We start the day on a positive note by singing a song and reading a poem. Students participate in morning announcement. I remind students about making good choices and about how proud I am of the specific activities, they are doing. I always comment on how proud I am of the students who are in school today.

> Morning announcements are a very important part of the day to me. It sets a positive tone for the day and gets students off to a positive start with their work. To manage at least a reasonable schedule I have to constantly prioritize and reprioritize important things during the day. I try to think smarter and not make work harder. I like the principles of Stephen Covey. I even took Covey's training several years ago. What I learned then, I still use today and that's the importance of prioritizing and delegating....I see myself as part of a team in the school. I do not rely on power to get things done. I want everyone to work together toward one goal – educating children" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Research Question 5: School Outcomes

5a "What are the outcomes of an achieving urban elementary school?" Reported in Chapter 2 is the academic performance and attendance data for the school. Table 4 and Table 6 contain specific information about daily attendance and student performance in reading for second grade students at Riversedge Elementary School.

> "The principal is serious about making every effort to get students to school daily. Students know they can call the principal directly if they cannot get to school. If the principal cannot pick them up, she assigns another staff person to see that the student gets to school safely" (AP interview, 6/99).

The principal acknowledges that attendance is a problem. When asked to expand on the issue of student daily attendance as a concern, the principal commented, " Attendance is a major problem for some students. A nucleus of students misses thirty to thirty-five days of school a year. These students are not necessarily children who have learning difficulties, but they cannot make progress because they are not here to be taught" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Students receive encouragement and recognition for coming to school everyday. An attendance incentive program reinforces students for coming to school daily. One incentive activity is a bike giveaway at the end of the school year. Students with perfect attendance participate in a drawing for a new bicycle.

"Be here everyday and you could ride away" - a large sign hangs off the handlebars of a shiny new bicycle in the main hallway of the school. Part of school-wide attendance program, the bicycle giveaway culminates a yearlong effort to encourage daily attendance. The principal recognizes and relays to staff the importance of promoting student daily attendance. On a daily basis, the principal announces classes with perfect attendance. Following is an excerpt of an afternoon announcement recognizing perfect attendance for the day:

> "We have several classes with perfect attendance today." The principal announces the teacher's name and grade level of five classes on the intercom at the end of the day. Cheers and applause ring throughout the school. "Congratulations students – keep it up and earn a chance to win at learning and to win a bicycle" (Morning Announcements, 5/20/99).

Increasing the percent of students with perfect attendance or five or less day is a targeted area for school improvement.

The principal relays to staff the expectation that teachers must attend school daily. The principal establishes good teacher attendance as a priority. Regarding teacher attendance the principal stated, "….substitutes are difficult to secure throughout the

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school district. It is harder for this school because of our location. Teachers know that instruction suffers greatly when they are not here. Established early in the school year is the expectation that teachers must come to school everyday if students are going to learn" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Instruction, according to the principal, "must be enhancing while inviting student participation." Academic performance data indicates that students, despite a number of limitations, achieve at local and state standards for children of the same age and grade.

Second grade students exit the school achieving at or above grade level on statewide reading tests compared to students of similar backgrounds within the local school district. Parents view the school as successful. Teachers recognize that a student's level of success during their K-2 years at Riversedge represent the beginning of what

> "I think the school is successful because I have seen parents really want to support the school and do what they can for the school. Even the younger mothers see that it is worthwhile to do something to help the kids and the school. (Parent interview, 6/99).

it takes to be successful in other school settings. One teacher comments, "We only have our students through second grade. We teach them knowing they will leave us and move on to attend another school for upper elementary. "

5b "How does the worklife of the principal affect these outcomes and how do these outcomes affect the worklife of the principal?" The principal views outcome indicators optimistically. The principal states, "… current success represents a small step toward obtaining our school performance goals." The principal measures success two ways: (1) by performance on standardized achievement tests, and (2) by student character growth. The principal's energy and drive appear fueled by student success. Positive school outcomes affirm the principal's commitment to educating young children and their families.

> "I think teachers are growing and learning by working in the school. I am especially proud of our accomplishments. That makes coming to work even more exciting." (Principal interview, 5/99).

THEMES AND PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

Themes apply to broad topics that emerged during analysis of the data. Patterns are specific behaviors that emerged consistently during observations and interviews. These themes and patterns tell a story about the principal's work life in this school.

<u>Three Themes</u>

1. **Inspired leadership** -the principal's worklife is not unlike the worklife of other elementary principals; however, unique school characteristics create a level of everyday crises and problems. How the principal experiences the job on a daily basis includes certain actions and beliefs. Leadership behavior that is motivational; leadership behavior driven by strong vision; and leadership behavior that is inspiring to others characterize the principal's worklife.

2. **Overcoming the odds** - the work environment of a school with a large number of at-risk students may be associated with more crises and create more problems for the principal. The socio-economic composition of the student body can affect the way a principal exercises leadership and increases the complexity of administrative responsibilities.

3. **Creating linkages** - positive school outcomes are associated with leadership that is responsive and with a work environment that is caring, nurturing, academically focused. Outcomes in a school are positive when there is a strong link between learning and coming to school -- and a link between community needs and school programs.

<u>Principal's Worklife</u>

Dismissal on the last day of school poignantly represents the challenge for principal leadership in an urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students. Following is a snapshot of that day taken from the researcher's field study notes:

As I drove up to the school, I could see orderly lines of students with teachers leading them to their busses. Those students already boarded were waving feverishly--- throwing kisses while they said their good-byes. Today was different

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from other dismissals. Looks on teacher's faces made the difference. Smiles and waves from students made the difference. The looks in the eyes of students made the difference in this dismissal. There was urgency in the eyes of the students. There was longing, fear of the unknown, and anxiety in the eyes of the students.

I could hardly wait to get to my field journal to write about the intense feeling that permeated the bus loading area and hallways. The last day of school at Riversedge Elementary School was unlike any other observed. As I watched teachers fight back tears and busses honk as they rolled away, I could not help but wonder. What is it about this school…what is it about what the principal does in the school that makes the last day of the school so bitter sweet?

After all busses safely exited the school parking lot, teachers reentered the school more composed, hugging, and congratulating each other. Some teachers acknowledged a successful school year while others acknowledged the difficulties of the year and thankfulness for the end. Overall, staff comments were reminiscent of a good year with good students. The principal says, "great job staff" and teachers scurry off to complete end of the school year tasks.

A connection established between administrators, teachers, and students helped to end another school year. It was evident that saying "good-bye" on the last day of school represented for staff a year's worth of hard work, dedication, commitment, and teamwork. The staff's willingness to teach in a school driven by vision and strong leadership yielded a successful school year (Fieldnotes, 5/99).

What the researcher observed as school busses loaded the last day of school, represents only a small degree of intensity felt by the principal and the staff of an elementary school working to educate a large number of at-risk students. The principal and staff share major events that symbolize the way students are valued and cared for. The principal sets the tone for what consistently must happen on behalf of children in the school. The principal's leadership is seamless. The principal's leadership behavior is overt as described by teachers, assistant principal, and parent volunteers. Teacher comments about the principal's leadership follow:

"She always has so much time for the teachers. I have learned a lot from the principal. She is a great teacher" (Teacher Interview, 5/19/99).

"I like the effort and time she takes with the children…you see her in the hallways meeting and greeting students in the morning and afternoon" (Teacher Interview, 5/18/99).

"….the principal is very positive. She expects teachers to make learning inviting. To help us make things best for students, she sends us to conferences to get ideas for teaching. She makes certain that our literacy room has plenty of books and that good children's books are available throughout the school. She reminds us to stay our toes…." (Teacher Interview, 5/14/99).

" The principal motivates us and keeps us on target. I especially like that she provides opportunities for us to attend workshop. She gives us pep talks and reminds us how important it is to remain keep our focus on children. She expects every child to learn. She tells us no child should sit in the room and be ignored in any way. She wants us to work with every child at their level and get them to improve. I feel she does an excellent job as principal" (Teacher Interview, 5/21/99).

The principal displays certain leadership characteristics. The principal has a strong sense of purpose for the school; the principal performs in ways that build others' respect; the principal talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished; and the principal articulates a compelling vision of the future- this is authentic leadership as portrayed by the principal of the school selected for the study. The principal's worklife centers around a compelling force driven by a vision to "make school a safe, happy, inviting place to learn (School Video 5/98). Table 18 contains a list of sub-themes and patterns along with supporting raw data related to the principal's leadership behavior.

Results of the MLQ rating scale (Table 19) provide data regarding principal leadership behavior and outcomes of that behavior. According to self -report and the report of others, the principal's leadership behavior is characteristic of transformational leaders. Additionally, rating scale results indicate that others feel the principal is effective and that they are satisfied with the work of the principal. The principal's outcome ratings are similar to that of others. Results of the MLQ reveal minimal differences between leader and rater scores.

Table 18

Emerging Sub-themes, Patterns, and Supporting Raw Data: Principal Leadership
Behavior

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw Data	Summary of Observed Behavior Patterns
Sub-theme: **Raw data:**	**Leadership** Teacher comments: "The principal is very involved in what the staff is doing….a motivator, a cheerleader, especially for the students." "I think we have strong leadership, I think there is good, strong leadership." "As a leader she sets the pace, she is a role model for staff. Staff and students are her interest and her concern." "She is good at getting us to try new things." "The work of the principal in this school is supportive toward teachers, students, parents, and staff." "I know the principal is very concerned that students are treated with the utmost respect."	Goal oriented Communicator Caring Shared decision maker Passionate Person-oriented Collaborator Role model Listener Visionary Empowering Creative High expectations Confident Energetic Buffers staff from external factors High standards for student and staff performance Child-centered Motivator Maintains focus on students Supporter Facilitator Resourceful

Table 18 (Continues)

Emerging Sub-themes and Patterns and Supporting Raw Data: Principal Leadership
Behavior

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw Data	Summary of Observed Behavior Patterns
Sub-theme	**Actions**	
Raw data	The principal has a very upbeat personality . . very warm and caring and that has a very positive affect on the school. In the school… anyone who walks in feels a lot of warmth, and you feel the caring…this does have a lot to do with how the principal portrays her personal feelings and feelings about the school."	Proactive Instructional leader Connects efforts to vision Sincere Active Advocate
	"The principal is a people-person. She is very assertive and knows how to get out in the community to get help…implementation of school initiatives and other school- community activities has a lot to do with the principal."	Child-centered Family-centered Caring
Sub-theme	**Beliefs**	
	Parent/volunteer comments: "Sincerely loves the children and wants the best of them for their own good."	
	"This principal puts her entire being into the school."	
	"One of the principal's strengths is getting others to share her vision of the school."	

Table 19

Principal's Leadership Behavior as Reported by Self and Others on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 5x

Name of scale	Self-rating	Percentile		Others		Percentile	Difference[e]
	$\underline{M}^a$		$\underline{N}$ 19	$\underline{M}^b$ 0-4[c]	$\underline{SD}^d$		
Transformational Leadership Factors							
Idealized influence (Attributed)	3.00			3.22	.61		
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	4.00			3.49	.45		
Inspirational motivation	4.00			3.66	.43		
Intellectual stimulation	3.00			2.86	.66		
Individualized consideration	3.75			2.93	.85		
Scale average	**3.55**	**90**		**3.22**	**.49**	**81**	**-.32**
Transactional Leadership Factors							
Contingent reward	3.75			3.21	.67		
Management-by-exception (Active)	1.25			1.33	.81		
Management-by-exception (Passive)	0.25			1.21	.77		
Scale average	**1.75**	**44**		**1.92**	**.44**	**48**	**.17**

[a]Mean score calculated across items in the scale. [b]Mean score calculated across items for each scale and then calculated across19 teachers. [c]The potential scale scores are 0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly often, 4 = Frequently, if not always. [d] SD is the standard deviation of the individual mean scores. [e]Difference is the $\underline{M}$ of others minus the mean of the self-ratings.

Table 19 (Continues)

Principal's Leadership Behavior as Reported by Self and Others on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 5x

Name of scale	Self-rating $\underline{M}$[a]	Percentile	Others $\underline{N}$ 19	$\underline{M}$[b] 0-4[c]	SD[d]	Percentile	Difference[e]
Non-leadership Factors							
Laissez-faire leadership	0			0.84	.76		
Scale average	**0**	**0**		**0.84**	**.76**	**21**	**.84**
Outcomes							
Extra effort	3.66			3.33	.63		
Effectiveness	3.50			3.45	.59		
Satisfaction	3.50			3.47	.70		
Scale average	**3.55**	**89**		**3.42**	**.59**	**85**	**-.13**

[a]Mean score calculated across items in the scale. [b]Mean score calculated across items for each scale and then calculated across 19 teachers. [c]The potential scale scores are 0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly often, 4 = Frequently, if not always. [d]SD is the standard deviation of the individual mean scores. [e]Difference is the $\underline{M}$ of others minus the mean of the self-ratings.

The most effective leaders display transformational leadership behaviors at least fairly often, that is, 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Further examination of the sub scales for transformational leadership, the leader scored highest in the areas of idealized influence (behavior) and inspirational motivation as compared to the two lowest rated areas of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

Chapter 2 contains a description of MLQ items and the number of items per scale. The following information summarizes results of the MLQ administered as part of this study. Results for each scale category rated by the rating scale follows. The idealized behavior scales show the extent to which leaders display behaviors that encourage common visions and instill trust. Inspirational motivation represents the appeal of the leader to articulate a compelling vision of the future. The inspirational motivator expresses confidence that goals are achievable. The results of this rating scale indicate that raters feel the leader displays less the behaviors that encourage individual development, empathy, and problem solving.

Transactional leadership involves the leader gaining compliance through contractual agreements with others. Effective leaders display transactional behaviors at least sometime, 2.0 on a 4.0 scale (Bass & Avolio,1997). The scale average indicates the leader is within the range of effectiveness as measured by self and others. Sub-scale scores indicate the leader employs goal setting and helps to clarify what is expected. Further, the leader does not look for mistakes, rather, takes corrective action when mistakes occur.

When leaders avoid taking a stand on issues, avoids clarifying expectations, and avoids addressing conflicts; leadership is inactive or laissez-faire. Effective leaders display laissez-faire behavior between once in a while, 1.0, or not at all, 0.0 (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The scale average for laissez-faire leadership was within this range for the principal. The principal takes a stand on issues, clarifies expectations, and addresses conflict. The principal displays a high level of extra effort and effectiveness as measured by the MLQ. The leader gets others to do more than expected, instills the desire to succeed, and increases the willingness of others to try harder. Additionally, the

leader is effective in representing the group to higher authority, effective in meeting organizational requirements, and leads a group that is effective. Raters are satisfied with methods of leadership and feel the leader works in a satisfactory way.

"Fundamental to a full range of leadership is that more effective leaders display each style to some degree, with more emphasis on active transactional and transformational style" (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

<div align="center">Work Environment</div>

Within the school, certain values, beliefs, and assumptions reflect the culture of this urban elementary school. Positive student and staff interactions and an environment that is warm, nurturing, caring, and respectful indicate feelings that permeate the school. One parent commented, "when you walk in the school, right

> "You'll see a school which helps us become good choice -makers, lovers of learning, and productive citizens of the future. You'll see a school which we all love" School Video, 5/98).

away you feel at ease….It is an exciting learning atmosphere. You know your child is safe, that your child cared for. It is a very good place for learning" (Parent Interview, 6/99). Table 20 contains a list of sub-themes and patterns along with supporting raw data related to school culture.

As indicated in the conceptual framework of the study, school characteristics and external factors are part of the principal's work environment. Following is a description of the school's unique characteristics and external factors. Information about these two components comes from observation and interview data.

Unique school characteristics result from the unique community the school serves. The school serves an urban community with a large number of at-risk children. Young parents, many between the age of 20-25 years old (few over 30 years old), are single parents with limited literacy. Students in the community are eligible for pre-school intervention services. Despite limitations, sixty-six percent of second grade students exit the program successfully.

Table 20

Emerging Sub-themes, Patterns, and Raw Data: School Culture

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw Data	Summary of Observed Behavior Patterns
Sub-theme:	**Values, beliefs, and assumptions**	Strong academic focus Strong sense of purpose Common goals related to the school's mission Commitment to excellence Shared decision-making Teacher empowerment School spirit Warm Caring Respectful High involvement Student and staff satisfaction Student recognition and celebrations School is safe and orderly Student-centered Focus on literacy Open access to teachers and administrators School's cultural responsiveness directly related to students and community needs Student work displayed throughout the school Improved student attendance Strong team effort
	Principal comments:	
Raw data:	"Celebrations happen anytime and for everything… with hugs, announcements, music, letters to students, memos to teachers, and assemblies."	
	"Staff celebrations are important activities…."	
	Teacher comments:	
	"Everyone is recognized through the principal's proud moment… students look forward to hearing their name and accomplishments on the intercom."	
	"This school is fueled by student enthusiasm and student work."	
Raw data:	"Success flows from greeting students in the morning to afternoon dismissal."	
	Parent comments:	
	"Parent involvement is valued."	
Raw data	"Positive interactions are observed in the hallways and classrooms."	

Attendance rates in this K-2 school are symptomatic of other environmental concerns. While nonattendance at school may be indication of illness for the students in this school, consistent nonattendance is typically the result of several factors. Absent mothers, teenage and young adult parents whose perspective of daily school attendance may differ from the school, and parenting based on limited literacy are contributing factors. A "cycle of homelessness" affects school attendance for a small number of students enrolled in this school. The principal describes this cyclical pattern in attendance for a small number of students.

> "The cycle, based in transience, finds students residing temporarily with family members or friends. Within a period ranging from several weeks to approximately three months, the family moves again. Depending on the stability within the current environment, the student's attendance may be sporadic or the student misses consecutive days of school" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

The principal recognizes poor attendance is not always a matter of willful non-compliance on the part of the parent, but is representative of a complex symptom of unstable family economics.

Because of this tendency among a small segment of the population of the school, attendance rates above a certain percent are difficult to obtain. Improved attendance remains a primary goal for the school.

The principal recognizes those students from adverse backgrounds such as poverty, illness, or parental problems can be resilient if school is an "inviting, exciting, nice place to be" (Principal Interview, 5/99). The principal recognizes and is committed to providing such a school environment. Attendance and all services indirectly related to it is an area of priority the principal target among staff and monitors within the work environment.

When asked a question concerning handling problems arising from the characteristics of the school. The principal responded, "I focus on the child. I let children know that this is a great place to be. I let them know there is light in their life, and that light is school" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

External factors exist but not to the detriment of school operation. One teacher summarizes the staff's perception of the influence of external factors on the work life of the principal.

"We know as staff that external factors exist. We probably only know half of what is required to do in response to requests from outside the school. Request for information or follow- up quite often is a lot to handle. However, requests come to us without, you know, causing a real big panic. We see a principal balancing external factors and school demands…but, I feel that our principal is making meaningful decisions about what is going to distract teachers from their primary mission---serving students first" (Teacher Interview, 5/99).

Parents also report knowing little about the affect external factors have on the principal's work life. One parent comments, "…from a parent's point of view, external factors do not have a negative impact on school operations. I observe cooperative relationships with community leaders, school district administrators, school board members, and church leaders" (Parent interview, 6/99).

The principal listed the following administrative external factors associated with the work environment in the school:

1. Community involvement
2. Parent Teacher Association
3. School division mandates and central office paperwork
4. Current state testing and accreditation standards
5. State and local school board policies

The principal reported that requests for information or action from external sources are less demanding than factors related to day to day school operations.

> "Nine board members attended today's PTA Executive Board meeting. Last year we had one member on the board. We talk about our annual goals and budget. It's unlike anything we have been able to do before….Today represents growth and hard work" (Fieldnotes, 6/5/99).

Additionally, the principal listed three external factors related to the characteristics of the school that are associated with the work environment:

1. Poverty
2. Illiteracy

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3. Family dynamics

The principal commented in a conversation about external factors related to the characteristics of the school. "Parents want students to read. Their children may be first generation college students…. I talk openly to parents about the importance of literacy- for them and for their children" (Field notes, 6/8/99). "Parents are subject to violence in the surrounding neighborhood. To keep parents positively involved in the school, we invite them to chaperone field trips and volunteer within the school. Parents with questions and doubts about their child's safety during the day are especially invited to be involved in daily school activities" (Field notes, 6/9/99).

School Outcomes

"…….staff is committed to providing a quality, appropriate education for ALL students. We offer a safe, inviting school in which children are engaged in essential Knowledge Work activities and experiences. Within a warm, positive school environment, we promote opportunities for academic achievement and creative expression. We strive to guide students to be good choice makers, lovers of learning, and productive citizens of the future."

School Mission Statement

"The basics of promoting positive school outcomes start with the mission statement of the school" (Principal interview, 5/99). The mission statement is a written and spoken reminder about the focus of work in the school. The mission serves as the impetus for change and action within the school. In addition to the mission statement, the principal lists other basics that contribute to positive school outcomes. During a conversation while touring the building, the principal brainstormed a list of considerations. She called these; "the basics of success" (Principal Interview, 4/20/99). According to the principal the basics are:

1. A clear vision of the future

2. A student-centered approach

3. A focused purpose – to help children grow and learn

4. A serious effort to keep children safe

5. An effort to eliminate activities which take away from instructional

> "I look at school success through the eyes of children. Going into classrooms and listening to them read. Looking and seeing happy and safe children. Observing the pride students take in their work. …"

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time

6.   An affection and passion about children.

7.   An expressed desire to have students perform well.

Basics related to academics, according to the principal include:

1.   Student performance data drives instructional decision-making.

2.   School outcomes are obtainable when school programs link to community needs.

3.   High expectations for student academic performance and behavior.

4.   A strong academic focus.

5.   Developmentally appropriate classroom instructional activities.

6.   Classroom instructional activities aligned with state and local curriculum.

7.   Positive school climate.

8.   Good teacher retention.

9.   Strong desire of the principal to have positive school performance in all areas.

Introducing change within the school requires a basic approach, according to the principal. "Change is inherent when working for to improve services to students" (Principal Interview, 5/99). Introducing innovative ideas and different instructional strategies to teachers requires a plan. During an interview, the principal discussed introducing change to teachers and staff. Following is a list of ideas the principal has about introducing change into a school:

1.   Defining what is important for staff to know

2.   Modeling expected behavior

> "Sharing information about new ideas is relayed to staff by providing research, articles, or just by giving them information. Teachers attend workshops and conferences locally, statewide, and nationally. They must be willing to learn and share information…through casual dialogue, teachers inform others about new ideas or how new approaches are working" (Principal Interview 5/99).

3. Observing teacher behavior
    and practices

4. Providing feedback to teachers

5.   Allowing others to demonstrate benchmarked practices and approaches

6. Empowering individuals to make change

7. Coaching by self or others

8. Providing support for teachers throughout the
    process of implementing change

Improved reading performance and improved school attendance outcomes, for the purpose of this study, define school outcomes. When asked the question, is this school successful? Why? Teachers, assistant administrators, and parents qualify "yes" in a number of different ways. The following comments from teachers and parents represent a general overview of opinion regarding school outcomes. Overall, individuals associated with the school feel school outcomes indicate a positive trend.

"I think the school is successful because it is a positive place. Whenever I visit the school there is a warm and welcome feeling" (Parent interview, 6/99).

"The principal has a strong desire to have positive school performance in academic and behavioral areas" (Teacher interview, 5/99).

"We know we are successful when students excel after they leave this K-2 setting. Students continue to receive awards and recognition in other schools" (Teacher interview, 5/99).

Table 21 contains supporting raw data on school outcomes. Included in the table is a list of sub-themes and observed patterns related to the outcomes of the school.

CASE STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The education of poor and minority children continues to be a great concern of educators. Recent demographic projections indicate that this segment of the childhood population is expected to increase dramatically this century (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989). Among trends likely to occur between 1990 and 2010 is that populations of minority youth will increase in the inner cities of our nation (Hodgkinson,1992). This

Table 21

Emerging Sub-themes, Patterns, and Supporting Raw Data: School Outcomes

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw Data	**Summary of Observed Patterns**
Sub-theme Raw data	**Success** *Teacher comments*: "Success in this school is measured by student academic and character growth while in the K-2 program". "….it's a successful school. Test scores steadily improve. Teachers are happy teaching at this school." "I see success….by the end of the school year every will progress in something, in some area." Overall, the school is successful. There are always higher goals to obtain. The principal encourages us to never stop trying….that's the key to the school's success." "The school is very successful…not measured by test scores only, but in	Academic growth Character growth Improving test scores Satisfaction Outcome positive because of strong linkage between educational program and student needs Link between learning and coming to school emphasized daily Strong sense of purpose Common goals High expectations

Table 21 (Continues)

Emerging Sub-themes, Patterns, and Supporting Raw Data: School Outcomes

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw Data	Summary of Observed Patterns
Sub-theme	**Success**	
	Teacher comments:	
	attitude of the children."	Positive tone in the school
Raw data	*Parent comments:* "I feel the school is successful…the principal has set a positive tone in the school. There is low turnover in teaching staff."	Shared vision
	"The school is successful because the principal gets others to share in the vision of what is best for students."	
Raw data	*Administrator comments:* "I know the school is successful simply by the number of students in school everyday. We know that by the number of staff that come to school everyday."	Improving student attendance rate Improving staff attendance rate Improving performance on state and local
	"Success is measured by student performance on state reading and local	

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Table 21 (Continues)

Emerging Sub-themes, Patterns, and Supporting Raw Data: School Outcomes

	Sub-themes and Supporting Raw data	Summary of Observed Patterns
Sub-theme Raw data	**Success (cont.)** *Administrator comments:* achievement tests. We also measure success by the quality of work displayed throughout the school on bulletin boards and wall." "….we see success daily in the effort students make." "…we also measure success by the number of students that leave the school and continue to be successful. Former students receive awards for academic achievement and excellence in other areas of performance."	benchmark tests Quality of student work Student effort Students continue to receive awards and recognition for positive school performance

trend compels school administrators to face the challenge of providing first rate educational services to their increasingly diverse student population (Bamburg, 1994).

Explored in this study is the worklife of a principal meeting day to day challenges of working with a diverse school population in an achieving urban elementary school. These challenges affect the worklife of the principal in a number of different ways. The research questions answered in the chapter provide information relevant to the impact of the principal's personal characteristics, the work environment, the educational programs, and school outcomes on the worklife of the principal. Following, the next section is a list of conclusions based on the study. Literature review cited earlier in the study provides discussion points for conclusions.

<div align="center">Conclusions and Discussion Points</div>

Using case study results as the basis, the following conclusions were determined regarding the worklife of the principal. The principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school requires flexibility, time management skills, positive interpersonal skills, and high expectations for students to assist in promoting a positive school climate and a school where students achieve.

Discussion Points

Changing views of school leadership advocate altering power relationships. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) explain that we have tended to think of leadership as the capacity to take charge and get things done. Perhaps it is time, they say, to stop thinking of leadership as aggressive action and more as a way of thinking --about ourselves and our jobs. "The issue is more than simply who makes decisions," says Richard Sagor (1992). "….rather it is finding a way to be successful in collaboratively defining the essentials of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to become energized and focused". Sagor continues his comments by saying, "In schools where such a focus has been achieved, we found that teaching and learning became transformative for everyone" (p. 13).

Henry Levin (1987), challenges that notion that children who are

at-risk for school failure need to be treated as if they cannot master challenging coursework. According to Levin, high expectations and standards foster achievement across all students.

The principal's time and experience over the last six years at Riversedge Elementary School helped her become more flexible in order to realize her vision for the school. The principal recalled a situation where personal flexibility in style and leadership was necessary in order to support her vision:

"During a recent faculty meeting I had to discus the importance of good class management and good personal coping skills. A teacher was the target of a child protective service investigation because of the way a student was physically handled in class. I had to remind the staff in a very autocratic manner about the importance of managing student behavior without hands-on intervention. During the same meeting, I participated in a teacher led discussion about plans for an upcoming visit from a museum educator on marine life. Quite often the way I address issues of importance to the school require different approaches (Principal Interview 5/99).

The following explanation describes how one parent perceives the school's success and what made it that way:

"….the school and staff are inviting. The principal makes you feel right at home. When you walk in the school there are smiling faces. For example, on the morning I report for parent volunteer work, I walk in and the principal is at the door with several other staff members welcoming students and parents….There is a lot of parent involvement. You just feel you and your child become part of the school family. You are a part of that family as long as your child attends school there. That's an important feeling to me….I think success starts from the top. The principal here makes everyone feel important (Parent Interview, 6/99).

1. The principal of Riversedge based the program of the school on student and community needs. A strong bond between home and school was part of the foundation for the educational program in this achieving urban school.

School reform movements over the past several years have stressed that initiatives involving extensive parental and community input can be successful in turning around schools serving at-risk students. Specifically, James Comer's School Development Program is an example of one such initiative implemented in schools serving at-risk students. Comer states, "Schools concerned with their students' lives, not

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just with academics communicate a sincere concern regarding children's development" (Comer,1996). Comer suggests that developmentally appropriate curriculum communicates care and concern for students.

The principal of Riversedge Elementary schools stressed the importance of curriculum and instruction that is student focused and developmentally appropriate. During an interview, the principal described her philosophy regarding curriculum and instruction within the school.

> "I felt the school needed to be more an early childhood place of learning. I knew we had to change when I saw more worksheets than student's work on walls. Instruction and activities in the school needed to be developmentally appropriate and creative. So gradually we started with developmentally appropriate – what is best for children age birth through age eight. I worked hard to get teachers to see that centers and play is very critical for young children. We moved from developmentally appropriate to creativity –where children were allowed to express themselves through art, music, and physical activity. Slowly things changed into what they are today – student centered, creative, and developmentally appropriate" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

A teacher commented, "We're not completely where we want to be, but we are making progress" (Teacher Interview, 5/99). A parent stated, " we are going to soar!….The principal wants the best for the school. She gets the best by sharing her vision and getting others people to participate in her vision" (Parent Interview 7/99).

The principal of Riversedge Elementary School persistently and tirelessly guides the school and community in becoming a "child-centered" school, responsive to the developmental needs of each student. A commitment to educating the whole child, a focus of building positive relationships within the school and community, and instructional strategies aligned with student needs are all active components in the educational program of the school.

3. The principal is responsive to cultural considerations as a leader in the school.

The concept of school culture offers principals a broad framework for viewing and understanding difficult problems and complex relationships within the school. Healthy and sound school cultures correlate strongly with increased student achievement and

motivation. Principals must nurture the traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols that express and reinforce positive school culture (Stolp & Smith, 1994).

Routines, ceremonies, and traditions provide valuable clues for approaching a school. Deal and Peterson (1990) suggest that the most effective changes in a school happen when principals model the values and beliefs important for the school. The actions of the principal are noticed and interpreted by others as "what is important". A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values.

The principal commented that her beliefs about educating children are very basic. "To me it is very basic. We are here for children. We are here to love children – to help children grow and learn in a safe school. I use myself as the model" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Regarding what is celebrated and what celebrations look like in the school, the principal responded, " We celebrate everything that happens and we celebrate just about anytime. If an announcement comes over e-mail about an award a child receives or recognition the school receives, I will make a special announcement over the intercom. If it is staff recognition, I may bring in pizza for a celebration after school. I recognize and celebrate accomplishments by writing special memos to teachers. We have an information board in the main office, birth announcements and other good new items go there. I encourage teachers to go out, do things together, and celebrate with each other. The assistant principal hosts one of my favorite celebrations at the end of the school year. All staff members are invited to a cookout at his home. We enjoy each others company outside of school and celebrate the end of another school year. We celebrate student accomplishments with announcements, assemblies, and displays" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

The principal models an ethic of caring and nurturing young children in a developmentally appropriate school environment. She highlights and celebrates successes of students and teachers in a way that reinforces exemplary efforts. It is with

enthusiasm that the principal continues to move the school and community toward its goals of student excellence and achievement.

   4. The principal of Riversedge is effective in using transformational leadership strategies.

Sagor (1992) found that, "schools where teachers and students report a culture conducive to school success had a transformational leader as principal" (p. 13). Transformational strategies rely on persuasion, idealism, and intellectual excitement, staff motivation through values, symbols, and shared vision"(Deal & Peterson, 1994). Transformational strategies provide a sense of purpose and meaning that can unite people in a common cause especially when the school faces change.

   Often viewed as complimentary with transformational leadership, transactional leadership is based on an exchange of services (ex., from a teacher) for various kinds of rewards (such as an evaluation) that a principal controls, at least in part. Sergiovanni (1990) considers transformational leadership a first stage and central to getting day-to-day routines carried out. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) conclude that transformational leadership should be viewed as only one part of a balanced approach to creating high performance schools.

   Results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire reveal that the principal uses transformational strategies in leading the school. The following statements from the rater version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire received a rating of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

   Items on the scale for inspirational motivation had an overall rating of 3.66 and include:

   Talks optimistically about the future;
   Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished;
   Articulates a compelling vision of the future; and
   Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.

   Items on the scale for idealized influence had an overall rating of 3.49 and include:

   Talks about their most important values and beliefs;
   Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose;

Displays a sense of power and confidence; and
Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission.

As rated by others, the principal uses actions to increase their awareness of what is right and important and moves them beyond their own self-interests for the good of the good of the students. The principal, according to the ratings of others, is proactive in many different and unique ways.

> 2. The principal of Riversedge provided resources and training to teachers; adequate materials and equipment; and opportunities for teachers to work, plan, and learn together around instructional issues in order to improve school outcomes. Instructional leadership is an essential skill.

Decreasing disparity for our urban elementary schools is likely to occur only if reform and restructuring efforts gain momentum. Also needed is greater awareness regarding the critical role principals play in the success of school improvement which affects school outcomes. Success will come from the hard work of principals, teachers, parents, and students (Urban Schools, January 2000).

As success is apparent in this one school so is the need for continuous improvement. School improvement and change, according to the principal, is a gradual process. The following excerpt comes from an interview with the principal:

> In the beginning, we had to talk about instruction that was right for children….We had to do research. I did research and shared it with teachers. I provided membership dues for teachers to join early childhood associations, teachers attended workshops and conferences, and returned to the school to work in teams to discuss their new ideas and changes. It was not easy at first. I got a lot of resistance.

> I purchased math and science manipulative materials; ordered books and ordered materials to make it easier for teachers to set up centers.
> I did the ground -work and then turned it over to the school improvement team. The school improvement team previously had been grade level chairpersons and other key people. I found that was not necessarily the best way to go. Grade level chairperson rotated and maybe it was not your choice that you serve on the School Improvement Team too…I decided the structure of school improvement team would change. You volunteered if you really wanted to make a change at this school. The response was overwhelming. The new school improvement team had a retreat that year. New members had to be willing to attend the retreat, take every aspect of this school and analyze it, and decide what was

working and what could be discarded. New ideas were generated in order to add or replace instructional interventions. In those four days we learned about commitment to children; we learned about teamwork; we learned about parent involvement; and we learned that even if we have children in our school that have lots and lots of problems, we could make a difference for them. The retreat was a turning point for staff and for me.

The first year of the program change was a growing year. The second year was an implementation year. And then, each year we continued to build on the plan. As teachers learn new things, go to conferences, and visit other schools they come back and share. We continue to make changes for the better based on new practices and information. I am open to all ideas that will make is school the best place for children to be" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

One parent reported an example of how the principal and teachers work together to bring new ideas to students:

"My child was so excited when a famous children's' author came to school and read her new book to students. A group of teachers and the principal heard the author at a teacher's conference and really wanted her to come to the school. It was a great idea. Now, when my daughter thinks of a book from that author, she just wants to read and read" (Parent Interview, 6/99).

The principal ensures several priorities. Priorities include that staff is responsive to the developmental, emotional, and material needs of the students and that teachers direct attention toward interventions to improve classroom teaching and teacher effectiveness. As the instructional leader of the school, the principal engages in instructional activities on a daily basis. Activities include such things as daily visits to classrooms, observation of teachers, coaching and mentoring teachers, attending grade level instructional planning conferences on a regular basis, and actively participation as a school improvement team member. The principal also engages in professional development activities and keeps abreast of new instructional interventions and ideas.

Chapter Summary

The principal's worklife in the school selected for study has similarities to other elementary principals. However, due to the characteristics of the school and external factors related to those characteristics, the principal faces daily crises and problems unparalleled in typical elementary settings. The principal selected for this study serves a

large number of at-risk students in an urban elementary school. Despite severe limitations within the home and community, 66 percent of second grade students exit the K-2 program reading at or above grade level on the state reading test. This percentage is the same as the school division average. Sixty six percent of second grade students at Riversedge Elementary School obtain scores higher than black and disadvantaged second grade students in the school division. Attendance percentages are lower than school division overall averages over the past five years, but show improvement over the last three years.

  Three themes emerged during data analysis that describe indicators of what the principal does everyday, what the work environment consists of, and what school outcomes are. Collectively, the indicators and answers to research questions provide information for practitioners and trainers in the field of educational administration

  Included in the content of Chapter 4 is discussion about research findings, implications for further research, recommendations for practice, and personal reflection of the researcher.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Information in Chapter 4 is a presentation of concluding perspectives for this study designed to investigate the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students. Included in this chapter is a summary of results, discussion of results, implications for further research, and recommendations for practice. The section titled, "Concluding Thoughts" captures the researcher's personal reflections on her experiences throughout the research process.

Summary

Interviews, observations, and the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire provided data about the principal's worklife. Data collected from these sources provided answers to five research questions; provided information from which themes and patterns emerged; and provided insight into the principal's worklife, the work environment of the school, and school outcomes. Chapter 3 contains a full discussion of themes and patterns as well as answers to research questions.

Conclusions of the study follow. For a full discussion of conclusions see Chapter 3.

1. In the case study it was found that the worklife of the principal in an achieving urban elementary school requires flexibility, time management skills, positive interpersonal skills, high expectations, and instructional leadership skills. These personal characteristics appear to have a positive impact on school outcomes.

2. The principal of Riversedge Elementary School based the program of the school on student and community needs. A strong bond between home and school was part of the foundation for educational programs in this school.

3. The principal was responsive to cultural considerations as a leader in the school.

4. The principal of Riversedge Elementary School was effective in using transformational leadership strategies.

5. The principal of Riversedge Elementary School provided resources and training to teachers; adequate materials and equipment; and opportunities for teachers to work, plan, and learn together around instructional issues.

The vision of the principal for the school encompasses educational interventions, high expectations for student learning, and strong community linkage. The principal encounters barriers and obstacles while leading the school on a day-to-day basis. This study illuminated the day-to day challenges of leading in an urban school with a large number of at-risk students. The study also examined how the principal deals with everyday problems and keeps school outcomes positive. The story of the principal's worklife is that of a complex and demanding job. The principal's time focuses on providing leadership to staff, advocating for children, providing support to teachers and parents, and serving as a liaison between the external constituencies of the school.

Discussion

Information obtained during data analysis is the basis of discussion. Information in this section provides insight into the perceptions and factors that influence the principal's worklife.

The discussion of research findings is divided into three sections of narrative explanation. The development of the principal's career is in "Starting Points." The challenges the principal faces in leading the school is in "Overcoming the Odds." Future perspectives for principals seeking information about worklife characteristics of principals in urban elementary schools are in "Miles to go." Discussion in the last section also includes discussion about trends and solutions for urban education.

Starting Points

The principal of Riversedge Elementary School is leading a school experiencing a level of success unlike other elementary schools in the school district of similar demographics. The principal sought a degree in educational administration after twenty -three years as a primary teacher. Within a year of completing courses, the principal received a position as an instructional specialist assisting principals of two elementary schools. Riversedge Elementary School was one of two schools served during this year.

The promotion to principal followed the school year after serving in the capacity of instructional specialist. The principal was assigned to Riversedge to fill a vacancy.

The vision of the principal for leading a school grew out of a desire to "make a difference in the lives of young children" (Principal interview, 5/99). Mentors played a significant role in shaping beliefs of the principal. The principal stated, "I was confident that what good principals were doing could be replicated" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Overcoming the Odds

The principal is making a difference in the lives of students and others in the school where difficult odds are hard to beat. School characteristics and external factors make the difference in this principal's worklife from other elementary principals. The principal applies resources from within the school, the school district, and the community to provide educational programs for students.

The principal strengthens the link between learning and coming to school by ensuring parents understand what is going on in their child's school. The principal stated, "Communication with parents is very important. Central office memos and other notices to parents many times are difficult to understand. Notices to parents often are rewritten to make certain parents that can understand it…. I take time to rewrite them" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

The above-mentioned methods for dealing with the demands created by the unique characteristics of the school and the following information indicated additional methods used by the principal.

There appears to be a relationship between the principal's personal values and the values of the school. The principal articulates both formally and informally the values that undergird the mission and vision of the school. The principal displays strong commitment to personal and professional mission.

The principal also appreciates the opportunity to work with other professionals who display the same level of commitment.

"… the principal sees something and says, Will this be good for the school, and it turns out to be good. She is always open-minded in terms of the school" (Teacher interview, 5/99).

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<u>The principal recognizes innovation and quality as the cornerstone to success.</u>
The principal believes that as a school administrator, thinking must be in line with other key administrative and organizational leaders. "Innovation, quality, and improvement are important in programming for successful outcomes" (Principal Interview, 5/99). The principal seeks continuous improvement of educational programs within the school so that educational opportunities extend to all learners within the school. The principal stated, " Program change is introduced gradually. The educational program for the school is developmentally appropriate for young children. Teachers participate in decision-making about what is good for the school…. Once program success is mastered within a class or a grade level, the program is generalized to other classes or grade levels within the school" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

<u>Putting vision into action is a primary function of the leadership behavior of the principal</u>. Sharing her vision with others about what is important in educating young children focuses the interaction of the principal with others. The principal, as observed by others, is an initiator, innovator, a team builder, and a team player.

> "Activities for parents go on throughout the school day and extend into the evening. The principal is always involved, works along with teachers and parents…always there, and always working and thinking to make things better for the school and students" Parent Interview, 6/99).

<u>The principal recognizes the importance of professional growth and development</u>. The principal engages in and encourages others to keep abreast of current trends and issues in elementary education, specifically, issues relating to educating young children and at-risk children. The principal participates in a number of professional development activities that include presenting at workshops and conferences and writing for professional publications. The principal provides professional growth opportunities to teachers on a frequent basis. Teachers attend conferences with the principal and as part of a team to study educational practices for educating K-2 students. Teachers from the school present workshops at educational conferences as a way to share outcomes of programs implemented in the school. The

principal perceives professional development as an opportunity to "grow change within the school" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

    <u>The principal relays information from internal and external sources to staff.</u> The principal articulates important information and expectations to staff verbally and in writing. Key individuals, identified to help "get the message out" (Principal's Interview, 5/99), report information relayed by the principal in grade-level or committee meetings. An office memo board and daily announcements also serve as means to communicate information. The principal uses personal reflection with staff when verbally relaying goals and expectations. The principal said, "I share my feelings about an innovation or perhaps my mistakes when I tried something " (Principal Interview, 5/99). Additionally, the principal labels what achievement looks like in the school; for example, she said "…we are a reading and writing school" (School Video, 3/99).

When asked about relaying information of importance to others, the principal stated, "I consider communication one of the single most important aspects of my job as elementary principal. Whether I am interacting with teachers, students, parents, central office staff, or other administrators, I must be able to express my views clearly" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

<u>Miles to Go</u>

Surrounded by poverty and all the negative features associated with poverty, Riversedge Elementary School has achieved academic goals beyond expectations that many people would have assumed unrealistic. While gains in achievement and attendance are noted, the principal and staff recognize that hard work still lies ahead. "We continue to struggle to improve achievement. The school is not perfect," stated one teacher. The principal references continuous improvement needs in all academic areas and attendance while acknowledging, "much hard work goes into our everyday work with students" (Principal Interview, 5/99). High expectations, common goals, and mutual agreement among staff regarding priorities for educating young children foster achievement in the school.

Implications for Further Research

Additional research is needed to better understand how elementary principals can better support the improvement of teaching and learning in urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students. Results of this study serve as impetus for further research. This section contains implications for research. Additional studies examining the worklife of principals in such schools of similar characteristics will contribute to a needed body of research in educational administration.

Studies designed to examine roles, relationships, and responsibilities of principals specifically in relation to the size of the school will expand on themes that evolved in this study. The effect of these variables on the leadership behavior of the principal is a potential topic of study. A suggestion would be schools serving K-5 or grades 3-5 with similar demographics.

A method similar to the one used in this study will assist researchers studying principal leadership behavior of more than one principal. Researchers must consider time and resources if studying more than one school site and principal at a time. Data management of one case is an enormous task. Knowing in advance the potential volumes of recorded and written data aids the researcher logistically.

A follow-up study of the same school to include the relationship between academic achievement, school attendance, and an intensive K-2 program may reveal important data regarding early intervention and the length of the kindergarten school day.

Several possibilities exist for further examination into the worklife of principals. Early in the research design, the researcher identified specific relationships for study based on a conceptual framework. Figure 1 (page 18) illustrates ten possible relationships within the worklife of the principal. Eight of the ten relationships were examined in this study. Future researchers are encouraged to examine relationships unexplored within the conceptual framework for this study. These relationships include: the relationship between work environment and school outcomes; the relationship between work environment and educational programs; the relationship between the

personal characteristics of the principal and educational programs of the school; and the relationship between educational programs and school outcomes.

The researcher reported on components of the worklife of the principal based on transformational leadership factors. These components and assumptions drawn from a review of literature on transformational leadership made up a conceptual framework for the study. Using the design of a conceptual framework, researchers can compare and contrast different work environments and the impact on the principal's worklife.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is a "full range" assessment of leadership and provides information about the relationship between leader's perceptions and those of raters and relates those perceptions to organizational outcomes. The results of the MLQ provided data about the principal's leadership behavior. Those conducting research after this study may consider using other instruments for assessing different school components or principal leadership behavior. An instrument such as NASSP's Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments' Information Management System (CASE—IMS) offers a diagnostic assessment that focuses on the entire school environment (Keefe, 1993). Another instrument, the Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger, 1983) allows teachers and principals to indicate their perceptions of the frequencies of exhibited principal behaviors.

The use of a rating scale for collecting data about principal leadership behavior proved useful as a means of confirming data across other collection domains, i.e., observations and interviews. A quantitative study examining leadership behaviors of elementary principals could include use of a rating scale and school outcome data. The principal and teaching staff would participate in the rating portion of the study. School performance data from standardized and local tests over the part three to five years provide data to compare rating.

Results of the rating scale would then be examined for correlation and relationships to trends evident within the performance data of the school. Specifically, information obtained would provide feedback to the school(s) participating in the study.

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Additionally, research findings would add to the growing body of information on principal effectiveness and the affect on school performance.

Following are three suggestions the researcher finds interesting for future study using case study methodology: (a) the role of central office in promoting change in schools; (b) exploring perspectives of stakeholder groups in urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students; and (c) exploring the differences between transformational leadership and transactional leadership within achieving urban elementary schools.

In summary, several possibilities exist for further study of the principal's worklife in an achieving urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students. Future research on the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school could be enhanced by changing the theoretical lens, examining a larger population of principals, or expanding themes identified for this one case.

<u>Recommendations for Practice</u>

Principals seeking to improve or increase achievement in urban elementary schools must be willing to study the work of other principals who are making gains in urban schools. Elementary principals seeking to increase achievement in urban schools with a large number of at-risk students will find information contained in this study useful.

This account of the worklife of a principal generated a number of recommendations for training and educating principals. The following section contains those recommendations for practicing and future administrators.

Principals play an important role in supporting school change efforts. Elementary principals who recognize the importance of the relationship between their leadership behavior and school culture can make a difference in the schools they serve. "The principal's role is central in interactions to build the school culture "(Pavan & Reid, 1990, p. 21). The principal's worklife within the school must focus on knowing the components of culture and planning as well as participating in culture- building activities. Pavan and

Reid (1990) also suggest, " Principals of urban elementary schools need to understand concepts of culture and have training in change process skills on a regular basis" (p. 21).

Leadership training for principals must include education and practice in the areas of communication and interpersonal skills. The work of principals includes close communication with constituents and other administrators. Articulating school goals internally and externally requires proficiency in speaking, listening, and writing.

Principals who recognize trends and patterns in performance data and demographic details of the school better advocate programming that is culturally relevant and instructionally responsive. Interpreting performance data and developing strategic plans for schools based on that data provide linkages for effective instructional programs.

Reflective practices provide meaningful feed back and opportunities for the principal. Examining self -perceptions and the perceptions of others is a tool that can promote professional and personal growth as a leader. School leaders must spend time in thought regarding important issues faced daily in order to meet challenges with renewed enthusiasm.

There are recommendations for those responsible for providing support and assistance to elementary principals. School division administrators should promote efforts to build the capacity of principals to provide quality instructional leadership. Specific ways include: (1) assisting principals in assessing, understanding, and using performance data to plan for the school; (2) ensuring that principals have time to engage in instructional support on a daily basis; (3) providing instructional specialist to assist with monitoring and engaging in instruction along with the principal; (4) providing opportunities for principals to learn and visit from other schools with similar demographics that achieved higher levels of success; and (5) giving principals time for their own professional development around instructional practices that will benefit the school.

One final recommendation deals with the principal's role in building and instilling a sense of community. Developing a collaborative, sharing decision-making community takes a minimum of 4 to 5 years (Pavan & Reid, 1990). The principal assigned to Riversedge Elementary School has been there six years. This suggests that continuity is a positive contributing factor when working for change in an urban elementary school. As a result, school district administrators must consider the importance of continuity in administrative staff assigned to urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Wolcott (1990) asks and answers a question regarding concluding qualitative research:

> How do you conclude a qualitative study? You don't. …Qualitative researchers seem particularly vulnerable to the tendency – and- urge to go beyond reporting what is and to use their studies as platforms for making pronouncements of what ought to be…. There is nothing wrong with offering your personal opinions or professional judgements- but be sure to label them as such… My advice is to work toward a conservative closing statement that reviews succinctly what has been attempted, what has been learned, and what new questions have been raised (p. 55).

Following this advice, concluding thoughts of the researcher include two sections: (1) "Understanding the Dilemma" contains information about the views of the researcher concerning the challenges faced by urban elementary principals. This section also includes the opinion of the researcher concerning the importance of considering worklife demands of principals in urban elementary schools. (2) "Reflections and Insights" contains my personal reflections and insights about the worklife of the principal. Also included in this section is a description of the impact of the study on me personally and professionally.

Understanding the Dilemma

The primary purpose of this research effort was to generate a deeper understanding of the worklife of a principal in an achieving urban elementary school. Findings of the study indicate the job is demanding and challenging. In addition to

worklife demands, however, the principal in an urban elementary school also faces challenges generated by public perception and attitude about performance potential of poor and at-risk students.

Collectively, poverty and minority status doesn't mean the inability to learn (Boardman, Harrington, & Horwitz, 1987). The dilemma facing urban elementary principals is that, while all young non-disabled children have basic cognitive skills, many poor and minority children are failing to reach their intellectual potential (Ginsburg & Russell as cited in http://eric-web.tc.columbia. edu./monographs/ti16_introduction.html). Recent demographic projections indicate that this segment of the childhood population is expected to increase dramatically into the next century ((Natriello & McDill, 1989). Urban elementary schools face the dilemma of finding ways to help low achievers in their schools reach their academic potential.

At the rate of current intervention, a major portion of our school age elementary population faces missing the valuable opportunities that a good education provides. Focused attention is needed in order to increase performance of low achieving students in urban elementary schools.

Part of the researcher's motivation to examine the topic of this study was personal realization that without proactive and rigorous intervention potential exists for continued deterioration within urban elementary schools. The researcher asked the question, is the basis of deterioration lack of understanding? Can the crisis within our urban schools be resolved without understanding the dilemma? My endeavor to answer these questions prompted the topic and research questions.

Answers to research questions obtained as a result of data analysis assisted the researcher in gaining insight into components of the principal's worklife in an urban elementary school. It is the hope of the researcher that others will gain understanding and increase potential of all students to gain opportunities provided by a good education.

For many students in urban schools the future is grim. Often propelled with a slow start into school, students in urban elementary schools are at-risk for falling further

and further behind. It is critically important that students in urban elementary schools receive an extra boost during the K-2 years. In order for this to happen effectively, schools must change. Schools offer the refuge of "hope" to urban elementary students.

The Pivotal Player

A growing body of research on effective schools has focused increased attention on the importance of the principalship (Pavan & Reid, 1990). Following is a list of practices employed by the principal in the school selected for study. These practices appear enmeshed into the principal's worklife and contribute to the outcomes of the school.

Principals spend considerable time on conflicts among adults at the school. The principal in this school redirects energy of the staff to improvement of teaching and learning. The principal in the words of teachers and parents "has a big heart for children… the principal is very child-centered" (Parent & Teacher Interview, 5/99).

A strategy employed by the principal centers on creating an environment in which teachers, parents, and stakeholders share a sense of responsibility for attainment of the goals of the school. Evidence of this includes joint decision-making of the School Improvement Team and the involvement of everyone in essential components of the work of the school.

The principal spends the first hour to an hour and a half daily in classrooms observing teaching and helping improve instruction by reinforcing good teaching techniques and providing suggestions. The principal stated, " I consider myself a teacher of teachers. Instructional leadership is one of my favorite parts of the job" (Principal Interview, 5/99).

Transforming a school to focus on success for students is not an easy task. In fact, the principal reported difficulties, challenges, and frustrations. The principal reported, "I recently spent a school day handling a personnel matter requiring immediate attention. " Perhaps the difference between this school and other urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students that are not achieving is the

persistence of the principal. The principal is committed to her dream of academic success for the students who attend Riversedge Elementary School.

The principal's methods of dealing with every day routines associated with leading in an urban elementary school with a large number of at-risk students occur simultaneously with good instruction in the classroom. The principal relays to others the importance of maintaining focus on high academic standards. The written mission statement of the school is a symbolic representation of basic beliefs. The principal is a role model for putting action behind vision.

<div align="center">Reflections and Insights</div>

It is the opinion of the researcher that uncovered in the results of this study of a principal's worklife are strategies that can assist in the development of principals. A description my reflections and insights follow.

Reflections

"Do you sleep? When do you sleep?" (Parent Interview, 6/99) is a question a parent reported they ask when the drive and energy of the principal must be described. The energy of the principal and the success of the school create a "cycle of success." This cycle, fueled by the principal and the school, is active and interactive. The principal appears never to rest and the response of the school is mutual.

<div align="center">Steps in the Development of Researcher as Research Instrument</div>

As the conceptual framework and methodology for this research evolved, the researcher also evolved as a major participant in the study. The role as researcher grew beyond participant observer. The beginning of fieldwork experience looked and felt different from the beginning of fieldwork. From researcher to research instrument- a transformation occurred. Reflecting on the entire process of conducting the study observed was that development as a researcher grew beyond the role initially envisioned. Taken from the field notes of the researcher, the following narrative describes the evolutionary process of researcher into a research instrument.

> One practice adopted early in the data collection phase was recording field study notes immediately following observations. I maintained a small work area in the library. Free from distractions, I would recall observations, conversations, or an

artifact review. If the observation or event were particularly striking, I would stop what I was doing and note a response. This was less appealing because it interfered with the level of participation or seemed intrusive for the setting.

I remember walking into the school the first day of fieldwork. Somehow, this day was very different from the other times visited. The lens in place and focused made the difference. The focus of inquiry just as the mission statement on the wall of the school was guiding my direction. I remember thinking then and continued to think throughout my time in the field about the importance of remaining as objective as possible. Others would wonder how I safeguarded against bias and opinion. I became an instrument. Perceptions, action, and beliefs of others funneled through me. I knew the integrity of my research depended on recording responses accurately.

I recognized from the initial stages of design the importance of guarding against bias. Steps taken throughout data collection assisted in providing objectivity. To establish credibility, three major techniques were used: persistent observation through announced and unannounced visits to the school, triangulation, and maintaining a reflective field study journal. Triangulation provided the overlap method to establish validity and confirmation. The design for this case study evolved over time and after much consideration of approaches. Books by Yin (1994) and Stake (1995) are treasures and became my best friends during research design, fieldwork, and data analysis.

Fear of the unknown created anxiety. Feelings of uneasiness quickly disappeared. My quiet and reflective behavior during observations would lead teachers and others to questions and discussions about the study; about someone's desire to do graduate work or research using similar fieldwork strategies and approaches.

Staff greeted me warmly. Asked questions gently, and treated me as one of them. The professional attitude of the staff made my job much easier. As I look back over the fieldwork part of the study, I know that what I experienced as a participant observer was made possible by the impact of the principal's leadership behavior. The staff and principal were professional, open, receptive, and responsive. The principal's willingness to participate in the study indicated a level of commitment to professional growth for self and for the staff.

The use of a transcriber allowed me to separate myself from the data. The transcriber worked alone with interview tapes and observation logs. This strategy allowed my interaction with the data from a different perspective. Often time, I would read interview data in settings other than locations where I typically worked. I read the transcripts several times before analysis of the data. Use of a

transcriber deleted a step in working with the data. A step I feel added credibility of my work.

As I look over the entire project, I see patterns of growth and development. I started with "transformational leadership as the lens" for focusing research. My work grew well beyond a snapshot of transformational practices in action. For me this is further evidence that I evolved, as did the research.

Also as I look back, I recognize my use of lists to describe actions, processes, or procedures within the school. The principal influenced my use of lists. She tended, during our conversations, to articulate her goals in list form or talk about "cycles" or "steps" in getting work completed. My report of findings includes many of the exact listings of the principal. Individuals looking for practical tips- theory to practice- may find the lists useful.

Insights

Aspiring administrators need to be both trained and educated to achieve positive outcomes in urban school with a large number of at-risk students. Principals must prepare to lead. This case study is a tribute to seekers of success. To become successful practicing administrators, individuals must pattern the ways of those who are successful. Much can be learned from the experiences of principals who work in achieving urban elementary schools with a large number of at-risk students.

Administrators must bring the best of everything into their worklife to make substantial progress in urban elementary schools that serve a large number of at-risk students. As principals embrace challenges the 21st century is certain to bring within our schools, they must be able to forge partnerships and build alliances with parents, with businesses, and with social service agencies. School leaders, as does the principal in this study, must lead in efforts to coordinate the energy and work of all stakeholder so that all children in their schools are well served.

Lashway (1996) discusses three broad strategies that school leaders choose when operating schools. Hierarchical, transformational, and facilitative strategies each view the school through a different lens. I did not enter fieldwork guessing that the principal of Riveredge Elementary School employed one leadership strategy over the other. However, as I left the fieldwork phase of my study, I left knowing what teacher empowerment, parent involvement, community involvement, and a committed principal

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looks like. Results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and data obtained through observation and interview data suggest the principal's use of transformational strategies.

Using research as purposeful, transformative process for the participants (including the researcher) was intriguing. I understand with heightened awareness the significance of observation, questioning, listening, and interacting in the worklife of the principal. The principal and staff were willing participants and begged to know about what was going on in the school as it related to best practices in educating young at-risk students. The principal and staff were willing participants and make good action researchers. Receptivity of the principal and staff, a "can do" attitude, and energy describe attributes that made research in this field such a rich experience.

Learned was the value of studying behavior as a component in organizational change. Validated for the researcher is the practice of questioning, observing, and reflection as essential skills for principals seeking change in schools. Principals must have the skills and abilities to read subtle and overt messages from the culture of the school and community upon entering as a newly assigned principal or a principal who is in the midst of change as result of several years in the school.

In closing, sincere gratitude and best wishes are expressed to the principal, staff, students, and community of Riversedge Elementary School. The perspectives acquired broadened the researcher's knowledge of people, relationships, and how important both are in leading others.