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Perception, practice, and theory : a case study of leadership in an urban middle school

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PERCEPTION, PRACTICE, AND THEORY:
A CASE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP IN AN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy

In
The School of Education

by
Marcia Speed
BS, Louisiana State University, 2002
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August 2013
I wish to dedicate a page in my dissertation to my parents;
Mom, you understand me in a way no one else does. Thank you for being there when I needed you most. I am forever grateful to call you mom.
In loving memory of my dad, James Speed Jr. (March 17, 1950 – March 8, 2012). Thank you for always believing in me and helping me learn to believe in myself. Your life continues to inspire my goals to help others.
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Abstract

Explaining the complex nature of how leadership works within the school has proven difficult; consequently, many studies have shown little or no effects of leadership on student outcomes and school performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Furthermore, researchers acknowledge that a gap exists in the literature between explaining models of leadership and describing the effective actions of leadership (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Kruger et al, 2007; Robinson, 2006; Robinson et al 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Of the research that does link leadership practices to student outcomes and school performance, the assumed indicators of leadership effectiveness, in most cases the relationship was studied through indirect effects (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). On the school front, restructuring options are being implemented for schools that fail to raise their test scores. Each of these options includes the opportunity for replacing the leadership and a number of the teachers in those schools. Specifically for Louisiana, the state in which this study was conducted, as of 2012, the state is seeing some gains, but thirty-six percent (36%) of Louisiana’s schools have received D or F (LDOE, 2012a). In addition, for 2012, forty-two additional schools received the grade F, an increase from 115 to 157 schools (LDOE, 2012a). As a result, Louisiana continues to implement sanctions in an attempt to improve school performance. The purpose of this study was to use case study methodology to explore the perceptions and practices of leadership in a Southern, urban middle school. Results supported the implementation of Distributed and Instructional Leadership practices. A major implication of this study is that it challenges the sanctions enforced by NCLB, by representing effective leadership in a struggling school, thereby raising questions of the appropriateness of holding principals responsible for school performance.
Chapter 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a brief historical overview of perspectives on student achievement and of the accountability movement. Next, I offer a description of the leadership theories relevant to this research, including Trait Theory, Transformational and Transactional Leadership, and Situational Leadership, with a discussion of their shortcomings, and a presentation of the leadership framework used as a lens for this study. The following segments include a statement of the problem and research questions, the rationale/purpose of the study, its significance, its delimitations and limitations, and a definition of key terms.

The current authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002 (United States Department of Education (USDE), 2002a). The primary focus of NCLB was assessment and accountability as a means of ensuring that students were learning established grade level standards (USDE, 2002b). The initial assessment goal of NCLB was that all students would meet or exceed state standards on high-stakes tests in Reading and Math within 12 years, i.e., by the year 2014. Accountability, however, has been implemented in the form of holding those who work in schools responsible for increasing student performance on high stakes tests.

Currently, many schools across the country have come under great scrutiny for their failure to reach standardized test goals. Schools are required, under NCLB, to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards reaching the achievement goals of 2014 (USDE, 2002a, 2002b). Schools that consistently fail to meet those performance requirements face corrective action sanctions that start with offering school choice options and a School Improvement Plan to target areas of needed improvement (USDE 2002a, 2002b). Schools that remain in corrective action
for years face further sanctions such as restructuring the school’s instructional program, adopting a model that includes replacing the leadership and a portion of the faculty, school closure, conversion of the school to a charter school, or state takeover of the school (USDE, 2002a, 2002b). Recent policy changes allow for ESEA flexibility, a waiver opportunity that gives states more time to implement changes to improve school performance. However, states are still required to incorporate sanctions in the form of “turnaround principles,” which may include the original sanctions as outlined in NCLB (USDE, 2012).

**Historical Perspectives on School Performance and Student Achievement**

In order to better understand current leadership and school performance issues, historical information pertaining to student achievement is needed to frame the context of the current state of schooling. First, I describe a perspective on initial research that documents the achievement gap in the wake of desegregating schools. This dimension was explored through looking into societal issues that contribute to the achievement gap. Second, I examine key documents that form the cornerstone of research on assessment and achievement. Third, I discuss the role of the federal government in enacting legislation that has contributed to the achievement gap through looking into the historical perspective of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

**Desegregation in schools**

Decisions of legal cases in the late 1800s and early 1900s set the premise for separate-but-equal. In particular, the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case led to separate-but-equal being “implanted as a national standard applying to the fourteenth Amendment” (Alexander & Alexander, 2005, p. 891). This resolution led to other decisions that more specifically set boundaries for where African-American students could receive an education. The availability of facilities and resources for the education of African-Americans was far inferior to what was
available to white students. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began to fight for equal educational rights for African-American students. There were several victories leading up to the famous 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case (Alexander & Alexander, 2005, p. 896). The verdict of this case ruled that “separate-but-equal had no place in the educational system and that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (Alexander & Alexander, 2005, p. 896). This led to plans that involved school closures and busing to help the progress of desegregation in schools. However, these measures alone were not sufficient to aid in the process of integrating schools.

The first magnet schools were formed as a means to help facilitate the process of desegregation (Ilg & Massucci, 2003, p. 66). “The federal magnet program began in 1972 as an amendment to the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) of 1972, a federal desegregation assistance program” (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p. 523). The belief was that providing specialized programs would aid in efforts to attract whites to black schools (Rossell, 2003, p. 698). Early research on magnet schools focused not on the quality of programs being offered but on factors related to student racial integration within the programs (Ilg & Massucci, 2003; Rossell, 2003). This was due to the fact that from the 1970s, the courts “focused on racial balance as the measure of desegregation” (Rossell, 2003, p. 700). However, in a study that looked into the differences found in magnet programs, Hausman and Brown’s (2002) teacher survey revealed only minimal differences in instructional practices of magnet teachers (p. 273).

Specifically in East Baton Rouge Parish, the area for this study, “On August 12, 2003, federal Judge James Brady signed the Final Settlement Agreement (FSA) to Davis, et al. v. East Baton Rouge Parish School Board et al., marking the end of the school district’s 47-year-long school desegregation case, the longest in U.S. history” (Public Affairs Research Council (PAR),
2005, p. 2). This desegregation case challenged the notion of institutionalized racial segregation, but desegregation efforts were voluntary and resulted in little change until 1981, when a judge closed 15 schools and implemented forced busing (PAR, 2005, p. 3). Also, during 1981, magnet programs were federally mandated as a part of the desegregation efforts (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p. 527-528). These desegregation efforts of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in white flight, with the demographic of black students within the district drastically increasing by thirty-eight percent (38%) to a total of eighty-three percent (83%) black students by the year 2007 (Beal & Hendry 2012, p. 528). A 1996 consent decree resulted in decreased busing practices and also in the formation of many new magnet programs within the district (PAR, 2005, p. 3).

**Early research related to the achievement gap**

James Coleman, a key author of “Equality of Educational Opportunity: A Summary Report” that is commonly referred to as “The Coleman Report,” described issues of desegregation and the achievement gap in his 1966 report, which was required as part of Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (p. iii). Coleman found that in spite of the 1954 defeat of separate but equal schooling, schools were still mostly segregated (p. 3). He also found that the black students were at a disadvantage in regards to the quality and availability of resources, quality teachers, and the curricula used (p. 22). However, in terms of the school factors Coleman studied, the factor that had the strongest relationship to achievement was the students’ belief that they had some control over their destiny, which was found mostly among black students who attended schools with higher proportions of white students (p. 23). Coleman described a “grade level gap” that showed how many deviations black students were behind their white counterparts at various grade levels (p. 21). Coleman found that the deficiencies in achievement tended to
grow with progression in grade levels, providing minimal opportunity for students to ever overcome the widening gap in performance (p. 21).

Coleman’s findings were used as a cornerstone in desegregation and educational reform efforts. One of his key findings was that student achievement, for black students, was strongly related to the educational background of their peers in school, regardless of the black students’ socioeconomic status (p. 22). Although Coleman expressed an awareness that integration was more complex than putting black and white students in the same building, he believed that his findings showed that integration would have an overall positive effect on black students’ academic achievement (p. 29).

Hauser (1965), author of “Demographic Factors in the Integration of the Negro,” explained how slavery practices contributed to the breakdown of the black family. Hauser found that in 1910, almost one third of blacks were illiterate, and by 1940, this number had grown to approximately forty-one percent (41%) (p. 855-56). By 1960, this percent decreased to twenty-three percent (23%), but was still over three times as high as for whites (p. 856). In addition to higher rates of illiteracy, Hauser also provided evidence explaining how many black families lived in poverty and its implications on children. He explained that due to larger family size, black families had more children to support on smaller wages (p. 865). The direct result was fewer resources available to support the education of the child. Hauser believed that “the poverty of the Negro family must rank as the single most important factor preventing the Negro from developing those abilities which could help him to assume both the rights and obligations of being a first-class American citizen” (p. 866). In other words, Hauser painted a daunting picture of how poverty begets more poverty. Parents who were already living with limited resources and who had large families were not able to provide the necessary resources for their
children to help them break out of a life of poverty. This led to Hauser’s most powerful analysis that improvements in educating black students occurred by generation and not by year (p. 868). From this perspective, Hauser reiterated the importance of the parent-child component in education, where patterns of poverty persist through each upcoming generation, hindering access to enough opportunities to cause the members of a family to become economically viable citizens. Instead, families become stuck in patterns of reproducing poverty.

**A Nation at Risk**

Moving past initial efforts to integrate schools, research still showed that America’s educational systems were greatly lacking. Under the administration of President Regan, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, commonly called *A Nation at Risk*, was written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). This document outlined the many shortcomings of America’s educational system and called for immediate action to change. The document stated, “if an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre education performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war” (Introduction, Para 2, 1983). Comparisons were made to other countries to show that the United States was not as competitive as it needed to be and that more rigorous educational practices were necessary for a change to occur. The Commission described four aspects of the educational process which they believed were key areas that contributed to the educational decline the researchers had described (Findings, Para 1). Those four aspects were content, expectations, time, and teaching.

*A Nation at Risk* served as another powerful declaration to the country, which demanded that public education undergo extensive changes in order to raise the United States’ ability to
remain competitive with the rest of the world. This led to additional pressures to increase accountability in public education.

**The Accountability Movement and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which initiated the federal government’s effort to solve educational problems, was signed into law on April 11, 1965 (Office of Education, 1969, p. 1). With ESEA’s inception, the government started providing funding for schools that serviced impoverished students. Since 1965, with each change in president, reauthorizations of ESEA have gone through many changes in an attempt to demand accountability from the states that receive federal funds.

“The 1994 reauthorization of the ESEA, known as the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA), represented the paradigm shift in federal education policy” (Forte, 2010, p. 76-77). It was the requirements of IASA that ushered in the standardized testing movement. In accordance with IASA, states were required to establish standards for grades 3-8, implement statewide assessments to test for these standards, and create a statewide accountability system to hold schools accountable for their performance (Forte, 2010, p. 77).

The most recent re-authorization of ESEA is NCLB. However, NCLB has resulted in “teaching the test” and not the individual. The legislation that was meant to bring schools into accountability has been turned into a testing system that labels schools and students, and then punishes them for failing to meet targeted goals. In addition to this, the autonomy given to the states to choose their own testing methods impedes the ability to make comparisons of each state’s performance.

When analyzing how NCLB has affected schooling in the United States, it becomes clear that the legislation is putting pressure on school leadership, teachers and students. The students’
scores are used to label students and possibly hinder them from achieving academic success if they are not good standardized test takers. The test scores are also used to label schools and teachers. Pressure is being exerted at the local school level to raise student test scores, with penalties falling on the school leaders if they fail to meet the requirements. This type of pressure and sanction from NCLB forces an assumption that the role schools play in education carries more influence than the environment to which students go back once they leave the school. This pressure also forces some schools to narrow their curriculum in order to focus on preparing students for high stakes tests. NCLB does not consider the role of the community and families in closing the achievement gap. In addition to these issues with standardized tests and NCLB, there are concerns about comparing state-to-state test results. Research provides evidence that these comparisons may be a dangerous and unreliable practice due to differences in state testing practices (Fritzberg, 2004; Forte, 2010; Linn, 2005; Maleyko & Gawlik, 2010).

**Shortcomings of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements**

NCLB requires all schools to meet the requirements of AYP, but gives the states the flexibility to select their own tests (Fritzberg, 2004, p.76). States are responsible for meeting yearly AYP criteria with the goal of every student reaching proficiency by 2014 (Linn, 2005, p. 4). However, Fritzberg (2004) believed that AYP provisions allow states the opportunity to water down their standards (p. 77). Forte (2010) concluded that the use of AYP failed to accurately identify schools that were truly in need of improvement (p. 80). Maleyko and Gawlik (2011) claimed that this flexibility with AYP could create a false impression that there is some consistency across the states in how AYP is implemented (p. 601). In addition, the freedom that the states have in how they implement AYP sends out deceiving messages to the community about the success and failure of some schools because these differences in implementation
greatly determine which schools are successful (Forte, 2010; Linn, 2005; Maleyko & Gawlik, 2011). Researchers report that consequences in how states implement accountability resulted in reports of student achievement and school AYP that are not comparable from one state to another (Linn, 2005; Maleyko & Gawlik, 2011).

**Factors that contribute to student performance on high-stakes testing**

Established as early as the Coleman Report, there are gaps in the levels of performance between black students and their white counterparts. This became more evident with the implementation of standardized testing. Conflicting evidence in current research shows the likelihood that multiple variables are causing achievement gaps between black and white students and that a multi-faceted approach may be necessary in order to narrow them (Rothstein, 2004). There are discrepancies in research with regard to whether or not teachers are the key factor contributing to these achievement gaps (Borman & Kimbal, 2005; Johnson & Uline, 2005). Other research focuses on claims that socioeconomic status is the key factor contributing to achievement gaps (Sirin, 2005; Tajalli & Opheim, 2004). Yet, some researchers describe such factors by more specifically including issues that are often the consequences of poverty (Evans, 2005; Mathis, 2005; Rothstein, 2004).

Currently, to assert the idea that certain in-school changes can lead to closing the achievement gap, a number of researchers are providing evidence that a reliance on a few programs, many of which are charter schools, supports the notion that some schools have achieved academic success in spite of student demographics (Billig, Jaime, Abrams, Fitzpatrick, & Kendrick, 2005; Rothstein, 2004). Although research supports the success at some of these schools, these programs tend to offer services that are not easily reproducible in every public school setting, such as the case with turnaround and charter schools.
Teacher quality. In their study on closing the achievement gap, Johnson and Uline (2005) focused on explaining standards that address providing teachers with the training they believe will help close that gap. They asserted that the “key strategy to helping teachers feel supported is the design and implementation of intensive, sustained professional development that is clearly connected to the daily work of teachers and the learning needs of students” (p. 47). Johnson and Uline (2005) also shared their beliefs about a school’s mission, implying that schools that are experiencing achievement gaps must lack the vision necessary for success.

In contrast to the work of Johnson and Uline (2005), Borman and Kimbal (2005) performed research in which they used standards-based teacher evaluation data to determine whether “better” teachers resulted in differences in student achievement and to discover the make-up of the schools in which those teachers were placed. They found that there was no significant evidence that highly qualified teachers were instrumental in closing achievement gaps (p. 4). Borman and Kimbal’s (2005) research showed that “teacher quality is not distributed equitably among classrooms with varying baseline achievement and poverty and minority concentrations” (p. 17). They also found that “students from poor, minority, and low-achieving backgrounds have access to teachers of lower quality, as reflected in the teachers’ evaluation scores” (p. 17). However, they reasoned that the cause of this disparity could either be that higher quality teachers seek out higher performing schools where to work, or there may be some bias in teacher evaluation scores based on the schools in which they teach (p. 17).

Borman and Kimbal’s (2005) study raises two questions about the role of teachers. First, in addition to having the educational status needed to be highly qualified, what other qualities are needed for a teacher to have a positive impact on student learning? Also, is the problem of
achievement gaps exacerbated by the fact that many of the best teachers are not in the schools that need them the most?

**Socioeconomic Status (SES) and the effects of poverty on school performance.** Some researchers have identified socioeconomic status as a factor contributing to the achievement gap. Tajalli and Opheim (2004) used data from over 7,600 Texas schools and performed a regression analysis that tested fourteen independent variables on economically disadvantaged schools. The researchers looked at variables in the areas of school and class size, expenditures, student-teacher ratio, teacher salary, and teachers’ years of experience (2004, p.49). Their results indicated that “the racial composition of schools gains importance as students move from elementary to middle and high schools and at the 10th grade level, percentage of white students is positively associated with performance scores” (p. 51). They found that expenditures, such as those for Instructional Leadership and bilingual education had a positive impact at the early levels. The teacher’s salary was associated with high performance only at the middle school level. The study revealed no correlation between factors such as school size, class size, or per pupil expenditures.

Tajalli and Opheim (2004) found that the number of disadvantaged students and the extent of their poverty were key factors that influenced school performance. Their results showed that “for each percent increase in the number of economically disadvantaged students in a campus, the odds of the campus being a high-performing case drops by 6.3% and 8.4% respectively for 4th and 8th grade campuses” (p. 51). They also found that “even within the pool of economically disadvantaged schools, the extent of poverty matters” (p. 51).

Some researchers explained the nature of socioeconomic status in relation to both what takes place in the schools and outside factors that influence students (Evans, 2005; Mathis, 2005, Rothstein, 2004). Evans (2005) recognized three outside factors that are believed to contribute to
the achievement gap. He took into account the work of James Coleman (1966) and asserted that parental influence is a major factor in student achievement. He also considered the work of Richard Rothstein (2004) indicating that poverty and school readiness are factors that need to be addressed. Mathis (2005) supported research which claims that student math scores could be predicted, not by their school, but by poverty and parental factors. Mathis (2005), like Rothstein (2004), made the connection between student achievement and the need to take action at the community level. He reiterated Rothstein’s suggestions to address the achievement gap by tackling issues such as those of health, mobility, housing, and unemployment besides providing additional school-related services.

Richard Rothstein, author of the book *Class and Schools: Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap* (2004), suggested that the achievement gap is due to many factors and will need an approach that includes efforts on many fronts in order to close the gap. Rothstein (2004) listed factors such as “a collection of occupational, psychological, personality, health, and economic traits that interact, predicting performance…that, on average, differs from the performance of families from higher social classes” (p. 4). He believed that in spite of the efforts of schools, it is impossible to overcome the influence of these factors. Therefore, his plan of action included providing additional services that targeted these factors. He supported making the connection through providing academic and community related services to students in order to address their diverse needs. Evans (2005) and Mathis (2005) both echoed Rothstein’s (2004) position in regards to addressing issues of achievement gap.

Evans (2005) discussed the limitations that schooling places on students. He stated, “for most children, the nature of their schooling is not nearly as significant as the nature of the
parenting they receive, or their socioeconomic status, or, for that matter, of the media culture that surrounds them” (p. 584). He believed that the achievement gap starts in early childhood, and efforts to close the gap should focus on prevention and early intervention through means such as quality pre-school programs and after-school programs, as well as support and training for parents (p. 587).

Mathis (2005) provided some insight on misconceptions about closing achievement gaps that are seen in various research attempts to showcase the success of many schools while condemning others for their difficulties in closing achievement gaps. Mathis explained four fallacies that are used to impose the idea that schools alone can close achievement gaps. When looking at the success of certain schools, Mathis (2005) believed that:

The media message is that, because this school has achieved success through hard work, all similarly situated schools can do the same. Thus closing the achievement gap requires no additional resources. It is simply a matter of will and effort (p. 591).

Mathis (2005) placed much emphasis on the amount of time spent in and out of school. He believed the comparably short amount of time students spend in school cannot overcome the much larger amount of time students are subject to the outside environment and saw a need to change the scope of education to include additional services outside traditional teaching and learning.

In looking at the characteristics of poverty, one can better understand how SES affects student outcomes and school performance. Students who are lacking in many needed resources outside school, resources to meet their physical, social, and emotional needs, enter school at a disadvantage for which schools lack the ability to compensate. This is supported by Sirin’s (2005) findings which “suggest that parents’ location in the socioeconomic structure has a strong
impact on students’ academic achievement” (p. 438). The research indicated the possibility that parents with low incomes lived in areas with schools that gave their children limited access to resources in addition to the limited resources they would have at home (Sirin, 2005, p. 438).

**Schools Achieving Success in Spite of SES**

Rothstein (2004) pointed out some discrepancies in how data is presented to the public in relation to the achievement gap and school performance. He stated that in studies that demonstrated student gains in spite of SES, researchers failed to mention other factors that were contributing to their success. For example, he explained how programs such as Knowledge is Power Programs (KIPP) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) have experienced achievement gains, but have specific resources, methods, or entrance criteria for their programs that are not typically found in regular public schools (p. 82-83). Rothstein’s (2004) assertions were confirmed in a study conducted by the United States Department of Education (Billig et al., 2005), in which researchers focused on four schools that “closed achievement gaps.” However, as we analyze the information that is presented in the research about each school, we find that some were involved in AVID, had after school programs, or one-on-one tutoring programs, for example, that helped enhance student achievement (2005, p. 32-36). Therefore, the success of these schools was not due just to enhancing student learning during the regular school day, but to specific programs and efforts that were implemented after school. These practices cannot be easily reproduced in every public school setting, especially if schools are not given the autonomy and funding they need to create successful environments in which all their students can thrive.

In Louisiana, the Louisiana State Department of Education (LDOE) reported that despite the state’s progress, student outcomes on state tests reveal that a 22.1-point gap still remains
between black and white students in ELA, and 26.7 points in math based on Spring 2011 data (LDOE, 2011d). The state also reported that eighty-two schools are high poverty, high performing schools, implying that these schools are beating the odds (LDOE, 2011e). However, upon looking at the list containing these eighty-two schools, and determining which ones were in the district where this current study took place, the three schools that made the list for the district were all specialty schools. Two of the schools were dedicated magnet schools and one had a gifted program (LDOE, 2011e). For those schools, the district implements an application progress that includes students meeting certain enrollment criteria, in addition to the schools’ having additional programs, resources, and finances not common in schools without their designated programs (EBRPSS, n.d.). It is these features of specialty schools that make them unrealistic examples to use as schools that are closing gaps. Many regular public schools do not enforce an application process, nor do they have the extra funding to provide the additional resources to students.

**School Leadership**

Inconsistent evidence is found in the research as it relates to effective leadership practices. There are many theories of leadership, as seen through the research, and each researcher who explores them interprets these models differently. Many studies that are trying to link effective leadership to student outcomes have not successfully, or consistently, determined the impact school leaders have on student outcomes, particularly student achievement. However, of these models that explain the actions and practices of leadership, it appears that leadership is most likely to have indirect effects on student outcomes in schools (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010).
Models of Leadership

Some of the most popular early theories and models of leadership, most of which were adapted from other fields, consist in describing the leader with personal characteristics or behaviors. Trait Theory, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Situational Leadership, are some common frameworks that have been applied to the field of Education. These most popular theories of leadership describe the characteristics or behaviors of the leaders in terms of their leadership’s ability to gain and maintain followership. However, these theories of leadership are not well connected to what daily functions of the principal are effective practices.

What is strongly evident in both research and the criteria for practice is that Instructional Leadership is vital to the success of a school. In looking at Instructional Leadership from an indirect leadership perspective, it becomes clear that the principal is part of a large process of providing various types of instruction-related support and resources to teachers, who in turn work with students to improve student outcomes.

In addition to Instructional Leadership, the Distributed Leadership is becoming a more prominent model used in research. This model of leadership takes into account the works of others whom the principal has included in the leadership process. Distributed Leadership also explains the types of interactions that take place among leaders (Spillane, 2006). Furthermore, Distributed Leadership takes into account various aspects of the principal’s responsibilities, including Instructional Leadership. Table 1 is a summary of these leadership models and theories that will be further explained, showing which ones are related to leadership actions.

Trait Theory. Bass (1990a) conducted an analysis of pervious research between the years of 1904 and 1947 to determine the personal characteristics of leaders. After reviewing
many traits that distinguished leaders from others, Bass concluded that they could be classified under six headings: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, and situation (p. 76). Bass concluded that leadership is not limited to the leader’s possessing specific traits. Instead, Bass (1990a) explained that “leadership appears to be a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his or her capacity to carry cooperative tasks to completion” (p. 77).

**Transactional and Transformational Leadership.** Burns (1978) believed that “the essence of the leader-follower relation is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivations and of power potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose” (p. 19). He differentiated between two types of leadership -- Transforming and Transactional Leadership -- to describe the difference in how the leader-follower relationship is carried out. Burns (1978) believed that Transactional Leadership simply involved interactions that occur in order to pursue the goals of the leader. Transforming Leadership, by contrast represents a different type of relationship between the leader and the follower in which the interests of both are an integral part of pursuing goals.

Bass (1990b) explained his perception of Transformational Leadership as superior to Transactional Leadership. He described a version of Transformational Leadership that “occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interests for the good of the group” (p. 21). Bass’s (1990b) definition of the Transformational Leader called for the leader to be charismatic and to provide inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 22). He acknowledged that both types of leadership could be used by the leader, yet the leader will mostly express one of them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Theory/Model Works</th>
<th>How Theory Focuses on Leadership Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trait Theory</td>
<td>1904-1947 personal characteristics of leaders: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, situation (Bass, 1990a)</td>
<td>Leaders are identified as possessing certain traits, from physical appearance to personal academic ability, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional Leadership Theory</td>
<td>One person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things (Bass, 1990b; Burns, 1978).</td>
<td>The leader and follower are not mutually connected in a continuing pursuit of higher purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership Theory</td>
<td>Moral/ethical conduct in pursuit of goals. Takes into account the collective interests of the leader and follower (Bass, 1990b; Burns, 1978).</td>
<td>The leader and follower are connected through the pursuit of collective goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Leadership</td>
<td>Communication of tasks to accomplish goals. The leader uses different techniques depending on the maturity of the subordinate (Hershey &amp; Blanchard, 1976).</td>
<td>Diagrams how a leader should be able to assess what is needed to get subordinates to complete certain tasks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>Actions the leader takes to influence teacher and student outcomes. The focus is on managing the instructional program and supporting student outcomes (Hallinger &amp; Murphy, 1985).</td>
<td>The leader is actively involved in the learning process in the school. Dimensions of the model explain actions in which the leader engages.</td>
<td>The focus is on actions related to managing all aspects of the school’s instructional program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributed Leadership</td>
<td>Suggests that leadership practices are carried out by formal and informal leaders and that the focus of practice is on the interactions of these leaders (Spillane &amp; Healey, 2010).</td>
<td>Acknowledges roles of formal and informal leaders such as the assistant principal, teacher leaders, instructional coaches in the decision making process.</td>
<td>The focus is on the management of the school including its instructional program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Created by the author (2012)
In contrast, Bass (1990b) described Burn’s (1978) versions of Transactional and Transformational Leadership as a “single continuum with the former at one end and the latter at the other” (p. 457).

**Situational Leadership.** In Gates, Blanchard, and Hershey (1976), the authors who developed Situational Leadership explained how the theory evolved from earlier models and was based on two behaviors, namely task behavior and relationship behavior (p. 349). The authors described task behavior as “the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication by explaining what each subordinate is to do as well as when, where, and how tasks are to be accomplished” (p. 349). Gates et al. (1976) explained relationship behavior as “the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support, ‘psychological strokes,’ and facilitating behaviors” (p. 349). This early explanation of Situational Leadership theory claims that leaders should be able to increase their relationship behavior as the maturity of the followers increases (p. 349).

In later descriptions of Situational Leadership, Hershey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2008) explained how the leadership style used depends on the performance readiness of the followers (p. 132). Performance readiness, as defined by Hershey et al., is not a personal trait. Instead, it is “the extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task” (p. 135). The authors created a continuum that connects performance readiness with the leadership style needed to accomplish a given task. Depending on the level of performance readiness, the leader uses a different type of leadership to accomplish his or her goals.
Shortcomings of Popular Theories of Leadership

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) explained how there was no singular definition of Transformational Leadership (p. 453). The authors pointed out five different versions of transformational, or transformative, leadership theory, with each of the more recent versions building on the original work of early authors. In describing theories of charismatic leadership, Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993), referred to what they called a “new genre of leadership, alternatively referred to as ‘charismatic,’ ‘transformational,’ ‘visionary,’ and ‘inspirational’ leadership” (p. 577). The authors stated that “according to this new genre of leadership theory, such leaders transform the needs, values, preferences and aspirations of followers from self-interests to collective interests” (p. 577). Even in the early descriptions of Transformational Leadership, Burns (1978) described what he called “transforming” leadership, but the term was later adapted to become the Transformational Leadership model.

These popular models of leadership contribute to what researchers are now referring to as “leadership by adjective”, models that describe behavioral characteristics of the leaders and their ability to gain and maintain followership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Robinson, 2006). However, they are greatly lacking in describing what principals do during the school day to run a school and identifying the roles of other formal and informal leaders with whom the principal shares leadership responsibility.

Instructional Leadership and Distributed Leadership: Leadership Frameworks Used as a Lens for this Study

Like other models of leadership, Instructional Leadership has also been subject to various research conceptualizations. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) are recognized for providing a thorough model of Instructional Leadership, taking the construct and describing the dimensions that capture its actions in a school setting (Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe,
Hallinger and Murphy (1985) described three dimensions of instructional management: defines the mission, manages instructional program, and promotes school climate (p. 221). The dimensions are further divided into functions, resulting in eleven functions of the principal that make up instructional practices.

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) acknowledged that implementing some aspects of instructional management involves indirect effects, by which the principal influences the practices of others (p. 220). What separates Instructional Leadership from other models of leadership is that rather than focusing on the personal characteristics of the leader, or the nature of the leader’s ability to gain and maintain followership, Instructional Leadership focuses on actions that take place at the school. These actions are focused on what the principal does to create a successful learning environment in the school.

Instructional Leadership shows the role the principal plays in supervising the school’s instructional program through managing resources and professional development, as well as monitoring, coaching, and evaluating teachers. Specific actions that occur during the school day and are related to student learning can be traced through Instructional Leadership.

One critique of Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) conceptualization of Instructional Leadership is that it originally contributed to the narrow view of the principal being the only responsible party (Robinson et al., 2008). However, there is a growing body of research that recognizes others in the school who act under formal and informal forms of leadership, with a focus on the terms “Distributed Leadership” (Spillane & Healey, 2010). Distributed Leadership comes out of this perspective that recognizes coaches, mentors, and teacher leaders, in addition to administrative staff, as part of the leadership process that takes place within a school. Such a perspective decentralizes the principal as the sole enacting authority and recognizes that there are
others to whom the principal delegates tasks. Distributed Leadership can also be seen in practices of Instructional Leadership. Spillane and Hunt (2010) conducted a study that took both Distributed and Instructional Leadership into account. The authors created a survey that measures Instructional Leadership actions, similar to the work of Hallinger. However, Spillane and Hunt (2010) incorporated questions that sought to identify leaders, in addition to the principal, who played a role in supporting teaching practices. Spillane and Hunt (2010) showed that through the process of supporting teacher pedagogy and providing interventions for students, the principal enlists the help of others to carry out these tasks.

Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom’s (2010) findings on Instructional and Distributed Leadership effects on student achievement suggest that the two forms of leadership may be complementary approaches that are both needed (p. 331). The objective of Distributed Leadership involves formal and informal leaders in the process of improving instructional practices and student learning opportunities. This focus is a key facet of Instructional Leadership practice. Spillane and Healey (2010) explained that a distributed perspective goes beyond the leader-plus aspect and focuses on the interactions that take place among formal and informal leaders. These persons can include assistant principals, mentor teachers, master teachers, instructional coaches, as well as informal teacher leaders for example. Through a distributive perspective, these individuals participate in various leadership functions that contribute to the overall practice of leadership at the school.

**Statement of the Problem**

Original restructuring options for schools include turnaround or transformational models, state takeover, or converting the school to a charter school (USDE 2002a, 2002b). Each of those options includes the opportunity for replacing the leadership and a number of the teachers in the
schools. This is a national concern. However, Louisiana, the state in which this study was conducted, has been aggressively implementing sanctions to turn student performance around. For example, the number of charter schools in the state has risen to 101, whereas in 2008, there were sixty-five (LDOE, 2012b). This does not include the number of schools that are still district operated but have undergone transformational or turnaround procedures. Furthermore, in a statement released for Louisiana’s 2011 school performance reports, it was stated that forty-four percent (44%) of the state’s schools earned a grade of D or F (LDOE, 2011a). For 2012, the state is seeing some gains, but thirty-six percent (36%) of Louisiana’s schools still have received a D or F (LDOE, 2012a). In addition to this, for 2012, the state saw huge gains in the number of schools that received F’s, even though the percent of schools in the D and F category decreased (LDOE, 2012a). Forty-two additional schools received the grade of F, a change from 115 to 157 schools (LDOE, 2012a). In a statement in the Baton Rouge newspaper, The Advocate, it was reported that the number of schools facing sanctions had risen by thirty-three percent (33%) (Sentell, 2012). Although Louisiana is among the states that are approved to follow the ESEA flexibility plan, it has many low performing schools, a problem that needs to be addressed, which will likely include implementing additional sanctions. However, in the area of school leadership, research is greatly lacking in defining effective school leadership and using research to determine the nature of effective leadership practices. Furthermore, what research has shown is that the principal’s leadership style may have indirect effects on student outcomes. Although this relationship is not clearly understood, school leaders often lose their jobs when their schools fail to meet student performance requirements.
Significance of the Study

Research is greatly lacking in describing leadership practices and understanding effective leadership. Many leadership theories describe characteristics of leaders but fail to provide much insight into the daily effective practices of the principal. Instructional Leadership is one key leadership model that focuses on explaining the practices of the leader. Research has provided evidence that Instructional Leadership is effective in positively improving student outcomes (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; O’Donnell & White, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). In addition to this, Instructional Leadership is tied to examinations for leadership licensure and is at the core of beliefs for major educational leadership organizations as the standard that principals should follow (Council of Chief State School Officers Interstate School Leaders Consortium, 2008; Education Testing Service (ETS), 2011; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008).

Furthermore, a contributing problem to defining effective leadership practice is the narrow view of leadership within the school that focuses only on the leadership of the principal. More recent research in the area of Distributed Leadership seeks to explain the nature of actions and interactions that take place between the principal and other formal and informal leaders to whom authority is delegated (Spillane, 2006).

As schools, such as those in Louisiana, continue to struggle to meet state and federal standards, sanctions are being implemented in failing schools that often include removing the principal (USDE 2002a, 2002b). For these reasons, a better understanding of current leadership practices is needed. The current study explores the practices, actions and interactions, of leadership and stakeholders’ (teachers’, leadership teams’, and the principal’s) perceptions of leadership practices.
Research Questions

To explore the practices and perceptions of leadership, this study sought to answer the overall question of how leadership is practiced in the school through the following research questions:

1. How does the principal implement leadership practices?
   a. What is the principal’s perception of her own leadership practices?
   b. What actions are part of the principal’s daily practices?
   c. Which theoretical leadership model(s) does the principal put into practice?

2. How does the leadership team (Formal and Informal Leaders) implement leadership practices?
   a. What is the leadership team’s perception of their own leadership contributions?
   b. What actions are part of the leadership team’s daily practices?

3. What are the teachers and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?

4. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practices?
   a. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the teachers’ instructional changes?

Purpose of the Study

The most disheartening finding about the achievement gap is that there are great similarities between the disparities discussed in the 1960s and the issues still problematic today. After fifty years of recognizing and researching the problem of the achievement gap and poor school performance, no specific formula has been used nation-wide toward any significant success in closing the gap and improving school performance. U.S. News and World Report revealed that schools such as Graham Road Elementary in Fairfax County, Virginia, and Hall
Elementary School in Mobile, Alabama, are among a group of schools that have experienced tremendous success in closing gaps and achieving high student and school performance (Chenoweth, 2009). However, in some schools across the United States these accomplishments do not negate the fact that many minority students of low SES are still struggling. The lack of a consistent, dominant solution to solve the problem of the achievement gap for the nation is evidence that, in spite of certain demographic similarities, something else is at play, possibly in each school setting, which makes achieving academic goals a more complex task than research has been able to identify. A better understanding of how some districts and schools are addressing these issues of achievement gaps through leadership practices, and the mandates of NCLB, is greatly needed in order to improve the pedagogical practices of practitioners in K-12 education.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and practices of leadership in a middle school located in a southern Louisiana district to determine the nature of leadership practices and which leadership practices are perceived by administrators and teachers to be effective. Painterland Middle School, a pseudonym, was selected for this study because it is in one of the largest school districts in the state, and within its district, it is the only middle school that does not have a magnet or gifted program, has had the same principal for more than one year, and does not have a school performance grade of F. This school is also a representative case of a high poverty school that is struggling to meet state standards. For 2011-2012, thirty-six percent (36%) of Louisiana’s schools earned a D or an F (LDOE, 2012a). Using a case study approach, this research explored the principal’s, assistant principals’, instructional specialist’s, and teachers’ perceptions of leadership characteristics in Painterland Middle School through the
use of questionnaires, End of Day (EOD) logs, observations, and interviews. Together, data were gathered from multiple sources to create a profile of the leadership in the selected school.

All findings from this study will add to the current body of research on Instructional Leadership, Distributed Leadership, leadership effectiveness, student achievement and school performance as it relates to NCLB. Specifically, the findings will challenge current assumptions of NCLB by examining leadership practices in the context of a school in need of improvement.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

This study is focused on one specific public school only, and does not include any other regular, alternative, private, or charter schools. The focus of leadership includes not only the principal, but additional members of the school’s leadership team.

Because it uses a case study methodology, this research is limited in the generalizability of its results to other schools. It is limited to findings in its specific context. These findings may not be reproducible in other school settings. However, they may explain the nature of events in a specific context, they may also allow for depth of understanding of the issues being investigated. This research may also be used as an example in other schools with similar conditions.

**Conclusion**

Research has established that there are many shortcomings of NCLB, the legislation that ushered in the standardized testing movement (Fritzberg, 2004; Forte, 2010; Linn, 2005; Maleyko & Gawlik, 2010; Rothstein, 2004). Student performance on standardized tests has become an indicator of the disparities in student performance known as the achievement gap. Also, consistent low performance of a school leads to sanctions for that school. This demand for improved school performance can lead to job loss for school leaders and teachers, when school efforts consistently fail to meet state and federal mandates (USDE 2002a, 2002b).
Further research is needed to better understand effective leadership in low performing schools, and to determine the nature and characteristics of effective leadership practices.

Summary of Chapters
This chapter served to provide a historical perspective of educational policy that has led to the current accountability movement. It also explained how, through current implementation of federal mandates, schools labeled as failing are subject to sanctions that may include replacing the leadership team, faculty, and staff of those schools. However, research has not established sufficient evidence that explains the effective actions of leadership that are necessary to successfully manage a low performance school. Chapter One also identified the purpose of the study and the research questions to be answered. Chapter Two will present a review of the literature addressing effective leadership. Literature will also be included about Distributed Leadership and Instructional Leadership, the lenses used for the present study. Chapter Three will describe the methodology used in this case study, including data sources and instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, and will address its limitations. Chapter Four will present the findings under each research question. Chapter Five will offer a discussion of the findings, their implications, and will include suggestions for further research.

Definition of Terms and Variables

Achievement Gap: Disparity between black and white student performances on LEAP and iLEAP criterion referenced tests (CRT).

Building Operations: Measured in the Principal Questionnaire (PQ) and the End of Day (EOD) log. For the PQ, it measures the principal’s perception of the amount of time spent on various activities related to building operations. For the EOD log, it explains functions such as
managing schedules, space allocation, building maintenance, as well as handling vendors (Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010).

**Community or Parent Relations:** Measured in the EOD log and refers to formal and informal interactions and meetings with the community and parents (Camburn et al., 2010).

**District Functions:** Construct measured in the PQ and EOD. For the PQ, it measures the principal’s perception of the extent of agreement or disagreement with various statements about the role and functions of the school district and central office. For the EOD log it refers to any function or meeting in which members of the school participate (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Data Usage:** Construct Measured in the PQ that measures the principal’s perception of the extent of data usage within the school.

**Distributed Leadership:** Recognizes coaches, mentors, and teacher leaders, in addition to administrative staff, as part of the leadership process that takes place within a school. Such a perspective decentralizes the principal as the sole person enacting authority and recognizes that there are others to whom the principal delegates tasks (Spillane & Healey, 2010).

**ELA:** The abbreviation used to describe English Language Arts classes.

**Finances and Financial Support:** Measured in the EOD log and explains functions such as preparing budgets, budget reports, seeking grants, and managing contracts (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Goals and Expectations:** Construct in the School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) that measures teacher and staff perceptions of the extent to which they agree or disagree that the principal sets goals and expectations within the school.

**iLEAP Test:** “Students in 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades take the state's iLEAP test, which is designed to measure student progress but does not determine whether they will be retained in
their current grade. The iLEAP is referred to as an ‘integrated’ LEAP because it combines a norm referenced test, which compares a student's test results to the performance of students in a national sample, with a criterion-referenced test, which reports student results in terms of the state's standards” (LDOE, 2012f).

**Indirect Effects or Mediated Effects**: The pathway of the effects of principal leadership on student outcomes. Specifically, it explains that the principal has a direct effect on other aspects of schooling, influencing teacher instructional practices for example, and these actions indirectly affect student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

**Influence**: Construct in the SSQ that measures the staff’s perceptions of the extent of decision-making influence they have for various areas of the school.

**Instructional Leadership**: Model of leadership described by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). A construct in the PQ, SSQ, EOD log. For the PQ, it refers to the principal’s perception of the frequency in which she engages Instructional Leadership related activities (Camburn, Huff, et al., 2010). For the SSQ, it refers to participant perceptions of the frequency of interactions they have with the principal for various areas of instructional support. For the EOD, it refers to the amount of time spent on functions related to Instructional Leadership (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Instructional Specialist**: A member of the school leadership team that assists with supporting teacher instructional practices through coaching, mentoring, modeling, data analysis, and other duties as delegated by the school principal.

**Leadership Team**: Construct in the PQ that measures the principal’s perceptions of interactions and decision making of the leadership team.

**LEAP Test**: “Students in 4th and 8th grade participate in the high stakes Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test, which determines whether they will be required to attend
summer school or be retained. The LEAP measures 4th and 8th grade students' knowledge and skills in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social studies, and students must score Basic or above in either English or Math and Approaching Basic or above in the other subject on the LEAP to advance to the next grade. 4th graders have had to meet this requirement since 2004, while eighth-graders have had to meet this requirement since 2006” (LDOE, 2012f).

**Monitoring Instructional Improvement**: Construct in the SSQ that measures teacher and staff perceptions of the extent to which they believe the principal is monitoring various aspects of instructional improvement.

**PE**: The abbreviation used to indicate Physical Education classes.

**Personal Knowledge**: Construct measured in the PQ that measures the principal’s perception of personal expertise in various school related areas.

**Personnel Issues**: Measured in the EOD and refers to any leadership action involving campus personnel matters (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Planning and Setting Goals**: Measured in the PQ and EOD logs. For the PQ, it measures the principal’s perception of the frequency in which she participates in activities related to planning and setting goals (Camburn, Huff, et al., 2010). For the EOD, it deals with having a vision for the school, and a plan that directs the school towards fulfilling this vision (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Principal**: The primary leader for the school.

**Professional Growth**: Measure in the EOD log that refers to time spent on personal professional learning opportunities (Camburn et al., 2010).

**School Improvement**: Measured in the PQ that refers to various aspects of school improvement planning. It includes questions seeking to determine funding sources, reform programs, and the implementation of a written school improvement plan (SIP).
**Self-Efficacy:** Construct in the SSQ that measures teacher and staff perceptions of their sense of self-efficacy as it relates to providing instructional services to students.

**Shared Responsibility:** Construct in the SSQ that measures teacher and staff perceptions of the extent to which responsibilities are shared within the school.

**Student Affairs:** Measured in the EOD log and refers with any interaction with students including discipline, counseling, or other formal and informal interactions (Camburn et al., 2010).

**Teacher Instructional Improvement:** Construct in the SSQ that measures teacher and staff perceptions of the extent of agreement or disagreement about teacher instructional improvement.

**Teacher-Principal Trust:** Construct in the SSQ that measures perceptions of the extent of trust that exists between teachers and the principal.

**Turnaround Principles:** Under policy for ESEA flexibility, an outline of sanctions that are to be implemented for failing schools. (USDE, 2012).

**Walkthrough:** Term used to describe an informal observation of teaching.
Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

Chapter 2 offers a review of the literature pertinent to the present study. It opens with a review of the method and sources used to identify previous research. This is followed by a review of what is effective leadership, leadership effects on student outcomes and school performance, Instructional Leadership and its effects, Distributed leadership and the study of leadership practices. The next section introduces instruments which have been used to measure Instructional and Distributed Leadership practices. The chapter closes with an examination of other influences on principal practices of leadership.

Identifying Previous Research

Many different models of leadership are being used in the field of education. With each model, often there are several interpretations of how that model should be implemented in schools. For the purpose of this study, the focus of the literature review is on examining existing research on whether any models or forms of leadership were evaluated as being effective in producing positive student outcomes and school performance. A combination of Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCO host databases was used to search for related publications, in addition to including readings listed in the references at the end of articles and recommended readings from professors and colleagues. This process of identifying publications related to effective leadership resulted in twenty three (23) articles and four (4) books meeting criteria for this review.

Research on leadership effectiveness falls into four categories: research that uses instruments to determine the extent of a principal’s implementation of a leadership model; research that studies characteristics of principals deemed effective because they work at high poverty, high performing schools; research that uses a variety of instruments to test whether
leaders’ actions affect student outcomes; and research that uses findings from empirical studies to determine if those characteristics are present in leaders in other schools.

These four areas highlight the problem that exists in research with defining what effective leadership is, i.e., NCLB and accountability policies are holding districts and schools responsible, making principals accountable for student performance at their schools. This is problematic because the assumption is that an effective principal positively influences student outcomes on test scores, thereby producing gains in school performance. However, this has not been established in the research. Instead, findings from the literature review showed that little research is available that evaluates the effectiveness of leadership on student outcomes. This review revealed that there is little published research that studies leadership effects on student outcomes and school performance (Robinson, 2006). Secondly, research has not consistently linked any leadership model to effectively producing positive student outcomes and school performance, and of those that have been linked, the relationship is weak. This highlights two issues: first, throughout the literature, there is much inconsistency in how leadership models are defined and implemented; in addition, there exists the problem of research methodologies that focus on the direct effects of leadership rather than the indirect effects. The third finding is that leadership may have more indirect than direct effects on student outcomes (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). This review revealed that of the models of leadership, Instructional Leadership has shown evidence of positive affects on student outcomes, and that leadership should be looked at beyond the context of the work of the principal.

What is Effective Leadership?

Most educators and researchers will argue that leadership is vital to the success of any school. Based on their review of research, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004)
concluded that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” and that “leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most” (p. 5). However, for the researcher, explaining the complex nature of how leadership works within the school has proven difficult and therefore, many studies have shown little or no effects of leadership on student outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004). Furthermore, researchers have acknowledged that a gap exists in the literature between explaining models of leadership and how leadership actually affects student outcomes (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Kruger, Witziers, & Sleegers, 2007; Robinson, 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Kruger et al. (2007) argued that over the last twenty years, research has raised an increasing number of questions about the relationship between educational leadership and student outcomes, adding to the difficulty in understanding its role and effects rather than offering answers (p. 5).

Authors Bell, Bolam, and Cubillo (2003) conducted a study in which they sought to identify and analyze research that looked at leadership effectiveness and student outcomes. These authors pointed out that much previous research on leadership effectiveness has sought to explain effectiveness from the perspective of determining the extent to which a leader exemplifies characteristics of a particular model of leadership, not how effective leadership is in relation to student outcomes. This gap in research was seen through attempts to locate studies that were conducted between the years of 1988 and 2002 that met the criteria of being primary research that used specific measures of student outcomes. The authors had detailed criteria and a two-stage process to identify research for their study. Of the 4,987 studies they located, forty-one made it through the first round of filtering by applying their criteria to the title and/or the
abstract, and eight remained after the same criteria were applied to the full text of the study (p. 12).

Studies that fit into this category of looking at leadership effectiveness in terms of characteristics of a model, include Kelly, Thornton, and Daugherty (2005), who conducted a study on principal and teacher perceptions of leadership styles based on a Situational Leadership Scale, and teacher perceptions of school climate. Their study compared the principals’ perceptions of their own leadership styles to the teachers’ perceptions, and found that the results were not related. They also found that teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s effectiveness were positively related to school climate, and their flexibility was negatively correlated (p. 22). Kelly et al. (2005) also discovered that teachers who thought their principals varied their leadership styles were more likely to rate their school climate lower. Although they added some depth to their study by looking not only at perceptions of Situational Leadership, but also to how leadership was affecting school climate, this measure was not specifically related to student outcomes or school performance. Their measure of school climate was more related to the leadership’s relationship and professional development of teachers.

Harris, Day, and Hadfield (2003), conducted a qualitative case study using interviews of teachers’ perspectives of leadership in order to better understand effective leadership. The objective of the research was to obtain a more contemporary view of leadership that takes into consideration various forms of delegated leadership roles. The authors identified four themes, which included teachers being able to differentiate between leadership and management, personal and professional relationships, values and vision, and continuing professional development. Their findings showed that teachers believed that the best principals empowered
others to lead. In other words, teachers felt that the best principals were those who not only performed acts of leadership but included others in the process as well.

Giles (2007) conducted a case study using three schools to examine dimensions of organizational learning implemented by successful leaders. Giles found that despite differences in the schools and the principals, “a common starting point was effective management of the instructional program” (p. 32). Giles also reported that by principals addressing the teachers’ basic needs, such as providing adequate resources and a safe, structured work environment, they earned access to provide teachers with leadership in other areas such as instruction (p. 32). In other words, as the principal gained the teachers’ trust, the teachers became more willing to follow the Instructional Leadership of the principal. Using case study methodology to examine how principals facilitated organizational learning proved to be an effective means to understanding their roles in practice.

Leithwood et al. (2004) stated that there is a need to be cautious about the use of “leadership by adjective” in the literature (p. 5). With this phrase, the authors were referring to the myriad of leadership models and theories which they believe have lacked in their ability to explain what effective leadership practices look like (Leithwood et al., 2004). This same position is articulated well in Robinson’s (2006) work in which she explains how these adjectives of leadership are “most concerned with qualities of leader-follower relations” (p. 64). She pointed out that most research in the area of educational leadership involves debates about the merit of leadership theories or the extent to which the characteristics of these theories are being expressed by the leader (p. 64).
However, Robinson (2006) posits that key to effective leadership is understanding effective teaching. In reference to research on effective teaching, Robinson (2006) states:

Those findings provide the clues to the leadership practices and dispositions that are required to develop and sustain effective teaching. If theories of educational leadership described those practices and dispositions, the relationship between leadership and student achievement would probably be substantial (p.66).

In other words, Robinson (2006) believes that research on effective teaching should be used to determine effective leadership practices needed to support teachers.

Gordon and Patterson (2006) believed that leadership occurs in a specific context. Using culture as an example, the authors explained how each school has its own culture and setting (p.208). They discovered that there is no one leadership model that will work for every school or that theories serve as recipes to make leaders successful (p. 208). Gordon and Patterson (2006) explained principal leadership as “a negotiation between a principal and her constituents” (p. 225). Their study categorized school leadership based on how the principal engages in decision-making. They differentiated between using theories to describe leadership and the types of leadership that emerged from their qualitative study. They identified five types of leadership: overt top-down, covert top-down, vanguard, network, and network wannabe leadership. All deal with how the principal carries out decision making or involves others in the process of running the school. In essence, these characteristics could fit into various theories that have already been established. However, the authors strived to explain how given the situation, or context, a different type of leadership is needed.

Taking into consideration methods of studying effective leadership, leadership by adjective, and the context of leadership, this literature review examined studies that linked leadership effects to student outcomes and school performance.
Leadership Effects

In order to fully appreciate research on how leadership affects student outcomes and school performance, it is necessary to differentiate between the types of interactions the principal has with others in the school. Hallinger and Heck (1996) explained the types of “effects” models seen in leadership research. Based on their interpretation of previous research, they concluded that “no universal paradigm or theory exists for examining organizational behavior that is valid in all contexts” (p. 7). Their use of different effects models provides a foundation from which to understand how the principal’s practices affect student outcomes and school performance.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) explained that early research before the eighties lacked in sound empirical practices, yet they laid the groundwork for future studies in educational leadership (p. 9). Hallinger and Heck adapted a classification system, first explained by Pinter (1988), that looks at administrator effects through non-experimental research in the context of direct-effects, antecedent-effects, mediated-effects, reciprocal-effects, and moderated-effects models (p. 17). They did not find the distinction between antecedent-effects and moderated-effects useful for their study, since the differences dealt with methodological rather than conceptual differences (p. 18). Therefore, the authors did not include moderated-effects in their study. The direct-effects model “proposes that the leader’s effects on school outcomes occur primarily in the absence of intervening variables” (p. 18). The mediated-effects model, which seems synonymous with current versions called indirect models, “assumes that some or all of the impact attained by administrators on desired school outcomes occurs through manipulation of, or interaction with, features of the school organization” (p. 18). The antecedent-effects model is explained as one in which the principal can be both a dependent and an independent variable, be subject to the influence of others and be the person who does the influencing (p. 18). The
authors believed that mediated-effects studies contribute more than direct-effects studies to theory building in the area of effective leadership and that combining antecedent-effects to the direct-effects or mediated-effects models may produce a more comprehensive view of the role of the principal (p. 18-19). Their view on indirect effects was echoed in the work of Leithwood et al. (2004) who asserted that in regards to effective leaders, “Mostly leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or features of their organizations” (p. 13).

Differentiating between the types of leadership effects being studied is of vital importance to understanding gaps in leadership effectiveness research. The main reason is because of inconsistent findings on leadership effects. Some previous research has focused solely on direct effects models and their findings reflected little or no leadership effects. Other research has included indirect effects models, which provides greater insight into leadership actions.

Aside from effects models of leadership is the fact that overall, there are still relatively few studies that are examining leadership effects. Next, is a review of three meta-analysis studies, in which the authors synthesized all the studies that met their criteria in order to determine leadership effects. Then, a summary of the findings from recent studies that sought to measure leadership effects is presented.

**Meta-analysis Research**

Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to determine the direct-effects of school leadership. The authors based their rationale for the study on their findings that previous research had been inconsistent in determining whether leadership had direct or indirect effects on student achievement and school performance (p. 398-399). Due to a lack of studies
that incorporated indirect models, the authors only included studies that used direct-effect models in their meta-analysis (p. 399). They found that not more than one percent (1%) of the variance in student achievement is associated with educational leadership (p. 415). The authors believed that this finding could be a reflection of the quality of the studies used in their meta-analysis. Robinson et al. (2008) suggested that their findings might be due to the authors’ choice in using only direct effects models in their study (p. 637).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) published a book titled *School Leadership that Works*, based on their findings from a meta-analysis on school leadership. The authors found the correlation between principal behavior and average student achievement to be 0.25 when outliers were omitted from their data set (p. 33). Marzano et al. also used the data to identify behaviors of leadership, which resulted in twenty-one responsibilities of the leader. The authors then did a factor analysis of the responsibilities and used their findings to create an instrument to help school leaders implement change initiatives. The major concern with this work is that of the seventy studies used by the authors, only ten were from peer-reviewed journals. The other sixty were from unpublished dissertations and research studies (p. 171-177).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) stated that “there seems to be a contradiction between the evidence that leaders have a weak indirect effect on student outcomes and the expectations of the public and policy makers that leaders make a substantial difference” (p. 637). The authors conducted a meta-analysis looking into Instructional and Transformational Leadership from twenty-seven studies that met their criteria. They found that Instructional Leadership embodied more leadership practices that had an impact on student outcomes than did Transformational Leadership (p. 665). The authors also explained that the construct validity of Transformational Leadership might actually be tied to whether or not teachers “like” their leader, rather than
whether or not their leader is effective (p. 665). The authors believed that the components that are emphasized in Transformational Leadership are important, such as the motivational, collaborative, and interpersonal skills, but they did not think that the theory of Transformational Leadership is needed to understand the aspect of leadership related to teaching and learning (p. 666). They acknowledged that there are few published studies in English that have studied leadership effects on student outcomes (p. 668). Five leadership dimensions were derived from their findings: establishing goals and expectations; strategic resourcing; planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and dimension five which included ensuring orderly and supportive environment (p. 655-656).

**Recent Empirical Research on Leadership Effects**

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) conducted a study in Canada in which they sought to examine the effects of their model of Transformational Leadership practices and leadership effects on organizational conditions and student engagement. The researchers’ model of Transformational Leadership was created out of their concern that previous models of Transformational Leadership were limited because they underrepresented necessary transactional, managerial practices (p. 454). Their findings on student engagement showed an effect of 0.11 for student participation and 0.17 for student identification, the two factors used to measure student engagement (p. 466). However, their results did reveal evidence of indirect effects of leadership. For example, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) concluded that “Transformational Leadership had strong direct effects on school conditions, which in turn, had strong direct effects on classroom conditions” (p. 467). They added that “together, Transformational Leadership and school conditions explain a seventeen percent (17%) variation
in classroom conditions, even though the direct effects of Transformational Leadership on classroom conditions are negative and non significant” (p. 467).

O’Donnell and White (2005) conducted a correlational study taking into consideration SES and Instructional Leadership as factors that may influence student outcomes. Using Hallinger’s PIMRS, the authors’ major finding was that the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s efforts to promote the school learning climate was the largest predictor of math and reading scores (O’Donnell & White, 2005, p. 61).

Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) analyzed data from a study which used surveys distributed to 180 schools from various districts within nine states (p. 321). The surveys used principal leadership variables, measures of trust, and measures of instruction. Using student testing data from their standardized tests, the authors found that Shared Leadership and Instructional Leadership are indirectly related to student outcomes.

Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) explained their perspective that research has been successful in determining that leadership does have some effect on student outcomes, mainly indirect effects, and that current research is moving in the direction of determining how those effects occur (p. 672). Using empirical research, the authors described four paths that they believed were avenues of indirect leadership practice. Leithwood et al. explained how each path has a different set of variables that have “varying levels of impact on students’ experiences” and that determining on which one to focus for improvement is a challenge for leaders (p. 673).

The four paths, rational, emotions, organization, and family, describe what Leithwood et al. believed were the pathways of indirect leadership. The authors used a data set from Canada that included teacher surveys, student SES data, and school-level student achievement to test six different hypothesis statements for their study (p. 684-686). Although they did not find evidence
to support each of their six hypothesis statements, Leithwood et al. found that “the aggregate effects on student achievement of each of the four paths indicates similarly sized, significant, and positive contributions by three of the paths; only the Organizational Path had no significant effects” (p. 696). In other words, the findings of Leithwood et al. suggested that there are factors that influence student achievement other than instructional practices, and these factors should be pursued further in research efforts.

Based on the meta-analysis and recent studies, there is a variety of evidence, but no consistent findings for what leadership practices are most effective in positively influencing student outcomes and school performance. Of the studies, one showed insignificant direct effects (Witziers et al., 2003). Others showed either Transformational Leadership, Shared Leadership, Instructional Leadership, or the four paths model as being reliable predictors (Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; O’Donnell & White, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). Of these sets of studies, most of them used a measure of Instructional Leadership, and each time Instructional Leadership was used in a study, results made a positive connection to student outcomes and school performance.

**Instructional Leadership**

**A Guide for Studying Leadership Effects**

Upon looking at professional organizations, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) adopted the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 standards for educational leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers Interstate School Leaders Consortium, 2008). ISLLC standards have been adopted by many states, and are the basis for licensure testing through the Education Testing Service (ETS) for educational leaders in at least 17 states, including Louisiana (ETS, 2011). The ISLLC built their views of educational
leader on six standards, and each standard is further explained by specific functions that indicate their implementation. Upon review, there is at least one function under each standard that relates to how the school leader drives instructional practices for the school (Council of Chief State School Officers Interstate School Leaders Consortium, 2008, p. 14-15).

Major organizations for educational leaders, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), put a focus on educational leaders being effective instructional leaders for their schools and promote resources that emphasize what elementary and middle school principals believe are the guiding standards for Instructional Leadership (NAESP, 2008). In addition to this, many researchers acknowledge that Instructional Leadership is an important aspect of achieving success in schools (May & Supovitz, 2011).

It is clear that the focus of educational leadership has shifted to the need for models that bring Instructional Leadership to the forefront. Instructional Leadership is proving to be an area that shows the leadership’s impact on student outcomes and school performance (Blase & Blase, 1999; Robinson, 2006; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Instructional Leadership describes the functions of the principal as it relates to all aspects of driving the instructional program of the school.

**Indirect Effects of Instructional Leadership**

Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) asserted that much of the early research on Instructional Leadership focused on the individual traits of the leaders and not on the context of the school (p. 96). The authors’ explanation of how the principal does not directly affect the classroom, but does affect many other areas that in turn affect student outcomes and the school performance is in line with the conceptualization of the indirect effects framework. Hallinger and Heck (1996) explained “the fact that leadership effects on school achievement appear to be
indirect is neither cause for alarm nor dismay” (p. 39). They purported that “achieving results through others is the essence of leadership” and that this practice does not “diminish the principal’s importance” (p. 39). Instead, the authors believed that it would be a worthy effort of future research to focus on “understanding the routes by which principals can improve school outcomes through working with others” (p. 39).

Hallinger and Heck (1996) believed that “the greatest progress in this field will yield from research that places the principal in the context of the school and its environment” (p. 34). They also expressed hopes that future research would explore the “potential value of conceptualizing the principal’s role in school effectiveness as an interactive, adaptive process” (p. 35). The authors addressed the issue of researchers not having a sufficient number of resources available to perform studies large enough to obtain data on leadership effectiveness. They suggested that when resources are limited, rather than attempting to do a study that looks at principal effectiveness just in the context of student outcomes, other variables such as school mission, teacher expectations, school culture, and facets of the school’s instructional organization should be included (p. 35-36). Although the authors believed that great strides had been made in leadership effectiveness research, they felt that the reliance on cross-sectional analysis was a limitation to gaining understanding of leadership effectiveness (p. 36). The authors suggested the need for longitudinal research, both quantitative and qualitative, to address the aforementioned limitations (p. 36). A major finding from their study was that principal leadership does make a difference, but “context, particularly facets of the school’s socioeconomic environment, appears to influence the type of leadership that principals exercise” (p. 37-38).
Some researchers have shed light on the growing problem of limiting the practice of leadership to the confines of the growing number of leadership models that are being developed to describe leadership practices (Gordon & Patterson, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson, 2006). Specifically, Gordon and Patterson (2006) believed that previous understandings of leadership have resulted in too narrow a view (p. 205). The contemporary understanding of leadership ascribes responsibility to a singular person in the school and does not take into consideration the power and contributions of other stakeholders (p. 207). For example, in addition to informal teacher leaders, many schools have assistant principals and other formal leadership members who have roles in running the school. Gordon and Patterson (2006) also found that the evolutionary tendency of leadership models is that they are repeated, adopted, and replaced by new models, never giving a real chance to determine their effectiveness (p. 207). Leithwood et al. (2004) claimed that their study on the four paths challenged the current “dominant narrative” about school leadership which is centered on instruction (p. 697). They also established that the narrow focus on Instructional Leadership points to the principal as the sole person responsible and does not take into account others involved in helping teachers improve instructional practice (p. 698).

Blase and Blase (1999) explained how the focus of leadership at schools has shifted to shared leadership, in which teachers are becoming more involved in the process as it relates to Instructional Leadership. The authors conducted a qualitative study into looking at the teachers’ perspectives of Instructional Leadership. Their study “assumed that the impact achieved by principals on school outcomes derives, in part, from the principal’s interaction with and influence on teachers” (p. 368).
Taking into account the indirect-effect of Instructional Leadership also causes one to recognize the likelihood that indirect models may include characteristics of Distributed Leadership. Distributed Leadership allows for recognizing the works of others to whom the principal has delegated authority and whom he or she has included in the leadership process. Because of this connection between Instructional Leadership and Distributed Leadership, I use both models as a lens for this study.

**Distributed Leadership as a Lens for Studying Leadership Practices**

Distributed leadership is distinctly different from other models of leadership because the focus goes beyond actions of the leader and seeks to explain interactions between the principal and the leadership team and among all the members of the leadership. In other words, distributed leadership takes into account how leaders work together to reach a common goal.

According to Spillane (2006), “the distribution of leadership differs, depending on the leadership function or routine, the subject matter, the type of school, the school’s size, and a school or school leadership team’s developmental stage” (p. 51). When explaining how leadership responsibilities are arranged, Spillane stated that “the evidence suggests at least three arrangements: division of labor, co-performance, and parallel performance” (p. 58). Examples that Spillane gave to explain where a division of labor can be seen, is with certain school functions such as handling student discipline or teacher evaluations (p. 58). He found that these particular tasks were often delegated amongst formal leadership team members, such as the assistant principal (p. 58). Co-performance involves formal and informal leaders working together on leadership functions, such as those centered around teacher and curriculum development, as well as school improvement planning (p. 59). This collaboration can also include outside expertise, as is often the case when schools use consultants to help deliver
professional development to teachers (p. 59). Parallel performance, by contrast, involves the leaders working individually on the same function (p. 59). Spillane explains that this redundancy can have positive effects, if the leaders are working independently to gain teacher buy-in for something (p. 60). However, this type of arrangement can prove problematic if members are not working towards the same goal or vision (p. 60). Spillane also explained that leaders can use different strategies while working within these leadership arrangements. In other words, each individual’s particular behavioral approach may be different while working towards achieving the same goal. Spillane used the example of “good cop, bad cop” to illustrate this distinction (p. 61).

**Case Study in Instructional and Distributed Leadership**

Case study was chosen as a methodology to address gaps in current research on educational leadership that can be effectively explored through a methodology that allows for the in-depth study of leadership. Using case study as a methodology will afford the researcher the opportunity to examine leadership practices and challenge presiding assumptions about effective leadership by using effective leadership research to determine if their described leadership qualities can be identified in a school labeled in need of school improvement.

Case study was chosen to specifically address the gap in research that shows that there is a need to explore and understand leadership in context in order to best identify and understand the complex nature of leadership practices (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). In other words, it is necessary to understand the practice of leadership in the sociocultural setting in which it takes place because it is possible that the reason research has failed to identify consistent indicators and models of effective leadership, is because leadership styles vary depending on a variety of variables related to the leadership, faculty and staff, students, and outside environment.
Similar studies involving using qualitative or case study methodology, further substantiate the necessity for case study research in the area of school leadership. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) conducted a case study in a single high school to determine stakeholder perceptions of effective school leadership and how principals understand their role as school leaders (p. 234). The authors were able to gain insight into stakeholder beliefs that effective principals worked to build trust and positive relationships, as well as insight into the nature of principal influence over teacher practices.

Burton, Brundrett, and Yeung (2005) reported on a case study that looked into the perceptions of senior staff and key stakeholders on the impact of principal leadership on the school (p. 28). The authors used public documents, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to determine the greatest areas of perceived principal impact.

Blase and Blase’s (1999) qualitative study on Instructional Leadership revealed a shift to shared leadership and found that in general, “in effective principal-teacher interaction about instruction, processes such as inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation result: Teachers build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods” (p. 359). Blase and Blase (1999) stated that “their data suggest that principals who are effective instructional leaders use a broad-based approach; they integrate reflection and growth to build a school culture of individual and shared critical examination for improvement” (p. 370). They explained how “comprehensive studies of teachers’ experiences in instructionally oriented interactions with principals have not previously been conducted” (p. 372). They suggested future case studies that take a more in depth look into what takes place at the specific schools in which the teachers worked, and to include student and parent perspectives using methods such as in depth interviewing and observation (p. 372).
Instruments that Measure Instructional and Distributed Leadership

Spillane and Hunt (2010) conducted a mixed-methods study that provided a descriptive analysis of the principalship. Their study looked at the focus of the principal’s work and how the work was completed. They sought to determine whether he or she worked alone or with others (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 294). They used experience-sampling logs (ESM), the principal questionnaire (PQ), and the school staff questionnaire (SSQ) as instruments in their study.

Spillane and Hunt (2010) employed cluster analysis to form sub-groups of principals based on common characteristics. The resulting three clusters of principals were then used to create “mini-cases” that described principal practices. The cases were titled administration-oriented, lone-rangers, and the personnel and personal touch. The authors found that each type of principal engaged in direct and indirect means of Instructional Leadership. They were also able to determine how each principal anchored his or her Instructional Leadership practice. In other words, one principal focused on student learning, another on identifying and addressing problematic teaching methods, while the third focused on relationship building as an avenue to support Instructional Leadership practices (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 317).

May and Supovitz (2011) used the same data from the Spillane and Hunt study, yet their focus was on studying the scope of principals’ efforts to improve instruction. Rather than follow previous research trends that sought to identify the presence or frequency of instructional practices, the authors “examined the breadth or targetness of principal’s efforts to improve instruction of their faculty and the resulting impacts on changes in teachers’ instruction” (p. 334). The authors defined scope as “the extent to which principals target their instructional assistance efforts on a subset of teachers or the entire faculty” (p. 336). May and Supovitz (2011) explained that during their search for other studies of this nature, they found none, making their...
study the first of its kind. They used two data sources, a principal daily activity log and two parts of the SSQ in which teachers reported measures of Instructional Leadership. The first part of the survey had teachers describe how often they worked with the principal, and the second part measured instructional change. The goal of this survey was to determine how the principals’ Instructional Leadership had changed various aspects of their teaching. May and Supovitz’s (2011) survey was given to ELA and Math teachers, the focus of their research. Their findings showed that teachers whom the principals targeted for instructional assistance showed more change, especially when the target of the principal’s focus was on a small number of teachers (p. 350). They believed that their results suggested that how principals focused their Instructional Leadership efforts had great consequences for the outcome of the school’s improvement (p. 350).

**Other Influences on Principal Practices of Leadership**

When considering models and methods of leadership practice, it is imperative to take into account those influences that the participants in the study believe had some bearing on their practices as leaders. In the case of Painterland Middle School, the principal revealed a book that was critical to her developing her practices within the school. *What Great Principal’s Do Differently, 2nd Edition* by Todd Whitaker (2012) is a book that serves as a tool for principals to identify key practices they should put into place. These practices are based on research examining effective principals in which the author participated. The book takes a somewhat antidotal approach to providing the principals with insight on how to handle teachers, maintain focus on student learning, and gain useful feedback to help improve the school.

Whitaker’s book challenges principals to first understand that “there are really two ways to improve a school significantly: Get better teachers or improve the teachers you already have” (p. 24). He further explains that the great principals recognize that their focus should be on
people and seek to develop the skills of their staff. Whitaker stated that the most effective principals “find the time to get into these troubled teachers’ classrooms and help build their skills. They make time to focus on instruction-proactively visiting classrooms and improving teaching- to reduce discipline issues” (p. 69). He focuses on explaining the importance of principals being mindful of how they treat teachers and the need for the principal to consistently work to create a positive environment at the school. He offers many suggestions to he principal in regards to teachers. He feels that the principal should base decisions on the best teachers in the school (p. 111). Whitaker suggests that the best teachers are respected by their peers, will keep discussions they have with the principal confidential, and have a school-wide vision (p. 112).

In regards to what he believes are practices of outstanding principals, Whitaker states that “rather than waiting for others to come to them, they regularly visit classrooms, spend time in the hallways, and seek out informal feedback. As a result, they learn about issues before they become problems” (pp. 33-34).

Whitaker discusses the role of culture in schools. He defines school culture as “the collective beliefs and values that influence policies and practice within the school” (pp. 84-85). He then explains that as a school has a culture, a culture also exists in every classroom, and in the case of an ineffective teacher, he offers the principal illustrations to demonstrate how having an effective teacher can make a classroom have a positive culture (pp. 85-86).

Whitaker closes his book by summarizing his findings into eighteen things that matter most for the principal (pp. 179-181).
Summary

Chapter Two provided a review of the literature pertinent to a study on leadership practices. Previous research revealed that it is greatly lacking in describing leadership practices, defining effective leadership, and determining its effects on student outcomes. Many leadership theories describe characteristics of leaders but fail to provide much insight into the daily effective practices of principals. A key leadership model that focuses on the actions and practices of the leader is Instructional Leadership. Research has provided evidence that Instructional Leadership is effective in positively improving student outcomes and school performance (Louis et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 2008; O’Donnell & White, 2005). In addition, Instructional Leadership is tied to examinations for leadership licensure, is at the core of beliefs for major educational leadership organizations as the standard that principals should apply, and is a model that incorporates distributed practices.

Distributed leadership takes into account the actions and interactions that take place between members of the leadership team (Spillane, 2006). This model of leadership takes into account the intricate nature of how multiple persons take part in the decision-making process. These leaders can hold formal or informal roles in the school. Furthermore, instruments have been developed that seek to explain the nature of Distributed Leadership, as well as give some insight into the Instructional Leadership of a school. These instruments are used in the present study to explore the actions and interactions of leadership. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for the present study. A description of instruments, procedures for data collection, procedures for data analysis, trustworthiness, and limitations of case study methodology are also included.
Chapter 3. Methodology

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology of the present study. It opens with the restatement of the problem, followed by the research questions. A description of the school and participants is provided, followed by an overview of the research design including instruments and data sources, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Finally, trustworthiness and limitations of the study are addressed.

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of the current study is to describe the practices of leadership and the perceptions of teachers, leaders, and the principal about these practices. Louisiana, the state in which this study was conducted, has been aggressively implementing sanctions to turn student outcomes and school performance around, which include replacing the leadership and portions of the faculty of schools. However, research is greatly lacking in defining effective school leadership and using research to determine the nature of effective leadership practices. Furthermore, what research has shown is that the principal’s leadership style may have indirect effects on student outcomes. Although this relationship is not clearly understood, school leaders often lose their jobs when their schools fail to meet student performance requirements. Therefore, this study endeavors to seek insight into the nature of leadership practices of an urban middle school.

Research Questions

To explore the perceptions and practices of leadership, this study sought to answer the overall question of how leadership is practiced in the school through the following research questions:

1. How does the principal implement leadership practices?
a. What is the principal’s perception of her own leadership practices?

b. What actions are parts of the principal’s daily practices?

c. Which theoretical leadership model(s) does the principal put into practice?

2. How does the leadership team (Formal and Informal Leaders) implement leadership practices?

   a. What is the leadership team’s perception of their own leadership contributions?

   b. What actions are parts of the leadership team’s daily practices?

3. What are the teachers and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?

4. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practices?

   a. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the teachers’ instructional changes?

**Context: Painterland Middle School**

To situate the context for exploring leadership, the characteristics of the school must first be explained. Painterland Middle School is a Title I, regular public school that also provides English as a Second Language, School Breakfast/Lunch Program, and Special Education services. It receives funding from sources such as 21st Century Community Learning Center and Class Size Reduction to support school improvement (PQ, March, 2013). Painterland Middle School has a school improvement plan (SIP) in which 66.67% of the SIP is characterized as a top priority in the school improvement plan (PQ, March, 2013). Mrs. Potter indicated that making improvements in the following areas were a top priority: school climate; the reading/language arts and math programs; the school’s library, technology or media; and student attendance (PQ, March, 2013). Improving the areas of school’s facilities, the health and welfare of students, and parent participation were listed as “in the plan, but not top priority” (PQ, March, 2013).
Mrs. Potter described Painterland Middle School as having nine hundred and ten (910) students, including: eighty-one percent (81%) African-American, eight percent (8%) White, three percent (3%) Asian, and eight percent (8%) Hispanic, with approximately 95% of the students eligible for free or reduced lunch, an official marker for low SES (Principal Interview, February 2013).

The rationale for selecting this school for the present study on leadership is that it is a representative case of the thirty-six percent (36%) of Louisiana schools that perform at a D or F. Table 2 shows the Louisiana state grade allocation system with changes that occurred during the last two school years.

Table 2: Louisiana School Performance Score Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>SPS Range (2010-2011)</th>
<th>SPS Range (2011-2012)</th>
<th>Approx. % of Students Scoring Below Basic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>120.0-200.0</td>
<td>120.0-200.0</td>
<td>0-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>105.0-119.9</td>
<td>105.0-119.9</td>
<td>13-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>90.0-104.9</td>
<td>90.0-104.9</td>
<td>25-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65.0-89.9</td>
<td>75.0-89.9</td>
<td>37-61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-64.9</td>
<td>0-74.9</td>
<td>62-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (LDOE, 2011b, 2011c).

Based on Louisiana’s 2010-2011 state performance scores (SPS), forty-four percent (44%) of the state’s schools earned a grade of D or F (LDOE, 2011a). For 2011-2012, the state saw many gains, however, thirty-six percent (36%) of the state’s schools still earned a D or an F (LDOE, 2012a). Since the SPS requirements needed for a D or F increased for the 2011-2012 school year, more schools were unable to reach the higher requirements to earn a D. This resulted in an increase from 115 to 157 schools receiving an F (LDOE, 2012a).
Participants

Painterland Middle School Principal

Painterland Middle School principal, named here Mrs. Potter, has a Master’s degree in Education and a certification in Educational Leadership. Mrs. Potter has eight years of previous experience teaching Social Studies and working as a Social Studies Content Trainer for the School District in which she still works. She has had five years of experiences as an administrator, with the last three serving as the principal of Painterland Middle School (PQ, March 2013). As she completes her third year serving at this school, she is recognized by district personnel for her stellar work ethic and exemplary leadership practices. These characteristics made her an ideal candidate for the current study. Her perceived effectiveness was further confirmed by her later being named as the 2012-2013 principal of the year for the middle school division.

Painterland Middle School Leadership Team

To assist the principal with the leadership of the school, there is a leadership team that consists of formal and informal leaders.

The formal leadership team members consists of two assistant principals (Assistant Principal of Instruction, Assistant Principal of Discipline), two guidance counselors, two deans of students, the Instructional Specialist, and the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) Site Facilitator.

The informal leadership team members include four grade level team leaders (one for each grade level and one for PE/electives), and one data leader.

All formal leadership members were invited to respond to questionnaires. However, although the counselors and deans of students play important roles in the school, in the context
of this research, their areas of activity lay outside the scope of this study. The key individuals working with the school’s instructional program, the two assistant principals, the Instructional Specialist, and the ESS Site Facilitator, in addition to the principal, were selected to participate.

All informal leadership team members were invited to participate in the study. One individual declined, and another one failed to complete the tasks related to the study.

**Painterland Middle School Teachers and Staff**

Sixty-four teachers make up the faculty of Painterland Middle School. Two librarians and eleven paraprofessionals who work in special education provide support to the teachers and students. Table 3 includes a breakdown of teachers by grade level and planning team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level/Planning Team</th>
<th>Number of Male Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of Male Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Female Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of Female Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE/Electives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.063%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Intervention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.88%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Painterland Middle School Principal Personal Communication.

All teachers were invited to respond to the questionnaires. For the teacher interview group, random sampling was used to select six teachers to be interviewed: one each from math, ELA, science, social studies, ESS, and PE/electives courses. This sampling criterion was used in order to ensure that teachers from each content area, or planning team, were represented in the study. In order to determine teachers selected for interview, teacher participants were grouped by their content area or planning team. Then, using Microsoft Excel, a random number was assigned to each teacher in the group. The groups were organized by ascending random number.
Teachers were selected for the interview group based in order of their names appearing on the randomized list for each group.

**Research Design**

This research conducted a case study of Painterland Middle School to explore the perceptions and actions of leadership. The research design is based on Yin’s (2003, 2009) description of case study, four aspects of which were used to verify the appropriateness of this methodology.

First, Yin (2003) writes in his third edition of *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). Secondly, in his fourth edition, Yin (2009) indicates that the rationale for selecting a single case is that the case must meet one of four criteria: it represents a critical case; it represents an extreme or unique case; it is a representative or typical case; or it represents a revelatory case (p. 47-49). Thirdly, Yin (2009) describes the concept of an embedded case study, which details how a case can have subunits of study (p. 50). Fourthly, he explains that “evidence for case studies may come from six sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (2009, p. 101).

Painterland Middle School responds to Yin’s criteria for case study. Since it has been improving against all odds for the past five years, the last three under the current principal, it represents an extreme and unique case. It is also unique in that it is in one of the largest school districts in the state, and within its district, it is the only middle school that does not have a magnet or gifted program, has had the same principal for more than one year, and does not have
a school performance grade of F. The school also meets the criteria of being a representative case of a high poverty school that is struggling to meet state performance requirements. Finally, its style of leadership may qualify it as a revelatory case, hence worth studying.

**Instruments**

Of the six major data sources listed by Yin (2003, 2009), interviews and direct observation were used as data sources for this study. Logs and questionnaires were also used. According to Yin (2009), one of the major principles of data collection is using multiple sources, which “allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues” and is the rationale for triangulation of data (p. 114-115).

**Questionnaires**

The questionnaires employed in this study, the Principal Questionnaire (PQ) and the School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ), were chosen because of their prevalent use in many other research projects related to school leadership. The review of previous research revealed that work with the questionnaires and principal log, the End of the Day log (EOD), originated from a longitudinal study that was funded by the US Institute for Education Sciences, and from the Distributed Leadership Studies funded by the National Science Foundation (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 317). The questionnaires were adapted by head investigator James Spillane, and have gone through multiple iterations over the several years of their use. The literature review also revealed that many researchers have used these questionnaires over the years, often publishing work that includes specific sections that were pertinent to each researcher’s specific studies. The key researchers are affiliated with the Consortium of Policy Research in Education (CPRE, 2012), which unites researchers from seven of the nation’s top institutions. However, with multiple iterations to improve the quality of the questionnaires and multiple researchers working
with the data, there was no one specific work that contained all the reliability data for the most current versions of the surveys. Multiple works were consulted to provide evidence of their reliability. Permission was granted to use all instruments for this study by Dr. Supovitz, Dr. May, Dr. Spillane, and Dr. Camburn. Next is a description of each instrument.

**Principal Questionnaire (PQ).** The background information describing the principal in the present study was provided by the PQ. It includes ethnicity, experience as a teacher, experience as an administrator, education, and certification. Background questions describing the school setting provide information on the school program, funding sources, reform programs, district functions, the leadership team, data usage, and school improvement. Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May (2010) measured the EOD log and principal survey to determine the validity of the PQ. They reported reliability for four domains measured in the EOD log and PQ: principal knowledge, building operations, planning and setting goals, professional growth, and instructional leadership. The main constructs adapted from previous PQs for use in this study include: principal knowledge, building operations, planning and setting goals, and instructional leadership.

Principal Knowledge is based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and asks principals to rate their level of knowledge in each area. In a paper by Dorner, Spillane, Pareja, and Huff (2008), the validity of the portion of the PQ that deals with the principals reporting their perceived competency levels, or principal knowledge, ranges from .824 to .886. Table 4 is a list of the reliability and validity data for domains of the PQ adapted for use in the present study.
Table 4
Principal Questionnaire Reliability and Validity Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain from PQ</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
<th>Validity Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Operations</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Setting Goals</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Camburn, Huff et al. (2010) with permission.

Building Operations is described by Camburn, Huff, et al. (2010) as “managing the school’s physical plant and staff in a way that supports students and the work of faculty and staff (Leithwood et al., 2004)” (p. 321). This includes managing equipment and schedules (p. 321). Also, as listed in a table comparing the EOD to the PQ, building operations also includes activities related to student affairs and duty (Camburn, Huff, et al., Appendix A: Table A1).

Planning and Setting Goals is described by Camburn, Huff, et al. as including “efforts to set the school’s vision as well as long-term planning to guide the school’s progress toward that vision” (p. 321).

Instructional Leadership is described by Camburn, Huff, et al. as encompassing key subareas that include coordinating the school’s curriculum, creating opportunities and conditions in which teachers can improve their teaching practice, and monitoring the quality of classroom instruction (p. 321). For a complete set of questions adapted from the PQ, refer to Appendix A.

**School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ).** The variables that were selected for use in the present study are those that were most central to answering the research questions. Participants provided background information that included race, gender, area of certification, highest level of education, total years of experience, years of experience at the current school, as well as courses and grade level(s) being taught. From the SSQ constructs included in this study, the variables used are shared responsibility, influence, teacher-principal trust, goals and
expectations, instructional improvement, monitoring instructional improvement, instructional leadership, and in-school networking. A variable named instructional change (adapted from ELA change and Math change) was used to ask questions that could apply to all content areas. Also, a variable named self-efficacy was adapted from the SSQ teacher efficacy construct. Some constructs from the original questionnaire, relating to the quantity of professional development, data usage, and identifying problems related to school climate, were not included in the present study. The constructs omitted were not relevant to answering the research questions in this study. For definitions related to the variables included in this study, refer to the Definition of Terms in Chapter 1.

Parise and Spillane (2010) reported reliability coefficients for some constructs in the SSQ, based on 30 elementary schools from the larger data set (p. 342-343). They used “Principal Develops Goals” to represent the construct for goals and expectations. Of the constructs that Parise and Spillane (2010) reported on, Table 5 summarizes reliability findings for those used in this study.

Table 5
SSQ Reliability Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSQ Dimension</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math Change</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA Change</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Develops goals</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Parise and Spillane (2010) with permission.

May and Supovitz (2011) used a portion of the SSQ to discuss the scope of principals’ practices. The reliabilities for the scale were 0.94 for Reading/ELA and 0.95 for Math (May & Supovitz, 2011, p. 341). It should be noted that the slight difference in reliability coefficients from Parise and Spillane (2010) might be due to a difference in the number of schools used in
their respective data. May and Supovitz (2011) reported using fifty-one (51) schools from all levels. Still this number was one lower than the fifty-two reported in Spillane and Hunt’s research (2010). For the modified set of questions used for the SSQ in this study, refer to Appendix B.

The End of Day (EOD) Log. The EOD log has been tested in multiple studies to assess its utility in determining principal actions (Camburn et al., 2010). The EOD log measures nine domains of responsibility: building operations, finances, community or parent relations, district functions, student affairs, personnel issues, planning and setting goals, instructional leadership, and professional growth (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 714). For definitions of these domains, refer to the Definition of Terms in Chapter 1.

Camburn et al. (2010) validated the use of EOD logs, and found them to be an effective alternative for collecting data on principal daily activities. The daily log was validated by comparing it to the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) instrument, which had previously been established as reliable and valid, along with comparing the logs to observations of principals (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 717). Six of the nine domains from the EOD log are also measured by the ESM: building operations, personnel issues, finances, instructional leadership, student affairs, and professional growth (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 717). The authors found that in general the ESM and EOD log yielded similar estimates of principal activities (p. 721). In other words, what principals reported on both the EOD log and the ESM instrument yielded “nearly identical” rank order estimates for each domain (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 721). The greatest difference was with building operations and finances, where there were differences in the percentage variation between principals for these measures (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 722). The authors suggest that these differences could be due to the EOD log reporting activities for an entire day, whereas the
ESM randomly asks principals to report their activities (Camburn et al., 2010, p. 722). Due to the reported reliability of the EOD logs, as well as their ease of availability over the ESM instrument, the EOD logs were selected for use in the present study.

Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May (2010) conducted a study in which they tested domains of the practice log with matching domains on the principal questionnaire and found that the EOD logs had reliability coefficients of .770 for building operations, .756 for instructional leadership, .567 for planning and setting goals, and .307 for professional growth (p. 326). The authors believed that the low reliability coefficients for the variables planning and setting goals and professional growth were due to fluctuations in the amount of time principals spent on those activities. The authors suggested that principals might spend more time on other tasks such as managing building operations.

All formal and informal leaders (i.e., the principal, the two assistant principals, the Instructional Specialist, the ESS Site Facilitator, the grade level team leaders, and the data leader) were each asked to complete the EOD logs for a total of ten work days. For a full set of questions for the EOD used in this study, refer to Appendix C.

**Observations.** In addition to these instruments, the researcher conducted direct observations to collect additional data. The activity time tracker from the EOD was adapted for the observation protocol. Observations were used to track leader actions and compare with the EOD logs submitted by the formal leadership team, which consists of the principal, two assistant principals, the Instructional Specialist, and the ESS Site Facilitator, as well as two informal leadership team participants, which consists of two grade level leaders. The principal, assistant principals, and Instructional Specialist were each asked to allow one full day observation. The ESS Site Facilitator and teacher leaders were each asked to allow one observation during a
portion of their time serving in their leadership capacity. For a sample of the observation protocol for this study, refer to Appendix D.

**Interviews.** In order to develop interview questions in line with the leadership models being studied, questions were created as follow-up based on the SSQ for all participants. The interview questions asked participants to give specific details about their perceptions of the principal’s practices, their interactions with the leadership team, and how they believed those interactions were helping them improve their pedagogy, and their students improve achievement. For all interviews, a guided, open-ended dialogical process was used.

Four teachers, both assistant principals, the Instructional Specialist, and two grade level team leaders each participated in three interviews. Two teachers did not complete all three interviews due to scheduling difficulty. Instead, one participated in two interviews and the other completed one extended interview. The ESS Site Facilitator and the data leader each participated in two interviews. Interviews ranged in length, averaging approximately twenty minutes per interview. Each interview focused on answering questions related to the SSQ and leadership practices at the school.

The principal participated in two additional interviews, for a total of five. The first interview was an informal interview to discuss the study and initial questions about her practice as a leader. It lasted approximately thirty minutes. Additional interviews, lasting approximately twenty minutes each, were used to consider follow-up questions to the PQ and SSQ, as well as discuss observations and address any additional follow up questions based on my field notes. The final principal interview was an exit interview to allow for addressing any remaining questions about the findings. It lasted approximately twenty minutes. For the interview protocol, refer to Appendix E.
Research Questions and Instruments

The general research question for this study is: How is leadership practiced at Painterland Middle School? This question was addressed by seeking answers to several sub-questions aiming at obtaining various stakeholder perceptions of leadership practice. Table 6 shows which instruments were used to explore each question and sub-question.

Table 6
Research Question by Instrument to be Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>PQ</th>
<th>SSQ</th>
<th>EOD Log</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does the principal implement leadership practices?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What is the principal’s perception of her leadership practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What actions are parts of the principal’s daily practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Which theoretical leadership model(s) does the principal put into practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the leadership team (Formal and Informal leaders) implement leadership practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What is the leadership team’s perception of their leadership contribution?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What actions are part of the leadership team’s daily practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the teachers and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the teachers’ instructional changes?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Created by the author (2012).
Data Collection Procedures

In addition to permission to use the instruments in this study, IRB approval was obtained. The district superintendent, the principal, and all participants completed consent forms for the current study. Next, data collection procedures are discussed by instrument.

Principal Questionnaire (PQ)

After the first interview, the principal, was asked to respond to the online questionnaire using SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire was administered once and the principal was notified that it would take approximately thirty minutes to complete. For a set of questions adapted from the PQ, refer to Appendix A.

School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)

All teachers and leadership team members were asked to participate in the SSQ. The formal leadership team was sent links to take the survey via email. Also, the principal designated a team-meeting day to allow teachers to come to the library to participate in the questionnaire. With the exception of eighth grade teachers, and certain intervention teachers who were administering a test to students that extended all day, the sixth, seventh, and PE/Electives teachers were asked to take the questionnaire during their planning period at the time reserved for team meetings. The questionnaire was administered online using SurveyMonkey in one seating and teachers were notified that it would take approximately thirty minutes to complete. After the first team, the 6th grade team, took the SSQ, there were problems with other teachers logging in. Therefore, individual links were sent to the remaining teachers. A total of 39 teachers were sent individual links to the survey. Reminder emails were sent out via SurveyMonkey to remind those teachers to complete the survey. Forty-five (45) teachers, in addition to both assistant principals, both guidance counselors, and the Instructional Specialist all
participated in the SSQ. For the modified set of questions used for the SSQ in this study, refer to Appendix B.

**End of Day (EOD) Log**

The principal and the participating members of the leadership team were asked to complete EOD logs over the course of two consecutive weeks of school. Completing the logs in this manner allowed for participants, as well as the researcher, the opportunity to see whether there were any consistent or routine practices in which participants were involved daily during the time of the school year when this study took place. For a complete set of questions to be used for the EOD, refer to Appendix C.

**Observations**

The researcher used the observation protocol (Appendix D) to conduct observations of the principal, two assistant principals, and the Instructional Specialist, each for a full day. In addition to these observations, partial day observations of the grade level team leaders and ESS Site Facilitator were conducted. One observation per participant took place, for a total of seven observations. Each participant had the opportunity to refuse the researcher’s participation in meetings or conversations deemed confidential to protect the rights of others involved (i.e., student or parent consults, certain teacher meetings or interventions). Observations were discussed during subsequent interviews to allow for member checking of events that were documented. For a sample of the observation protocol for this study, refer to Appendix D.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the principal, two assistant principals, Instructional Specialist, six teachers, two grade level team leaders, and the data leader. They took place at the school, and at the time most convenient for them. A total of three interviews were scheduled
with each participant, with two additional interviews with the principal. For the principal, three out of five interviews were recorded. Two of the interviews were informal and not recorded. For each recorded interview, the principal was given a copy of the transcription, an opportunity to listen to the recording, as well as the opportunity to make corrections or adjustments to any of her responses. A signature sheet was created for the principal to sign, indicating her receipt of the interview transcripts and to indicate her participation in informal non-recorded interviews. Also, the signature sheet required signatures if the principal desired to check out a copy of the CD audio of the interview. For her interviews, the principal reviewed and signed each interview transcript, but did not request to listen to the recordings. For the sample interview protocol, refer to Appendix E. For a sample of the signature sheets, refer to Appendix F.

For the formal leadership team interviews, which included the assistant principals and the Instructional Specialist, two interviews were recorded. One interview was informal and not recorded. This gave each of these participants a total of three interviews. Similar to the principal interviews, these leadership team members had a signature sheet that documented dates for their informal interviews, receipt of interview transcripts, and the receipt of CD audio of the interview. The participants were given copies of the interview transcriptions and given the opportunity to modify and confirm their responses. Each participant returned a signed copy of his or her interview transcription that was subsequently used for analysis in this study. None of the participants asked for an audio copy of their interviews.

For the teacher interviews, it was discovered that the teachers did not feel comfortable having recorded discussions. After completing a recorded interview for one teacher and having difficulty obtaining thorough answers to questions, then facing concerns from other teacher participants about using a recorder, it was decided not to record teacher interviews. Instead, after
the first two interviews, an interview debriefing protocol was created, that contained a summary of the first two interviews, as well as follow-up questions to ask the participants. Like for the recorded interviews, teacher participants were allowed to make modifications to their responses and signed the debriefing interview form at the conclusion of the interview. The teacher who had one recorded interview was given the opportunity to check out the audio CD, and was given a copy of the transcription for his review. The teacher declined the opportunity to listen to the recording, and returned the signed interview transcription after having an opportunity to make modifications to responses. A signature sheet was used to document the dates of the interviews. For a sample of the teacher debriefing protocol, refer to Appendix G.

For the grade level leaders, each of the two participants allowed for one recorded interview. None of the other interviews were recorded. A signature sheet was used to document dates of interviews. For a sample of the signature sheet, refer to Appendix F.

For the data leader, two interviews took place and were not recorded. Instead, the interviews took the form of the data leader demonstrating how computer software is used to gather data for the school. The second interview was followed up with the data leader submitting, via email, the tracking form used for analysis of weekly data for the school after finishing detailed explanation of how data for the form is gathered.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Validity considerations for data analysis were based on Reissman (2008). She wrote, “the coherence of participants’ narratives, and the investigator’s interpretative work with them, is a related facet of trustworthiness” (p. 189). According to Reissman (2008), researchers “can ground their claims for validity by carefully documenting the processes they used to collect and interpret data” (p. 193). She offered suggestions such as keeping a journal or a log, recording
interviews, relying on detailed transcripts, and she asserted that “following a methodical path, documenting claims, and practicing reflexivity strengthens the case for validity” (p. 193). She also stressed that “taking one’s work back to those studied earlier strengthens trustworthiness” (p. 197). This enables the researcher to address ethical concerns by including those individuals being studied in the research process, allowing them to review transcripts and researcher interpretations for accuracy and alignment with their own beliefs and perceptions on the topic.

In addition to Reissman’s approach, Miles and Huberman’s (1994) model of analyzing qualitative data with a coding method was used to process information gathered from the interviews, observations, and EOD logs. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the description or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). After having coded data, the researcher organized them into emergent themes.

In Huberman and Miles (2002), Denzin describes the interpretive process from the perspective of bracketing, constructing, and contextualizing. Denzin explains that bracketing involves taking the phenomena being studied apart, finding words and phrases that speak directly to the phenomenon, and interpreting the meaning of these words and phrases. Constructing involves putting the bracketed pieces back together and showing how it forms a whole. Contextualizing involves taking the constructed findings and applying them to the larger picture and explaining how the participants experienced the phenomenon. In this study, bracketing was used to organize the data by research question. Once themes emerged, constructing was used to explain how the themes contribute to explaining the leadership practices at Painterland Middle School. Lastly, the findings were contextualized to explain how the experiences at Painterland Middle School relate back to the current body of literature on leadership. Analysis procedures
are further explained according to each instrument to show how they were used to answer research question.

**Principal Questionnaire (PQ)**

The principal questionnaire was analyzed by determining in which areas of leadership she perceives she is most knowledgeable. These results were further analyzed along with the EOD logs and observation logs to determine how the principal perceptions are aligned with current theories and models of leadership, as well as the actual practices of the principal.

**School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the SSQ. For constructs in the questionnaire, percentages were presented for each response on the categorical scale used. Teacher responses to the social networking questions on the survey were analyzed by determining the frequency with which someone was listed as the first or second person to whom the teachers go for help.

**End of Day (EOD) Log**

Data from the EOD logs were analyzed based on the constructs tracked on the logs. Those constructs were used to determine themes in actual actions that took place during the day for each participant. Participants were asked to track activities in increments of fifteen (15) minutes. For the analysis of participants’ data, the upper range of time was calculated. For example, if a participant documented 15-30 minutes of an activity twice during different times of the day, the final total indicated up to 60 minutes for that day’s activity. For some participants, such as the principal, rather than indicating a range, a specific time was listed. These times were within 15-minute timeframes. Findings were collected based on participant groups and their conformity to Instructional and Distributed Leadership models in order to determine the extent to which these models are followed at Painterland Middle School.
**Observations**

The principal and six leadership team members were included in direct observations. The protocol used for the observations included the time log for various activities derived from the EOD logs. Using a clock, the researcher documented start and stop times as the activities occurred. In addition, the researcher took notes on practices witnessed during the observation. The observation notes went through a coding process, in which key terms and phrases were identified and coded based on which research question, or questions, they were aligned. Denzin’s (2001) description of bracketing and constructing was used to interpret the meaning of observation data.

**Interviews**

Each participant was asked to take part in a total of three individual interviews, plus an additional two for the principal that lasted approximately thirty to forty-five minutes each. During each interview, informal member checks took place in which the researcher summarized participant responses and allowed for clarification and adjustments as needed. Each interview was transcribed using the qualitative computer software Atlas.ti. The software was used for accuracy and efficiency in coding by determining the frequency of different key words and phrases related to leadership. As meanings and themes emerged two techniques were used to represent the data collected. Descriptions using the interviewee’s words are included in the data results.

**Trustworthiness**

One of the benefits of case study research is the ability to use multiple data collection measures, which can elicit both quantitative and qualitative data, to gather information about the case being studied. According to Yin (2003) “with data triangulation, the potential problems of
construct validity can be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (p. 99). For this study, multiple instruments were used to collect data and provide rich descriptions of leadership practices at Painterland Middle School. In addition, the analysis procedures for EOD logs, observations, and interviews enabled the researcher to bring depth and richness to the findings, as well as provided triangulation of data with multiple sources reporting on the same constructs.

**Limitations of Using Case Study Methodology**

A limitation of case study research involves the effectiveness of the researcher in collecting various types of data. To address this limitation, I used the specific protocols that have been described. Also, member checks were performed throughout the study allowing participants to review interview transcripts or summaries, and asking follow up questions during interviews. Interviews were used to conduct informal debriefings with the assistant principal and Instructional Specialist after each observation.

Another limitation of case study is the inability to generalize the findings to other settings or populations. The case study takes place in a specific bounded system, therefore in a specific context. The findings of the study would be limited to the specific context in which the study took place. However, a benefit to this is having the ability to evaluate and improve the “case” by understanding its unique components. Although the results cannot be generalized, they can provide an example, or allow a better understanding of schools with similar situations. Furthermore, understanding the components of this case will set a foundation for future studies on school leadership practices.
Summary

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology of the present study. It provided a restatement of the problem and the questions. It offered a description of the participants and an overview of the research design, including a detailed account of the instruments used in this study. Next, the data collection and analysis procedures were explained, and issues of trustworthiness and limitations of the study were considered. Chapter 4 will present the results.
Chapter 4. Results

Chapter 4 presents a summary of the results from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. It opens with the results for two of the sub-questions used to address the first research question. Next, the results from the sub-questions used to address research question two are presented, followed by a summary of results from research questions three and four. Lastly, a summary of the chapter is presented. Table 7, indicates the data sources for each research question and sub-question.

Research Question 1: How does the principal implement leadership practices?

Three sub-questions were used to help answer research question 1:

   a. What is the principal’s perception of her leadership practices?
   b. What actions are parts of the principal’s daily practices?
   c. Which theoretical leadership model(s) does the principal put into practice?

The first two sub-questions will be answered in this chapter. The last sub-question will be discussed in Chapter 5 in order to connect the principal’s practices of leadership to previous research. These questions were used to create a profile of the principal’s practice based on emerging themes about her actions and interactions as she participates in functions to run the school (Spillane, 2006). A comparison of the principal’s perception of daily actions and reported actions is also presented. On the day the principal was observed, her actions as reported on the EOD, are also compared to the researcher’s own observations.

RQ 1.a. What is the Principal’s Perception of her Leadership Practice?

The PQ and interviews were used to determine the principal’s perceptions of her leadership practice. A summary of findings from the PQ and interviews follows.
Table 7
Data Sources for Each Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>PQ</th>
<th>SSQ</th>
<th>EOD Log</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does the principal implement leadership practices?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What is the principal’s perception of her leadership practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What actions are parts of the principal’s daily practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Which theoretical leadership model(s) does the principal put into practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the leadership team (Formal and Informal Leaders) implement leadership practices?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What is the leadership team’s perception of their leadership contribution?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. What actions are part of the leadership team’s daily practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the teachers’ and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practice?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. What are the teachers’ perceptions of the teachers’ instructional changes?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Created by the author (2012).

**Principal Questionnaire (PQ).** First, Mrs. Potter provided information on the school background, describing the district functions, leadership team dynamics, and data usage. Then she addressed the constructs measured in the PQ: personal knowledge; building operations; instructional leadership; and planning and setting goals are presented. A summary of the background information and results for each construct follows.
**District functions.** Mrs. Potter’s average for district functions was 3.17 out of four, which can also be interpreted as 75% agreement, with the district’s role in the school. Specifically, Mrs. Potter strongly agrees that the district’s curriculum frameworks are specific and clear, its assessment program provides specific and clear information about what students should know and be able to do, and its standards for student learning drive much of the school improvement agenda for the school.

However, she feels strongly that within the district there is a great deal of turnover and central office policies and procedures change frequently. She also believes that the school district’s improvement agenda makes it difficult for Painterland Middle School to create a school improvement plan tailored to the specific needs of the school and recognizes that the district’s personnel policies and practices make it difficult to hire staff with the expertise and interest that are needed for school improvement.

Mrs. Potter acknowledges that the district’s instructional policies give teachers clear information about what and how to teach, and she recognizes that the district is an important source of funding for Painterland Middle School improvement agenda.

**Leadership team dynamics.** Results showed her perception of the extent of the leadership team’s interactions with one another, as well as her perception of how members of the team worked together to make decisions. Mrs. Potter indicated that she strongly agreed with 62.5% of the areas measured, namely that the members of the leadership team openly express their professional views during meetings, they are willing to question one another’s views, do a good job of talking through views, opinion, and values, and work together closely to lead the school.

Mrs. Potter does not believe that a few people in the team dominate the decision-making process, nor does she believe that she lacks in involvement in the same.
**Data usage.** Reporting 100% implementation of the data usage, Mrs. Potter indicated that she uses data in all the areas measured to: identify individual students who need remedial assistance; set learning goals for individual students; tailor instruction to individual students’ needs; develop recommendations for tutoring or other educational services for students; assign or reassign students to classes or groups; identify and correct gaps in the curriculum for all students; encourage parent involvement in student learning; identify areas where teachers need to strengthen their content knowledge or teaching skills; determine topics for professional development, setting school improvement goals, and celebrate the achievement of school goals.

**Personal knowledge.** The principal’s reported findings for personal knowledge show that she has generally high levels of mastery in each of the indicated areas, with an average of 4.39 out of five. Mrs. Potter believed that she had “a great deal” of knowledge for 48.7%, “quite a bit” for 41% of the areas, and “sufficient” knowledge for 10.3% of the areas. She did not respond with options “a little” or “some” for any of the questions about her perceptions of her personal knowledge. Her reported level of personal knowledge is quite remarkable.

Mrs. Potter revealed that she perceives herself as having “a great deal” of knowledge in the following areas: developing and implementing strategic plans; different types of assessments; effective communication; procedures for forming and using teams in school, curriculum design, evaluation, implementation, and refinement; procedures for coaching teachers; models and strategies of change and conflict resolution; methods for creating learning cultures; adult learning and professional development models; the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals; emerging issues and trends that have a potential impact on the school community; and school cultures.

Mrs. Potter also acknowledges having “a great deal” of knowledge of: benchmarking and
evaluation and assessment strategies; evidence-based procedures for assessing struggling students; information sources; data collection, and data analysis strategies; aligning instruction, assessment and materials; effective decision-making processes; and procedures for monitoring teachers.

She believes that she has “quite a bit” of knowledge in the following: applied motivational theories; what students should know and be able to do at each grade level in mathematics and reading and writing; effective consensus-building and negotiation skills; elements of school design; community relation; the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community; successful models of school, family, business, community, government, and higher education partnerships; student growth and development; effective instructional practices in mathematics; the values of the diverse school community; various ethical frameworks and perspectives; the political, social, cultural, and economic systems and processes that have an impact on schools; evidence-based practices for intervening with struggling students; and practices in ELA.

Mrs. Potter acknowledged a lower level of mastery, yet “sufficient” knowledge in applied learning theories and systems theory, and about the role of public education in modern society and in an economically productive nation.

Interestingly, Mrs. Potter reports a “great deal” of knowledge in evidence-based procedures for assessing struggling students but only “quite a bit” in evidence-based practices for intervening with the same students.

Building operations. For all questions related to building operations, the principal indicated that she participated in activities more than 2 days a week, which is the highest frequency rating on the PQ for this construct. The statements related to building operations
asked her to identify the extent to which she: supervises clerical, cafeteria, and maintenance staff; monitors public spaces, such as the cafeteria, hallways, playgrounds, etc.; deals with emergencies and other unplanned circumstances; works with students and their parents on discipline/attendance issues; and complete routine paperwork (such as reports and record keeping).

**Instructional leadership.** Mrs. Potter indicated that the extent of her implementation of Instructional Leadership practices varied based on the task. She indicated that she practices in the following areas more than 2 days a week, the most frequent option for this construct: she examines and discusses what students were working on during a teacher’s lesson; examines and discusses standardized test results of students from a teacher’s class; monitors the curriculum used in classrooms to see that it reflects the school’s improvement efforts; as well as classroom instructional practices to see if they reflect the school’s improvement efforts.

Mrs. Potter indicated that 1 to 2 days a week she observes a teacher trying new instructional practices or using new curricular materials.

Three statements for Instructional Leadership were listed as practices in which the principal participates only a few times a month, when she demonstrates instructional practices and/or the use of curricular materials in a classroom, develops the staff development program in the school, and troubleshoots or supports the implementation of school improvement efforts.

Lastly, in two areas of Instructional Leadership Mrs. Potter indicated that she practices only a few times throughout the year when she personally provides staff development and maintains programs for special education students.

**Planning and setting goals.** The principal indicated that she participates in planning and setting goals, but only a few times a month, when she examine the school’s overall progress
towards its school improvement goals, sets explicit timelines for instructional improvement, and clarifies expectations or standards for students’ academic performance. On the other hand, she works to frame and communicate broad goals for school improvement more than 2 days a week, and a few times throughout the year, she plans to improve the teaching of specific curricular units or objectives.

**Interviews.** Mrs. Potter participated in a total of five interviews during the course of this study. Three of the interviews were considered formal, and were recorded and transcribed. All interviews took place at the school in her office.

Mrs. Potter readily explained that the success she is experiencing at her school is not solely due to her own leadership. She insisted that all stakeholders are important for the success of the school. Therefore, she described her leadership practices in the context of how leadership is carried out individually, as well as how leadership functions within the team. She explained that with good administrative leadership and great teachers, student buy-in is a necessity for the success of the school.

Well, I think it evolves every day depending on what the situation is. But I would say that I think that I am very transparent. And that it’s a shared leadership. I think that we work as a team (March 2013).

Mrs. Potter added that she had a leadership team that consisted of formal and informal leaders. In addition to her assistant principals, deans of students, counselors, ESS Site Facilitator, and the Instructional Specialist, she also had grade level team leaders and a data leader who were also teachers at the school. These individuals made up the leadership team with whom she met weekly during Thursday leadership meetings to discuss the state of the school. These meetings centered on discussing concerns as well as progress with all forms of data such as discipline,
student performance on benchmark assessments, and absenteeism. In reference to the leadership
team’s participation in the weekly team meetings, Mrs. Potter stated:

I have found that what this does is that it gives everyone a voice. And every department,
every grade level, every subset in the school, knows what’s going on. We problem solve
issues, and everyone knows the problems the other group is having. And we are also able
to use other successes in other grade levels to support grade levels that are having trouble.
(March 2013)

Building operations. After noticing the principal’s unwavering commitment to daily
duty, I asked her to explain why she believed it was an important daily action for her to
participate in. She quoted Todd Whitaker’s book “What Good Principals Do Differently”, and
explained:

Well, Todd Whitaker who wrote What Good Principals do Differently always says that
good principals do lunch duty. Because if a principal puts in an hour and a half of lunch
duty, it probably saves them three and a half hours of discipline paperwork at the later
end of the day. (March 2013)

She explained that morning, lunch and afternoon duty afford her the opportunity to interact with
students:

In the mornings, I do duty in a location where I probably greet ninety-five percent of the
students that come into the building. So I’m one of the first faces that they see. So as
they enter the building, I’m not only learning their names, learning their personalities,
I’m also gauging them to see which students are going to have a bad day, because you
could tell as soon as they get off the bus by their mannerisms. (March 2013)

She added that she also participates in duty during class changes, lunch, and afternoon bus duty:

In between every class, I usually take the toughest grade level, and I do duty on that
hallway just to ensure that everything is under control and I can keep my eye on them.
And then at lunchtime, I do duty in the commons area so that I can direct and interact
with the traffic. So that’s the second time of the day that I probably interact with every
single student on campus. And then at the end of the day, I do duty on the hallway, that
goes out to the buses, so as the students leave for the day, I’m able to gauge if they had a
bad day, if they’re gonna be a bad issue at the busses. (March 2013)

She emphasized how critical duty is as a part of her daily practice, and its role in helping her
develop relationships with the students. She said it is
vital because the kids talk to you. When the kids see you as part of the surrounding, I’m basically a piece of furniture at the end of that hallway, they know I’m going to be there. They walk in and expect to see Mrs. Potter at the end of that hallway. They tell me what’s going on in their day. They tell me what happened in school. They tell me if other students are having issues. They tell me about teachers. They tell me about tests. And the kids will later say, “Mrs. Potter, how did you know that happened,” and I’ll say “I heard about it at 7 o’clock this morning” because I am in a place where the kids have full access to me and I have full access to them and we get to know each other. We develop a relationship. (March 2013)

Mrs. Potter also explained that in the absence of daily duty,

   The kids don’t know you, they don’t see you, you don’t have a presence on your campus, and you don’t know what’s going on. (March 2013)

   **Instructional Leadership.** According to Mrs. Potter, most instructional issues are resolved by working as a team. She believes that she rarely acts in isolation, stating that she rarely takes on an authoritarian role and usually for situations such as school safety issues.

   I have a team of experts and each person has a different skill set. And we come together on a regular basis and I take all of their ideas and we brainstorm and we argue and we problem solve, and the decisions are made as a group. (March 6, 2013)

Mrs. Potter also believes that in addition to their skill set, she selected the members of her leadership team because:

   They’re strong individuals that have strong backgrounds in instruction. They have strong backgrounds in discipline. They have excellent relationships with students, and they are no non-sense, no-complaining personalities. (March 6, 2013)

In regards to whom she believes teachers see the most, she first explains that from a duty perspective, teachers see different leadership team members based on their assigned duty posts. However, from an instructional perspective, she states that teachers probably see the API the most often.

   Mrs. Potter explained how teachers receive needed support through the practices of her leadership team. She mentioned in conversation about informal walkthroughs (March, 15, 2013),
and again during a discussion about formal observations (April 26, 2013), that there are three things that she looks for when going into a class:

If I see organization/structure, student engagement, and it’s aligned to the state standards, those three things tell me if I have a good teacher and (if) the students are going to perform well or not. (March 15, 2013)

She explained that they “usually divide and conquer” to provide support to teachers (March 15, 2013). She relies on her formal leadership team members, her two assistant principals and her instructional specialist to help her provide support to teachers. She stated:

And we usually divide and conquer to provide support. There are four of us that are not in the classroom that are extremely strong instructionally, as well as the team leaders. So first thing we do, first line of defense is we go to the team leader and see what the team leader can provide. And then we get feedback from the team leader and then we go back in the classroom and we observe again and if we see that they are still struggling, then we come in and provide support and that means that we all model lessons, we review lesson plans, we stay in the classroom for longer periods of time, we assist with dealing with heavy hitter discipline problems, whatever is needed basically. (March 15, 2013)

When asked about her practice of modeling teaching, the principal explained that she takes the role of participant when she visits classes. She often participates in class activities, even challenging other students to determine who will get the correct answers. Mrs. Potter explained:

At least once a week I’m in a classroom interjecting. I wouldn’t say that’s co-teaching or planning, but I do a lot of joining in. Or I get challenged a lot as well, to like compete in games so they can either embarrass me or I can embarrass them. (April 26, 2013)

She stated that she has lead activities in the absence of a teacher, but then her role is mostly interacting with the students and participating with them.

Planning and setting goals. Mrs. Potter described how she built the positive culture of the school through implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):

My first year when I got here, we really pushed the PLC model. And a lot of people say PLC, he have professional learning communities. (March 15, 2013)
RQ 1.b. What actions are parts of the principal’s daily practice?

**EOD logs.** The principal submitted EOD logs for a total of seven workdays. The following table shows her reported amount of minutes dedicated to each area of activity daily.

Table 8
Principal Daily Minutes by Area on EOD log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
<th>Total In Minutes</th>
<th>Total In Hours And Minutes</th>
<th>Percent of Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Operations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances and Financial Support</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>6.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or Parent Relations</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>7.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Functions</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>5:15</td>
<td>8.79%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>13.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1:45</td>
<td>2.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>13.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>3.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>30.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3585</td>
<td>59:45</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EOD logs submitted by the principal.

Based on the principal’s EOD log, she spends the majority of her workday interacting with students and teachers at duty, a total of 30.13% of her reported time. The next largest amounts of her reported time are spent on student affairs and Instructional Leadership, each accounting for 13.39%. The third largest portion of her time is spent on building operations, which is
10.98%. The remaining areas of the EOD log were each less than ten percent of her reported time.

The EOD log also allowed for the principal to indicate with whom she completed activities. She noted that activities such as personnel matters and building operations were likely done alone. Most of the other activities involved other members of the school leadership team.

**Interviews.** In her interviews on her daily practices, Mrs. Potter revealed that they vary throughout the school year. She also noted that certain practices, such as daily duty, are vital to her success as a principal. Mrs. Potter also gave an estimate of how she perceives that she spends her time. Her estimates are compared to what she reported on her EOD logs, and one day of her EOD log is compared to the researcher’s observation of the same day.

**Principal practice during the spring semester.** This present study took place during the Spring semester, and during the Spring, Mrs. Potter’s duties are different from what she does during the beginning of the school year. She stated:

In August or summer time up until October, we are rolling out new things, we are ensuring that implementation is tight from classroom to classroom to classroom (March 2013).

Yet, the Spring semester is when she begins planning for the next school year. By the Spring semester

Every classroom is pretty much rolling consistently [because] by this time of the school year, there is enough structure and enough support provided that the teachers show an improvement. (March 2013)

Therefore, Mrs. Potter states that she does not have to spend as much time on activities such as attending team meetings or providing professional development. These tasks are delegated to other leadership team members so that she can focus more on the upcoming school year. She also stated that Spring semester is
A time when I start to reflect and think about the master schedule and what has worked this school year and what hasn’t worked this year. And I really do some data crunching. (March 2013)

Principal perception of how she spends her workday. The principal made an estimate of what she believes she spends her day doing. Based on the pie chart, the principal perceives that she spends 75% of her day either interacting with students during duty, teachers to complete formal and informal observations, and parents for conferences. The other 25% of her day is spent completing required paperwork for central office. The following figure displays her initial perceptions of how she spends her day.

Figure 1: Estimated Percent of Daily Time by Activity
Source: Principal Interview.

Principal estimates compared to EOD logs. The principal’s estimates she quoted during her interview of how she spends her day were compared to what was reported on her EOD logs. Figure 2 represents what was reported on the EOD logs. Building operations, finances and financial support, school district functions, and personnel issues were all combined for the pie chart to represent what the principal considers matters related to district paperwork. These areas are all combined under the School District Functions construct.
Based on the principal’s reported times on her EOD log, she spent approximately the same amount of time, 30% and 29.12% on district related activities. She also estimated that approximately 30% of her time was spent on duty. She reported a total of 30.38%. Major differences occurred between the estimated time spent with parents and Instructional Leadership related duties. The principal estimated that she spends approximately 20% of her time with parent conferences. During the duration of her tracking activities, she recorded 7.59% of her time for community and parent relations. For the purpose of this study, formal and informal observations are considered Instructional Leadership practices. Mrs. Potter estimated that she spends approximately 25% of her time on observations. She recorded approximately 13.50% of her time for Instructional Leadership related activities.

**Observation.** One full day was spent shadowing the principal. Table 9 offers a summary of the activities and durations observed by the principal and includes the times reported by the principal in her EOD log.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Researcher Reported Observation</th>
<th>Principal Reported Day 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Operations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances and Financial Support</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community or Parent Relations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Functions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Issues</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Principal EOD Logs and Researcher Observation Protocol.

A comparison shows differences in each area reported. According to the observation data for this day, the principal conducted two formal observations. This accounted for the majority of the Instructional Leadership time for the day. The principal also participated in a brief parent conference, worked with her Assistant Principal of Instruction on a personnel issue, as well as assisted with a student discipline issues on this day. For example, the researcher documented that the principal went into her first formal observation at 8:00am and stayed 41 minutes (Principal Observation, March 2013). She entered her second formal observation at 9:00am and stayed for 51 minutes (Principal Observation, March 2013). She also spent time working with the guidance counselor preparing for upcoming testing and worked by herself to finalized some formal observations (Principal Observation, March 2013).
Conclusion

Mrs. Potter indicated on the PQ her perceptions of the district’s functions. Overall, she feels strongly that the district provides sufficient support related to curriculum, student learning, and school improvement. However, she regrets that within the district there is a great deal of turnover and that central office policies and procedures change frequently. She also believes that the school district’s improvement agenda makes it difficult for Painterland Middle School to create a school improvement plan tailored to the specific needs of the school and recognizes that the district’s personnel policies and practices make it difficult to hire staff with the expertise and interest that is needed for school improvement.

She believes that the leadership team members work well together to make decisions for the school and that data is used extensively. Mrs. Potter acknowledges that she has high levels of knowledge related to leadership. She is very often involved in practices that are related to building operations. In terms of Instructional Leadership, she spends the majority of her time analyzing data and monitoring the instructional program. The most frequent practices in which she is involved for planning and setting goals include examining the school’s overall progress towards its school improvement goals, setting explicit timelines for instructional improvement, and clarifying expectations or standards for students’ academic performance.

Mrs. Potter’s description of her daily practices revealed a commitment to making school decisions through the use of the leadership team. She explained the role of her participation in classes to interact with students and her commitment to daily duty.

Mrs. Potter’s estimates of practices as revealed in her interview and reported practices on the EOD logs provided similar results. However, a comparison between her EOD logs and the
scripted observation revealed that Mrs. Potter did not document all of the daily activities and over estimated time spent on student affairs and duty.

Research Question 2: How does the leadership team implement leadership practices?

Sub-questions for research question 2:

a. What is the leadership team’s perception of their leadership contribution?

b. What actions are part of the leadership team’s daily practice?

RQ 2.a. What is the Leadership Team’s Perception of their Leadership Contribution?

Interviews

Formal leadership team perspectives. The leadership team members were asked to describe their roles and responsibilities as members of the team. The Assistant Principal of Instruction (API) stated:

I oversee the master schedule. I oversee all instruction on campus, just making sure we are aligned to Common Core, that all benchmark testing occurs, and that everyone is prepared for LEAP and iLEAP. I oversee substitutes. It’s whatever is needed to make instruction happen here. (API, March 2013)

The role of the Assistant Principal of Discipline (APD) was explained by the participant as one in which the majority of the time is spent interacting with students and handling student affairs. The APD stated:

I generally deal with discipline issues here at Painterland Middle. We try to be as fair as possible. However, we follow the handbook, the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, to the letter when it comes to the serious incidents. We deal with our kids on an individual basis because every situation is different. We try to think of alternatives to suspending or expelling. We work on all those first. The only time we suspend or expel are for the ones that we really have no choice, whenever it involves a matter of safety, security, and weapons or drugs, etc. (APD, March 2013)

The APD further explained:

As far as the kids go, I just want to make sure that they know that I am approachable, that I can be talked to. I’m not just the person that deals with you in the office, but if you have any concerns or whatever. I kid with the kids sometimes when I find out they are
having a good day and I want to make sure that day continues I will go and I will kid around with them a little bit just to let them know that I am human as well. (APD March 2013)

The Instructional Specialist described job responsibilities as working with teachers dealing with instruction. (Instructional Specialist, March 2013)

The Instructional Specialist stated:

I can model a lesson, I can co-teach, I can help them plan, I can meet with team meetings, whether it’s content level or grade level. I assist with professional development on any level, it could be classroom management, it could be a specific content, whatever the professional development is at the time…RTI. Also, I do walkthroughs in all core contents, even electives. I manage data with the intervention programs such as Success Maker. (Instructional Specialist, March 2013)

The ESS Site Facilitator described their job as being the supervisor of all of ESS inclusion teachers, and special needs teachers. (ESS Site Facilitator, March 2013)

To further explain, the ESS Site Facilitator stated she is also responsible for:

anything that deals with our ESS students [district term for special education students] and I’m also the 504 [refers to legislation providing rights to students with disabilities] coordinator for services of those students here on campus. I’m responsible not only for supervising them with instructional goals meeting the requirements that are under the state and school system’s guidelines for special education, but I also provide them with in-service training following guidelines under CAP [Corrective Action Plan within the district that addresses special education practices] and keep the teachers full informed and up to date. (ESS Site Facilitator, March 2013)

Grade level team perspectives. The grade level team leaders (GLL) described their role as liaisons of information between the teachers and formal leadership team. In addition to this, they participate in various additional leadership responsibilities at the school. One team leader explained:

I hold bi-weekly team meetings. I have morning duty. I am also the head of LEAP remediation, so I run that program after school. (GLL, April 2013)
The grade level team meeting was also described as an opportunity to review student data (GLL, April 2013).

Another leader explained that as the team leader for Physical Education (PE) and electives courses, they

Organize it to where we meet once a week and we go over important things that are due, dates, certain types of issues that may be arising. I’m the liaison basically between Mrs. Potter and the administration and with what the teachers are feeling. (GLL, April 2013)

The data leader explained his responsibility of analyzing benchmark data for the school. Specifically, the data leader described being responsible for determining how many students need to take benchmark tests, which questions were missed most, and which teachers have input their students’ data (Field Notes, April 2013). The data leader explained that data is used to gauge how the teachers and students are performing for each unit (Field Notes, 2013).

RQ 2.b. What actions are part of the leadership team’s daily practice?

EOD logs. Over the two-week period for completing EOD logs, the demanding nature of the participants’ responsibilities, as well as the complex nature of the types of interactions and activities in which they participated, impeded their ability to complete all the requested logs. Data also indicated that formal leaders as well as the grade level leaders completed the majority of their actions in a few areas on the EOD logs, namely Instructional Leadership, Student Affairs, and Duty. Therefore, to analyze results of their EOD logs, the total amount of time was calculated for the areas reported and the number of days that logs were submitted. Table 10 summarizes the results of the formal leadership team members EOD logs.
As shown in Table 10, the Instructional Specialist, APD, and ESS Site Facilitator each had an area in which they spent the majority of their time. The Instructional Specialist spent a total of forty-three hours and forty-five minutes on Instructional Leadership practices over the course of ten days. The APD spent forty-five hours on student affairs over a total of nine days. The ESS Site Facilitator spent twenty-eight hours and thirty minutes on student Affairs over the course of ten days. The API reported nine hours on Instructional Leadership and thirteen hours on duty over the course of five days.

In terms of with whom the formal leadership team completed their activities, duty was done as a team, with each person in charge of a specific location at the school. For Student Affairs and Instructional Leadership, they typically worked with others. The ESS Site Facilitator, worked mostly with students, teachers, and parents. The Instructional Specialist worked mostly with students and teachers. The Assistant Principal of Discipline worked the majority of reported time with students or other district personnel. The Assistant Principal of Instruction worked mostly with teachers, with the exception of one day in which the majority of her activities were completed individually.

For the grade level leaders, the majority of their work time was dedicated to teaching. Therefore, there were only small amounts of daily time dedicated to solely operating in a
leadership capacity. In the instances when they were performing leadership duties, it was in the areas of instructional leadership and duty.

**Observations of the Leadership Team.** Full day observations of the two assistant principals and Instructional Specialist were conducted, during which the researcher scripted the activities and interactions of the participants. A summary of each observation is presented by participant.

**Observation of the Assistant Principal of Instruction.** The researcher shadowed the API for a full day (Observation of API, March 2013) during the course of the observation, the researcher observed that the participant engaged in actions related to student affairs, duty, and instructional leadership. The participant also handled parent phone calls and a conference. The majority of the workday was spent on Instructional Leadership practices (Observation of API, March 2013). The API completed a formal observation of a teacher and worked on teacher submitted binders (Observation of API, March 2013). Also, the API dedicated two hours and forty-five minutes of the day to Instructional Leadership practices (Observation of API, March 2013).

**Observation of the Assistant Principal of Discipline.** For the observation of the assistant principal of discipline, the majority of the observation day was spent documenting various actions involving student affairs, mostly discipline issues (Observation of APD, March 2013). One of the student engagement activities included the APD going to purchase lunch for some students as part of a deal in which lunch was promised to them if they made the honor roll (Observation of APD, March 2013). There was also another student affairs action in which the APD spoke with student members of their mentoring team and gave them their team t-shirts.
(Observation of APD, March 2013). In addition, the APD handled duty, as well as an interview from another visiting college student (Observation of APD, March 2013).

**Observation of the Instructional Specialist.** For the Instructional Specialist’s observation, the majority of the time was spent on Instructional Leadership activities. She worked on reviewing and providing feedback to teachers for their RTI and process binders that had been submitted for 9-week evaluations (Observation of Instructional Specialist, March 2013).

**Observation of the ESS Site Facilitator.** The ESS Site Facilitator observation was conducted over a half-day. During that time, the ESS Site Facilitator worked on student affairs, handling matters related to Special Education student paperwork and documentation.

**Observations of the Teacher Leaders.** In the case of the grade level team leaders, observations were limited to times when they were performing leadership duties. Therefore, the researcher attended team meetings for the grade level team members that participated in the study. During the team meetings, the researcher observed the team members discuss any teacher questions and concerns, as well as cover any deadlines and requests from the formal leadership team (GLL Observations, April 2013).

The researcher also met with the data leader, who did a software demonstration to illustrate how the school’s data is managed on a weekly basis. The data leader explained that their primary role is to monitor student benchmark assessments for the school. In instances were declining trends are seen, the data leader brings this information to the attention of the affected teachers and to the administrative team (Field Notes, April 2013).

**Other documentation of leadership team actions.** The principal and teacher interviewees reported that they believed the Assistant Principal of instruction was one of the people they see most in their classes. Using the software that the leadership team uses to
document informal walkthroughs, it was determined that the principal had completed the most walkthroughs. Table 11 details the number of walkthroughs done for the school year at the school.

Table 11  
Leadership Team Informal Walkthrough Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Team Member</th>
<th>Number of Walkthroughs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal of Instruction</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal of Discipline</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report given by principal from walkthrough software.

These document walkthroughs only provide a partial picture of the amount of time the leadership team spends in classes. In instances where learning walks, where multiple team members visit classes together and then discuss findings, all walkthroughs may not be documented through this software. Also, in terms of discipline-related class visits, not every discipline-related visit resulted in a walkthrough form being completed. Also, in addition to these informal walkthroughs, the leadership team also conducted formal observations of every teacher.

**Conclusion**

Leadership team members described their roles and responsibilities as members of the team. Their formal responsibilities included overseeing various aspects of the school’s programs such as: the school’s special education program, the school’s 504 program, the masters schedule, and student discipline. Members of the leadership team also had responsibilities such as supervising and organizing substitute teachers, conducting routine informal walkthroughs, and conducting formal observations. The leadership team explained their role in the instructional process, which includes providing professional development. In the case of the instructional specialist, regular modeling and co-teaching, are parts of the support given to teachers. Teacher
leader responsibilities consisted mainly of being liaisons, or conduits, of information between the administrative team and teachers. They act to help voice teacher concerns and suggestions, as well as help the relay information from the administrative team.

The data leader, who is also a teacher leader, is responsible for tracking the school’s benchmark assessments. As the data leader determines any weakness in performance, at the class or grade level, this information is brought to the attention of the teachers and administrative team. The administrative team is responsible for proving teachers with any needed support to address student performance issues.

During observations, the researcher was able to confirm formal leadership team member participation in providing the Instructional Leadership for the school, as well as documenting their roles in student affairs and duty. Formal leaders results from the EOD logs showed that their reported activities were consistent with the job responsibilities that each position carries. Also, the researcher observed that the Assistant Principals and Instructional Specialist also participated in personnel matters as needed. In cases where continued instructional concerns were cause for personnel matters, these team members were often involved in the process of gathering needed documentation.

**Research Question 3: What are the teachers and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?**

All faculty and staff were asked to complete the SSQ. Therefore, some of the SSQ data includes the perspectives of the leadership team. However, questions for in-school networking were answered by teachers and teacher leaders that do not hold formal leadership roles at the school.

In addition to the SSQ, participants were interviewed regarding the principal’s leadership practices. The following results first explain participant responses to each construct measured in
the SSQ. For a full set of questions adapted for the SSQ, refer to Appendix B. Then, a summary of participant interviews follows.

**SSQ Participant Demographics**

The principal confirmed that there were sixty-four teachers at the school. In addition to the number of teachers, there were a total of eight additional faculty participants who included the two deans of students, two assistant principals, Instructional Specialist, ESS Site Facilitator, and two counselors. Of this number of teachers and staff, fifty completed the SSQ. Table 12 represents the total number of faculty, teachers and staff included, with the percentage of SSQ participants by gender.

**Table 12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Gender</th>
<th>Number of Participants in SSQ</th>
<th>Total Number of Faculty and Staff</th>
<th>Total Percent of Faculty and Staff who Participated in SSQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Participants</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Participants</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SSQ demographic data and Principal Interview.

The SSQ participants also indicated their ethnicity. Four percent (4%) of the SSQ participants were Hispanic, 36% were African-American, and 60% were Caucasian. Of these participants, 44% indicating having a Bachelor’s degree and 56% had a Master’s degree or higher. All participants have formal certification.

For years of experience, 23.3% reported 0-5 years of experience teaching, 28% reported 6-10 years. Almost half of participants reported over ten years of experience; with 20.9% indicating 11-19 years and 27.7% indicating 20 years or more experience teaching. For the number of years that participants have worked at Painterland Middle School, 50% have been at
the school for 1-5 years. Forty-two percent (42%) of participants indicated they have worked at Painterland Middle School for 6-10 years, and 8% worked there more than ten years.

The participants were also asked to indicate the courses they teach, or formal position they hold, with results as follows: 6 math teachers, 11 ELA teachers, 4 Intervention teachers, 5 Social Studies teachers, 4 science teachers, 11 PE/electives teachers, 1 math and science teacher, 3 ESS teachers, both assistant principals, and both guidance counselors.

Conflicting results were reported for both the question asking participants to indicate the courses they teach and the question asking them to indicate the grade level(s) they teach. All 50 participants indicated the courses they teach or formal position they hold, with 45 participants identifying themselves as teachers. However, two teachers did not indicate the grade level(s) they teach. Of the 43 teachers that did indicate the grade level(s) they teach, six teachers indicated that they teach intervention courses at one or all grade levels. However, out of all 50 participants who answered the previous question about their courses taught, only four teachers indicating being intervention teachers.

**SSQ Results by Construct**

**Self-efficacy (Figure 3).** For participant responses to the statement “I strongly value the kinds of changes expected at this school,” 47 out of 50 participants responded to the question. Of those who responded, 10.6% indicated that they disagreed with the statement. Sixty-six percent (66%) indicated that they agreed, and 23.4% stated that they strongly agreed with the statement.

For the statement “The kinds of changes expected in this school require me to make major changes in my classroom practices,” 38.3% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, and 61.7% agreed or strongly agreed.
Another statement “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult and unmotivated students,” 12.8% of participants disagreed with the statement. Of the other participants, 61.7% agreed and 25.5% strongly agreed. Overall, 87.2% of participants were in agreement with this statement.

The other three questions for teacher efficacy were written from the perspective of the participants admitting a deficit in their ability to reach students. The statement “Most of a
student’s performance depends on the home environment, so I have limited influence” had 53.2% participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 46.8% who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In other words, 53.2% of the participants believe that they do have some influence over students in spite of their home environments.

The statement “my students’ peers influence their motivation more than I do” resulted in 46.8% participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. There were 53.2% participants who believed that their students’ peers had a stronger influence over their motivation than the teachers.

For the statement “I am uncertain how to teach some of my students,” 55.3% of the participants’ responses indicate that they do feel certain about how to teach their students. The remaining 44.7% participants do feel uncertain about how to teach some of their students. Figure 3 shows graphs of frequency of responses in order to best illustrate teacher perceptions.

Teacher Influence. Participants in the SSQ had to respond to questions about their perceptions of the amount of influence teachers have in making decisions. Overall, participants believed that teachers have little influence over school policy. Table 13 shows the participants’ results to this construct.

Table 13
Influence Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence_Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.5013</td>
<td>.68980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by researcher.

As shown in Table 13, participants averaged 2.5 out of 4. Further analysis of the data was conducted to determine which specific questions related to teacher influence contained the lowest averages. The two questions that contained the lowest averages were hiring professional staff, where 64% of participants believed that teachers had none or a little influence. Also,
establishing the curriculum and instruction program had 54.2% of participants who believed they had “none” or little influence. Tables 14 and 15 display participant responses to these two questions.

Table 14  
Hiring Professional Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by researcher.

As shown in Table 14, in the case of hiring professional staff, only 32% believed they have some influence, while only 2% believe they have a great deal of influence.

For Table 15, the data shows that while over half of teachers feel they had “none” or little influence, 34% believed they had some and 10% believed they had a great deal.

Table 15  
Establishing the Curriculum and Instruction Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by researcher.

**Shared Responsibility.** For shared responsibility, the average of 4.08 reveals that participants believe that most teachers are involved in sharing responsibility (Table 16). The statement “take responsibility for helping one another do well” had a total of 82% of participants
respond either “most” or “nearly all.” The statement “help maintain positive student behavior in the entire school” had a total of 81.6% of participants respond either most or nearly all. The third statement, “take responsibility for improving the overall quality of teaching in the school” had a total of 89.6% of participants respond either most or nearly all.

Table 16
Shared Responsibility Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared_Responsibility_Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.0833</td>
<td>.66004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS Output created by the researcher.

**Teacher-Principal Trust, Goals and Expectations, Monitoring Instructional Improvement and Instructional Improvement.** The average for participant responses on teacher-principal trust, goals and expectations, monitoring instructional improvement and instructional improvement, showed that overall, the participants were in agreement with the statements for each construct.

The following table is a summary of participant averages for each construct. Then, a summary of each construct follows.

Table 17
SSQ Constructs Teacher-Principal Trust, Goals and Expectations, Monitoring Instructional Improvement and Instructional Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher_Principal_Trust_Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.1156</td>
<td>.76845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals.Expectations_Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.5122</td>
<td>.50294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring_Ins_Improv_Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.3735</td>
<td>.57907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ins_Improv_Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.1958</td>
<td>.56792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.

For teacher-principal trust, teachers had to respond to the statements “I feel respected by the principal,” “I trust the principal at her or her word,” and “its ok in this school to discuss
feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal.” Participants responded that they agreed or strongly agreed, 89.8%, 91.6%, and 75.6% respectively.

For each statement related to goals and expectations, over ninety percent of participants indicated their agreement with the principals’ practices. Table 18 shows participant averages by statement for this construct.

Table 18
SSQ Construct Goals and Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school clearly communicates expected standards for reading/language arts or English instruction.</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school clearly communicates expected standards for mathematics instruction.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school encourages teachers to raise test scores.</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school communicates a clear vision for our school.</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school communicates clear standards for student learning.</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.

As shown in Table 18, one statement had 100% of teachers in agreement about the principal’s practices. Participant responses to goals and expectations indicate their belief that the principal is effectively communicating the vision for instructional practices at the school.

For Monitoring Instructional Improvement, participants responded over 90% agreement for four out of five statements in the construct. The statement “The principal at this school works directly with teachers who are struggling to improve their instruction” had a total of 82.6% of participants in agreement. Table 19 summarizes participant responses and shows that teachers had a near consensus with their beliefs about the principal’s practice of monitoring instructional improvement.
Table 19
SSQ Construct Monitoring Instructional Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent of Participants who responded Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school carefully tracks student academic progress.</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school knows what’s going on in my classroom.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school actively monitors the quality of math</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school actively monitors the quality of reading/language arts or English instruction</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school works directly with teachers who are</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>struggling to improve their instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.

Responses for instructional improvement showed that the vast majority of participants were in agreement with statements about the extent of teacher instructional improvement at Painterland Middle School. For each area, participants responded over 80% agreement with the statements. Teachers most strongly believed that there is a detailed plan for improving instruction in our school. Table 20 is a summary of statements for the instructional improvement construct.

Table 20
SSQ Construct Instructional Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent of Participants who responded Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a detailed plan for improving instruction in our school.</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The steps for improving instruction are carefully staged and sequenced.</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps that teachers should take to improve their teaching are clearly</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outlined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been exposed to many examples of the kinds of work that is</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expected of my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been exposed to many examples of the kind of teaching that is</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expected in this school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.
In-school networking. In their SSQ responses, participants were asked to indicate whether they held formal leadership roles within the school. Those who indicated “yes” were exited out of the survey because they were not required to take the in-school networking portion of the questionnaire. This is because as members of the leadership team, their names were likely ones that the teachers would mention as their “go-to” persons. Determining which, if any, of the leadership team members the teachers went to for support was the rationale for excluding formal leadership members from participating in this portion of the study.

Data reveal that a total of 38 out of 50 participants who took the SSQ answered the In-Networking Question. Of these participants, 31.6% reported that other teachers were their first option of people to go to for instructional support. Next in frequency were the assistant principals, with a percentage of 26.3. Approximately twenty-one percent of teachers indicated that the principal was their first choice when seeking out instructional support. The table below shows the results of the teacher’s first choice for in-school networking.

Table 21
In-School Networking Choice 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principals</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Specialist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Team Leaders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Leadership Team Members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.

For the In-School Networking Choice 2, participants were asked to list their second choice when seeking instructional support. As shown in Table 22, a total of 37 participants
submitted answers to this question. The Instructional Specialist and other teachers each received 35.1% of participants who selected them as their second choice when seeking instructional support. Interestingly, only 1 teacher indicated the principal as a second choice option.

Table 22
In-School Networking Choice 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Specialist</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teachers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Team Leaders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Leadership Team Members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPSS output created by the researcher.

Only responses for the teachers’ first two options were considered for analysis, because the majority of teachers did not list options three through seven. The data shows that for the first and second option, most teachers report going to sources other than the principal as their person for support. The data shows that the majority of teachers mostly go to other teachers, the two assistant principals, or the Instructional Specialist for support.

Interviews

Leadership team perspectives of the principal’s practice. The leadership team was asked to state terms or give examples of things that described Mrs. Potter’s leadership. Leadership team members believe that she listens to the suggestions of others, and has started delegating more tasks. One leadership team member stated:

She delegates. She listens to other people. (Interview, March 2013)

and also that
She is not afraid to hear other people’s ideas. She is not afraid to try other people’s ideas. If something that she thought of is not going to work and she looks and sees that someone else is doing it correctly, or the way it actually needs to be worked here, she is going to give that person the kudos for it and say good job. That is one of the best things she does (Interview, March 2013).

Another leadership team member declared:

Mrs. Potter is involved in every aspect of this school. I’ve worked with some great principals, but Mrs. Potter is one that I feel is more engaged with every aspect of the school than I’ve ever seen or been a part of (Interview, March 2013).

A third leadership team member confirmed:

She is probably one of the most involved principals that I’ve ever seen. She is never in her office, in a good way. When she is in her office, its serious issues or business she has to attend to in private. For the most part, she is everywhere and anywhere on campus. She’s involved, interacting with her teachers, with her students. She knows everybody, where they’re at and what they are usually engaged in. She’s up on top of things. And I think that is a reflection of…she’s allowed that freedom because of the administrative team she has put together (Interview, March 2013).

A fourth leadership team member stated that Mrs. Potter was “very hands-on” and that if questioned

she would know what’s going on in almost every classroom. (Interview, April 2013)

A fifth leadership team member described Mrs. Potters leadership practices and the responsibility that comes with being a principal. The leadership team member explained how Mrs. Potter listens to others when making decisions and that

She does listen. She will make sure everybody’s side is heard. But ultimately the decision is hers, because when you sit in the big chair, everything is her responsibility. Everything is her responsibility. If I screw up, who are they going to call? My boss. Okay, if a teacher screws up, who are they going to call? My boss. Students aren’t performing well, who are they going to call? The boss. You know, the building’s on fire, who are they going to call? The boss. So she holds the reigns for everything, but she is completely open to listening. An that’s what makes her a good leader, a good leader who not only gets her point across, but has a good ear as well. (Interview, March 2013)
Mrs. Potter was also described as good at analyzing data, aware of what is taking place everywhere on campus, and diligent in obtaining needed resources, a good motivator and someone who takes a hands-on approach to leading.

**Teacher interviews.** During teacher interviews, teachers further explained their perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices. Teachers stated the types of activities in which they regularly see Mrs. Potter engaged. These included interacting with students, verbally disciplining students, guiding meetings, duty, and conferences with parents (Teacher Interviews, April 2013). Mrs. Potter is described by one teacher as

> easily accessible and visible around the campus. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

Another teacher stated that he also believe that

> Mrs. Potter generally knows what is going on in classrooms because she conducts regular informal walkthroughs. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

This same teacher also stated that

> She is involved in everything. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

and that one of Mrs. Potter’s most effective qualities is her awareness (Teacher Interview, April 2013). The teacher went on to explain:

> She is not asking teachers to do anything that she herself is not willing to do. (Teacher Interview, April 2013).

Mrs. Potter is also described as being informed about student data (Teacher Interview, April 2013). This teacher stated:

> Mrs. Potter’s practices reflect what a principal should do. A principal should be seen interacting with students. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

because it makes her more accessible for students and teachers because they usually know where she is (Teacher Interview, April 2013).
Conclusion

The SSQ was used as a tool to determine teacher and staff perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices, as well as their perceptions of the teacher’s extent of involvement in various decision-making areas. The results revealed that in many areas, the teachers and staff were in agreement with the statements measuring the various constructs. However, this was not the case for perceptions of teacher efficacy and teacher influence.

Further analysis of results from the SSQ, that took into account the background demographics, showed that there may be gender differences in participant responses. However, due to the disproportionate number of male to female staff, as well as the overall small sample size, these results were not significant for this study and were not included. Nevertheless, Chapter 5 will address demographic factors as a possible area of further research.

The In-Network Question asked teachers to list the top seven people to whom they go to for instructional support. The teachers’ results showed that the teachers go to one another for instructional support. Also, many teachers seek out the assistant principals as their first option. The second option again had other teachers as the top choice for participants. The next second choice option was the Instructional Specialist.

In the leadership team interviews, teachers consistently stated that Mrs. Potter involves the team in decision-making. Team leaders acknowledged Mrs. Potter’s high level of engagement and awareness of activities that are taking place at the school.

The teachers confirmed Mrs. Potter’s visibility around campus and her accessibility to students and teachers, her knowledge of what is taking place in classrooms, as well as her knowledge of data, and her involvement with all various aspects of the school.
Research Question 4: What is the teachers’ perception of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practice?

Research question four asked the seven teachers who participated in interviews to give their perception of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practice. In addition to this, teachers were asked to indicate their perceived levels of instructional change. These questions about the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practice and teachers’ instructional change were adapted from the SSQ. Next, is a summary of the results from these questions, followed by a summary of teacher interview results.

School Staff Questionnaire: Principal Leadership Practice and Teacher Instructional Change

The findings for their perception of principal scope of Instructional Leadership practice indicate that with the exception of the principal teaching a class, teachers believed that they participated in different things with the principal a few times a year, and in some cases a few times a month. Table 23 represents participant responses to statements about the principal’s Instructional Leadership practice.

Table 23
Principal Scope of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times per year</th>
<th>A few times per month</th>
<th>1-2 days per week</th>
<th>More than 2 days per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal and I discussed my instructional practices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal observed me teaching a class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I observed the principal teaching a class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal provided feedback after observing my class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal reviewed the work produced by my students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the participants indicated having observed the principal teach a class. Also, none of the teachers indicated that they participated in anything 1 or 2 days a week or more than 2 days a week.

Table 24
Teacher Instructional Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Assessments (formal or informal)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student grouping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials used</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The topics covered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching methods you use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kinds of work you have students do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kinds of questions you ask students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your understanding of the needs of individual students in your class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For the questions asking the participants to indicate how much they changed the following aspects of their teaching this year (Table 24), all questions had at least four of the seven teachers answering in the range of 4 to 7, with 7 representing “a great deal.” For each area, the number of teachers for each response option is indicated.

**Teacher Interviews**

During interviews, teachers were asked to discuss the extent of their interactions with the principal and explain factors that influence their teaching practices.

Teacher two answered that she seeks to “change what we are told to”, and tries to implement new strategies that are recommended by the leadership team (Teacher Interview, April 2013).

A third participant stated that the new curriculum was the major influence on her
instructional changes (Teacher Interview, April 2013). This participant also explained that “it’s the kids first” (Teacher Interview, April 2013). She went on to explain that she focuses on explaining to students that the only way to have success is with an education (Teacher Interview, April 2013).

Teacher four believed her instructional practices were most affected by a program she was involved in that provides teacher training (Teacher Interview, April 2013).

In reference to influences that lead to changes in instructional practices, teacher five explained how she does not worry about student performance on standardized tests. She stated that,

As long as I do what I need to do, everything else will fall into place. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

She explained that what students do not understand, she reteaches (Teacher Interview, April 2013). She also stated that she starts standardized testing practice at the beginning of the school year. It is a whole year thing, no cramming practice in right before testing. (Teacher Interview, April 2013)

Teacher six explained that the influences on her instructional practices come from a combination of influences, namely value-added, administrator input, and district policies (Teacher Interview, April 2013).

Conclusion

During the interviews, some of the teachers indicated that the principal did not regularly perform particular events, such as those asking whether the principal reviewed student work or provided feedback after observing a class.

In regards to teachers’ instructional change, interviews revealed that the teachers made significant changes to instruction, but those changes were not solely influenced by the principal.
Other factors, such as knowledge of the students, student performance, and teacher observations played a role in their modification of practices. There was also an instance of a teacher whose involvement in a program that provided support and professional development served as a source that influenced their teaching practices the most.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. It opened with the results for two of the sub-questions used to address the first research question. Next, the results from the sub-questions used to address research question two were presented, followed by a summary of results from research questions three and four. Lastly, a summary of the chapter was presented. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the results.
Chapter 5. Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings from the current research. It begins with a restatement of the objectives of the study and a summary of significant findings, followed by a discussion of the results in relation to the previous literature reviewed, and some recommendations for using the SSQ and EOD logs. An acknowledgement of the limitations of the study is next. Then, conclusions and implications are drawn concerning the use of case study in research on school leadership, the implementation of Instructional and Distributed Leadership, and the appropriateness of NCLB sanctions. Lastly, recommendations for further research are given.

Restatement of the Objectives of the Study

A mixed-methods, case study methodology was used to examine leadership at a Southern urban middle school setting. Distributed Leadership and Instructional Leadership were the lenses used to examine and understand the nature of leadership practices within the school. The current study explored the actions and interactions of leadership, and examined the perceptions of the principal, leadership team, and teachers about leadership practices.

Significant Findings of the Study

This study led to several significant findings that are summarized below and will be discussed in the next section.

Mrs. Potter is focused on being a hands-on principal at Painterland Middle School. She regularly does informal walkthroughs, and provides instructional support to teachers. She is also involved in the daily practice of duty. She uses duty as an opportunity to build relationships and interact with students. Also, duty allows her the opportunity to gauge the daily climate of the school.
In regards to her perceptions of the district’s role in supporting the school, she believes that the district provides clear frameworks, and that its standards and assessment program are sufficient. However, the district’s improvement agenda makes it difficult for her to create a school improvement plan tailored to the needs of the students. Also, the district’s personnel policies and practices make it difficult for her to hire the staff she needs for school improvement.

Mrs. Potter believes the school extensively uses data to support the school’s instructional program which includes providing learning opportunities for students, encouraging parental involvement, and determining school improvement goals and topics for professional development.

In terms of perceptions of her personal knowledge, she believes she is very well informed in most areas regarding the leadership of the school. She is frequently involved in functions related to building operations. Her Instructional Leadership practices vary in frequency depending on the task and the time of year. She very frequently monitors student data, implementation of the curriculum, and teachers’ instructional practices. However, she indicated that she does not frequently teach lessons in classes, contributes to the professional development program for the school, or troubleshoots or supports the implementation of school improvement efforts.

Although she is directly involved in some leadership practices, Mrs. Potter indirectly participates in Instructional Leadership at Painterland Middle School. Distributed Leadership was used to facilitate the Instructional Leadership of the school. The principal uses a leadership team, comprised of both formal and informal leaders to carry out Instructional Leadership. The formal leaders play a large role in helping supervise various parts of the instructional program. The informal leaders serve as conduits of information between the teachers and the formal
leadership team. Mrs. Potter calls weekly leadership team meetings to bring these constituents together to discuss their individual roles in the Instructional Leadership of the school. During these meetings, leaders provide data and various feedback that are used to make decisions on the direction of the school.

The principal’s reporting on EOD logs revealed that she spends most of her daily time performing duty and interacting with students. She reported spending time daily on building operations, which was consistent with her response on the PQ that she performs building operations activities more than twice weekly.

Interviews and direct observation revealed that Mrs. Potter’s direct role in Instructional Leadership involves observing and evaluating teachers. She also participates in informal walkthroughs, which allows her to assess teacher instructional practices. She uses this information to identify teachers who need support. It is through Distributed Leadership practices that she provides this actual support to teachers.

Mrs. Potter’s perception of how she spends her workday as she communicates it in her interviews and her reporting on the EOD logs were similar. However, when her EOD log was compared to an observation conducted on the same day, it was apparent that she did not document some of the practices the researcher observed, and she overestimated the time spent on others.

The SSQ results revealed that participants think most teachers are involved in sharing responsibility, have high levels of teacher-principal trust, believe the principal effectively communicates goals and expectations, as well as effectively plans and monitors instructional improvement. However, they feel that they lack in influence to make certain decisions. In regards to their efficacy, nearly half of the participants believe that student performance depends
on the home environment, thereby limiting their influence on students. Nearly half of the participants also felt that student peers motivate them more than teachers do. Nevertheless, a large percentage of participating teachers and staff perceive that they can get through to even the most difficult and unmotivated student. Data reveal that they believe they have some influence on students, but they also acknowledge that other factors beyond their control influence student performance as well.

The in-school networking portion of the SSQ revealed that the teachers go to one another as primary sources for support with instructional issues. In instances where they do seek out help from the leadership team, it is most likely to be from one of the assistant principals, and sometimes from the Instructional Specialist. The principal was not the most frequently selected person to whom teachers go for help, but this finding is consistent with Distributed Leadership practices. In other words, because the principal has empowered other leaders, the teachers use those leaders as sources when they need help. Also, the teachers feel comfortable going to one another to get answers.

Teacher interviews confirmed the teachers’ positive perceptions of the principal’s practices. Teachers described the principal as being accessible, engaged, and very involved. She was also described as being very much aware of what is going on in every class, diligent in providing needed resources, and a good motivator.

The portion of the teacher interview in which they revisited SSQ questions about the principal’s scope of practice yielded interesting findings. Teachers explained that some of the functions were not regularly performed by the principal, but by other members of the leadership team. They also revealed that multiple sources of influence have an impact on their teaching, not
just the principal or other leaders at the school. Some teachers emphasized that they are also
student focused, changing instructional practices based on student needs and performance.

**Discussion of the Results**

Four research questions guided the present study on leadership practices. These
questions explored the nature of the Instructional and Distributed Leadership practices at
Painterland Middle School. What follows is a discussion of findings under each research
question in the context of the literature reviewed and a mention of some ancillary findings on
student outcomes. Research question 1 and 2 are addressed together to more clearly describe the
nature of the Instructional and Distributed Leadership practices.

**Research Questions 1 and 2: How do the principal and leadership team implement
leadership practices?**

**Principal leadership practices.** Supported by the description of Instructional
Leadership by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Distributed Leadership by Spillane (2006), Mrs.
Potter’s practices were aligned with both forms of leadership. Most of her practices are centered
on enhancing student learning opportunities and supporting teacher instructional practices, two
components of Instructional Leadership which are described by Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985)
model. Based on the current findings, the way that teachers and students are supported within
the school coincides with Hallinger and Murphy’s description of setting the school climate, one
of three components of their Instructional Leadership model (p. 221). Moreover, Mrs. Potter’s
practices of using both Instructional and Distributed Leadership are aligned with Louis et al.’s
(2010) findings in which the authors explained the importance of having both Instructional and
Shared Leadership – similar to Distributed Leadership – and that the two forms “are
complementary approaches and that both may be necessary” (p. 331). This is because a shared
model of leadership expands “the sphere of responsibility and creativity to meet pressing school
needs” and allows for all stakeholders to take part in focusing on Instructional Leadership goals (p. 331).

Mrs. Potter performs various functions that support the Instructional Leadership of Painterland Middle School. Aligned with Hallinger and Murphy (1985), she works at setting the climate of the school. Although duty can be considered a function of building operations, Mrs. Potter’s participation in daily duty is a key practice she uses to cultivate a positive school climate. By making herself visible and accessible to students and teachers, she creates an atmosphere of order and trust in the school. Another key practice is how she uses Professional Learning Communities to foster a positive climate amongst teachers.

Blase and Blase (1999) found that “talking with teachers in and outside of instructional conferences was the cornerstone of effective instructional leadership” (p. 359). In accordance with Blase and Blase’s (1999) primary talking strategies that principals use with teachers to promote reflection, Mrs. Potter demonstrated making suggestions, giving feedback, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and giving praise (p. 359). As observed by the researcher, Mrs. Potter used informal walkthroughs as a means to provide teachers with feedback on their teaching, as in this one specific instance, when she called a teacher into a meeting after a classroom visit, and together they discussed the teacher’s performance and worked on a plan to address some of the teacher’s instructional weaknesses.

In addition to informal walkthroughs, Mrs. Potter uses student benchmark data, and formal observations to help inform the leadership team as to whom they should provide support. This practice of providing support to teachers is both an Instructional and a Distributed Leadership practice, because multiple team members work together to provide instructional
support to teachers as indicated by Louis et al. (2010) as complementary models of leadership practice.

According to Whitaker (2012), a part of great principals’ having an accurate sense of self is getting quality feedback, and that great principals “made themselves so visible and accessible that people could readily offer comments and provide feedback” (p. 33). Mrs. Potter had daily informal meetings, such as those occurring daily during breakfast and lunch, which were used for leadership team members and teachers to have open discussions about a variety of ideas and topics. This practice of Mrs. Potter’s in which she made herself accessible to teachers helped foster a positive school climate by building relationships with the faculty and staff and allowed her to gain regular feedback.

**Leadership team practices.** From a Distributed Leadership perspective, there are aspects of Spillane’s (2006) description that can be seen throughout practices within the school. When Mrs. Potter explained her process of empowering others to share in leadership responsibility, she discussed how, with each year she has served as principal, she has learned to share more leadership responsibilities. In accordance with Harris et al. (2003) who found that the best principals were those who not only performed acts of leadership but included others in the process as well, and Hallinger and Heck (1996) who stated “achieving results through others is the essence of leadership” (p. 39), Mrs. Potter strongly supports her leadership team and values the individual expertise that each person has to offer. All persons on the leadership team were described as being a part of the decision-making process, whether they were identified as formal or informal leaders. However, in the current research, teacher leaders who were responsible for team meetings acted only as liaisons of information to the rest of the teachers. In other words, their role in team meetings was not to make major decisions, or deliver professional development
to teachers, but rather to convey information to the teachers about formal leadership expectations, and to the formal leadership about any teacher concerns.

The three leadership arrangements described by Spillane (2006) – division of labor, co-performance, and parallel performance – are apparent in various aspects of leadership practices at Painterland Middle School. Within the leadership framework of the school (Figure 4), there exists a division of labor as described and discussed by Spillane (2006), in which there are practices specific to each job role. First, formal leaders have designated leadership functions that are a part of their individual roles; these functions are performed exclusively by that leader. For example, the API handles managing substitute teachers. She is also the person in charge of putting together the master schedule. The APD is the administrator who handles expulsion hearings. The ESS Site Facilitator is the person who deals with all matters regarding implementing the special education program at the school. The Instructional Specialist is the person who most closely helps plan lessons and model teaching.

As explained by Spillane (2006), co-performance involves the leadership team collaborating on a singular activity, while parallel performance involves them working individually on tasks. This is clearly seen in their weekly leadership team meetings every Thursday after school, when the team members collaborate on instructional planning. These meetings consist of having various members from the team bringing data they have collected. These data are used to create a snapshot of the status of the school. On a weekly basis they monitor every measurable aspect of their school. For example, the data team leader was observed to give updates on student data via Edusoft (Field Notes, March 2013). As an Instructional and Distributed Leadership function, as suggested by Louis et al. (2010), these meetings allowed for constituents to each contribute to decisions about the learning environment
of the school. Also, in accordance with Hallinger and Murphy (1985), the weekly meetings served the purpose of helping the leadership team monitor student progress, a practice the authors described as a part of managing the instructional program (p. 222). According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), monitoring student progress involves the practices of using test data to drive decision-making in relation to instructional goals (p. 223), which essentially describes the main purpose of the school’s weekly leadership team meetings.

Figure 4: Painterland Middle School Leadership Model
Source: Created by the author (2013).

Various other aspects of the leadership team’s practices revealed co-performance or parallel performance attributes as described by Spillane (2006). How they handle responsibilities for discipline, evaluating teachers, providing support for struggling teachers, as
well as sharing in other Instructional Leadership functions allow opportunity for the leadership team members to either collaborate with their planning, or work individually on common tasks.

A part of Instructional Leadership includes the supervising and evaluating of instruction, as described by Hallinger & Murphy (1985), with practices of formally and informally observing teachers. In determining how these practices were distributed amongst the formal leadership team, the principal and teachers interviewed credited the Assistant Principal of Instruction as one of the individuals they see most often in their classes. Although using the software that the leadership team uses to document informal walkthroughs revealed that the principal had completed the greatest number of walkthroughs, overall, their formal and informal observations create a strong environment of monitoring and support for teachers.

Whitaker (2012) challenges principals to understand that they cannot be great leaders from their offices, and that they cannot allow themselves to become bogged down with situations in the office such as dealing with discipline, and if they do not “get out of [their] reactive mode and into an improvement mode, the problems that consume [their] days will never go away” (pp. 68-69). In accordance with these suggestions, the leadership team took a proactive standpoint in handling discipline and interaction with students and teachers. The leadership team, including the principal, was consistently out interacting with students and other teachers during duty. Leadership team members talked to students by name, often discussing grades and student behavior. They made duty a “sacred time” during lunch. This was a 90-minute block of the day where the focus was on having an orderly lunch period, but also blocking out all outside influences to focus solely on the students and the teachers. The leadership team would not take meetings or calls during lunch duty unless there was an emergency or a required district level meeting.
Research Question 3: What are the teachers and staff’s perceptions of the principal’s leadership practices?

During interviews, participants consistently discussed positive attributes of the principal’s leadership practices. They expressed their belief that they have a voice in the decision-making at the school. It was clear that formal leadership team members play a larger role in decision-making, but it was also clear that the principal gives voice to all stakeholders. In contrast to the “leadership by adjective” described by Leithwood et al. (2004), responses to interviews and the SSQ allowed the teachers and staff to explain the nature of the principal’s practices. Their descriptions help explain in what actions the principal participates during the school day and provide some insight into what the principal does to run the school.

According to Giles (2007), a positive perspective of the principal creates the context for teachers’ willingness to follow the principal’s Instructional Leadership. At Painterland Middle School, as revealed by data from the SSQ, teachers and staff do trust Mrs. Potter’s leadership practices.

Research findings of Robinson et al. (2008) are supported by the SSQ results for the construct goals and expectations. These authors used meta-analysis that revealed the impact of five dimensions of leadership on student outcomes, with establishing goals and expectations as a dimension that had a significant effect (p. 659). Participants indicated a strong belief that indeed the principal has established goals and expectations for Painterland Middle School. Therefore, these data provide evidence that a context which positively affects student outcomes is being cultivated at Painterland Middle School.

Leithwood et al. (2004) found “three sets of practices that make up the basic core of successful leadership practices” and established that “evidence suggests that those leadership practices included in Setting Directions account for the largest proportion of a leader’s impact”
The authors’ description of Setting Directions further supports the SSQ construct goals and expectations. Furthermore, Leithwood et al.’s (2004) description included practices such as “identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and creating high performance expectations” in addition to “monitoring organizational performance and promoting effective communication throughout the organization” (p. 8). The SSQ constructs of instructional improvement and monitoring instructional improvement are both aligned with the practices outlined by Leithwood et al. (2004).

The findings from the SSQ construct In-School Networking illustrate a limitation in the school’s attempt to practice Distributed Leadership as described by Spillane (2006). These findings provide evidence that teachers at Painterland Middle School do not consider their grade level leaders as primary persons to go to for instructional support. This is consistent with interviews in which grade level leaders were described as liaisons of information rather than providers of additional professional development and support to their peers. Evidence shows that although informal leaders are involved in the decision making process, they are assigned to certain practices.

**Research Question 4: What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s scope of Instructional Leadership practices?**

Data from research question four challenges the work of May and Supovitz (2011) who focused their research on the principal’s Instructional Leadership practices alone. In the current study, although the principal participates in instructional activities, other leadership team members also played key roles. Namely, in response to the question on how many times the teachers had observed the principal teach any classes, all participants marked “never.” These results challenged the work of May and Supovitz (2011) in as much as teachers indicated other leadership team members who play a supporting role in Instructional Leadership practices. It
was also observed that the Instructional Specialist regularly participated in facilitating classroom activities and co-teaching. The results from this study indicate that, relying on the principal’s Instructional Leadership practices alone, as May and Supovitz (2011) indicated, may not provide a clear picture of the scope of support being given to teachers at the school because it does not take into account the Distributed Leadership practices of other leadership team members.

**Ancillary Findings: Student Outcomes**

As established in previous research by Louis et al. (2010), O’Donnell and White (2005), and Robinson et al. (2008), Instructional Leadership has proven to have a positive impact on student outcomes. Although the present study did not specifically investigate leadership effects on student outcomes, some interesting – albeit limited results – are worth noting. In their interviews, participants from this study mentioned how they perceived that the principal’s leadership practices affect student outcomes. From the perspective of the principal, she believed that her practices have a positive impact on student outcomes.

She stated

> I think it has a positive impact. Since I’ve been here, scores have come up each year. Our SPS has improved. The percent of students scoring proficient on state tests has improved. The culture of our campus has improved. Our suspension and expulsion rates have decreased. Our dropout rates have decreased. (Principal Interview, March 2013)

One leadership team member believed that the principal’s rapport with students is helping improve student culture, which also has a positive impact on student performance. Another explained that the principal’s effective use of data to drive practices at the school helps improve student achievement.

A teacher leader summarized the principal’s practices in those terms: “relentless,” in that she does not let up on her standards for teacher performance (GLL Interview, April 2013). By
maintaining high standards consistently, this participant believes that it has helped influence teacher practices, which in turn have brought yearly increases in student performance.

During the interviews, members of the administrative team – the formal leaders – also indicated that they believe that their practices affect student outcomes. The API mentioned that her leadership affects student achievement because she has to make sure everything is aligned to standards, that students master standards, and that quality teaching and re-teaching takes place. The Instructional Specialist and Assistant Principal of Discipline thought that rapport with students is a key to having a serious impact on student achievement. From their perspectives, this is because once student buy-in is obtained, they do not want to disappoint the leaders. As a result, they believe that students work hard to maintain proper behavior and perform well in their classes. Consistently, when asked about the impact of leadership on student outcomes, participants mentioned that the school’s scores were improving each year as an indicator that the leadership was positively affecting student outcomes. Participants explained the principal’s practice of using data to drive instructional decisions and practices, as well as the principal’s rapport with students as ways in which the principal was having a positive impact on student outcomes. Furthermore, the principal’s consistently high standards for teachers were listed as a way in which she had a strong impact on students, which is supported by Leithwood et al. (2004) who asserted that effective leaders indirectly influence student learning through others. This is also a good example of indirect effects of Instructional Leadership, in which according to Heck et al. (1990), the principal does not directly affect the classroom, but does affect other areas that in turn affect student outcomes.
Besides the principal, other formal leaders believe that their work has an influence on student outcomes. This occurs through their helping provide Instructional Leadership to teachers, and maintaining positive rapport with students.

As these findings indicate, constituents believe that leadership does impact student performance, which is consistent with previous research that supports the impact of Instructional Leadership on student outcomes and school performance.

**Recommendations for using the School Staff Questionnaire and End of Day Log**

**School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)**

The SSQ asked questions related to others playing a part in the decision making process. However, the modification of questions to determine the principal’s scope of practice described by May and Supovitz (2011), does not give a clear picture of the role other leadership team members play. For example, the questions related to the principal’s scope of practice and teacher instructional change were problematic because of two assumptions. First, they assume that the principal is the primary, or sole person, who performs the activities measured. Second, they assume that teacher instructional change is due to the principal’s scope of practice. In the case of Painterland Middle School, this was not the case. During interviews, teachers revealed that other leadership team members were key persons involved in instruction, and that many sources of influence play a role in how they may modify their instructional practices. Determining the principal’s scope of practice does not help support a better understanding of Distributed Leadership within the school. Not taking into account all leaders who help with instruction may not paint an accurate picture of which teachers are being sought out for support. Therefore, it is recommended that questions pertaining to principal leadership practices be extended to include the practices of all leaders at the school.
End of Day (EOD) Logs

Although Camburn et al. (2010) found the EOD logs to be a fairly reliable tool, the implementation of the logs for this study yielded dissimilar findings. It is highly likely that participants either over or under estimated times reported for various activities. An example of this is the principal’s EOD log compared to the researcher’s observation for the same day. The principal conducted two formal observations, which were not reflected in the principal’s EOD logs.

In addition to this, the EOD logs were difficult to manage. Even with the option of completing an electronic version, it was difficult for participants to complete them daily. Due to the numerous tasks they have to assume, even with reminders, they often forgot or did not have time to complete the logs. Furthermore, the complex nature of interaction makes it difficult to accurately document activities. A singular activity may involve multiple domains on the EOD log, making it difficult to complete the form accurately. For example, the ESS Site Facilitator often works with teachers, parents, and students in conferences pertaining to student ESS services. So at the same time, her actions can classify as parent relations and as student affairs. Therefore, it is recommended that EOD logs be verified with frequent observations of participant practices. Also, this study revealed that it is possible that the forms need further revision to help participants better document complex interactions.

Limitations of the Study

When interpreting these results some caution is necessary on at least two accounts: this research is based on a single case study; and it is limited to the context in which it took place, a Southern urban, middle school. Although these results are not generalizable to all schools and all contexts, they may provide some insight into leadership practices at other schools in similar
contexts. Moreover, these findings contribute to the overall understanding of the practices of leadership, and can add to discourses on effective leadership practices and use of sanctions on low-performing schools.

**Conclusions and Implications**

The present study at Painterland Middle School studied leadership in a specific context using case study methodology and mixed methods, to provide an in depth description of leadership practices in accordance with the recommendations of Blasé and Blasé (1999) and Hallinger and Heck (1996). According Hallinger and Heck (1996), “the greatest progress in this field will yield from research that places the principal in the context of the school and its environment” (p. 34). Thus, the current study supports the continued use of case study to explore leadership practices and recommends longitudinal studies as suggested by Hallinger and Heck (1996).

In the case of Painterland Middle School, Instructional Leadership is a major focus and the school is seeing small, yearly gains. Previous research of Louis et al. (2010) and Robinson et al. (2008) has also shown that implementation of Instructional Leadership had positive effects on student outcomes and school performance. This suggests the continued use of Instructional Leadership to promote improving school performance.

Painterland Middle School does show evidence of the positive effects of implementing Distributed Leadership practices. Formal leaders and teacher leaders have been empowered with some responsibility. However, the data does not confirm that teacher leaders are being used extensively to help provide Instructional Leadership to their teacher peers. From the perspective of the teachers, the In-School Networking data showed that the teachers seek out their peers as their primary go to person for support. However, the way the leadership team implements
Distributed Leadership practices does not fully support their Instructional Leadership efforts. Although teacher leaders play a role in the decision making process and facilitate team meetings, those meetings are not frequently used by teacher leaders to provide professional development to teachers. The implication would be to work towards sustained implementation of Distributed Leadership by further identifying teacher areas of expertise and providing opportunity for them to play larger roles in sharing their instructional knowledge with their peers.

The practices of leadership at Painterland Middle School are a complex mixture of Instructional and Distributed Leadership. As illustrated previously in Figure 4, although the school’s model of leadership incorporates Distributed Leadership functions, there still exists a hierarchical framework of leadership within the school that is set by the school district. An implication of schools implementing Distributed Leadership within the confines of a hierarchical leadership framework is that it limits the extent of leadership practices that are being delegated to formal and informal members of the leadership team. It also supports the narrow descriptions of school leadership that focus solely on the principal, as well as perpetuating the problem of holding principals accountable for everything at the school. This suggests that further consideration be taken to restructure leadership frameworks in schools to further empower leaders to implement Distributed Leadership.

The principal’s recognition in the district, as well as the positive descriptions given by the faculty and staff, indicate that she is perceived as effective. However, the school’s performance score still places it as a low performing school. The school is seeing small gains each year, but those gains have not been sufficient to keep the school out of “school improvement status.” The case of Painterland Middle School serves as one that challenges the assumption that effective leaders must produce significant gains in school performance. The findings of this study reveal
that even with a great leader in place, there are still other factors which have a major influence on the school’s performance. With this in mind, it raises the concern of the appropriateness of NCLB sanctions that require the removal of the principal and other faculty and staff members in persistently “failing schools.” Robinson et al. (2008) explained this contradiction between leader effects and expectations of policy makers (p. 637).

**Future Research Suggestions**

Further research is needed that takes into account the context and indirect effects of school leadership in order to determine the ways in which leadership influences student learning and school performance. Another area of future research includes further study of Distributed Leadership to determine roles that additional stakeholders play (other formal and informal leaders, additional school staff, etc.), whether levels of implementation can be identified, and the nature of fully implementing Distributed Leadership practices instead of hierarchical forms of school leadership. This type of data may be useful to districts as well as principals seeking to implement Distributed Leadership in their schools, as well as universities seeking to train school personnel in using distributed practices. Research is also needed to further investigate Blase and Blase’s (1999) findings that Instructional and Distributed Leadership as complementary practices.

Another area of future research would be to use demographic features of the SSQ to determine differences in participant responses. Namely, this study suggested that there may be gender differences in perceptions. However, due to the small sample size, as well as the disproportionately small number of male participants, these findings could not be confirmed. Further research with a larger sample could further explore these possibilities.
Lastly, as a concern raised by the findings of this study, further research needs to be conducted in struggling schools to determine whether there are any trends in effective and ineffective leadership practices, as well as what support is needed for principals to help improve school performance in an effort to detour schools from reaching the point of mandated sanctions for low performance. This type of research may be important to universities seeking to prepare pre-service administrators (future principals and assistant principals) for work in schools. Also, it may help school districts seeking to provide adequate support to school leadership teams.
References


Appendix A
Principal Questionnaire (PQ)


JPEGs From SurveyMonkey

(16 pages)
1. Study Title: Perception, Policy, and Theory: A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

By clicking below, you acknowledge that you have given your consent to participate in this study and that you have been given a signed copy of your consent form.
Principal Questionnaire

Biographical Information

2. Please indicate your gender.
☐

3. Please indicate your racial/ethnic background.
☐ Hispanic, regardless of race
☐ Black, not of Hispanic origin
☐ White, not of Hispanic origin
☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Biracial/Multiethnic
Other (please specify)

4. Please indicate your highest level of education.
☐ Bachelor’s
☐ Master’s in Education
☐ Master’s in another field
☐ +30
☐ Educational Specialist/Professional Diploma
EdD or PhD (specify area)

5. Please indicate your areas of certification. Check all that apply.
☐ Level 1-3
☐ A, B, or C Certificate
☐ Educational Leadership
☐ Counseling Endorsement
☐ National Board Certification
Other (please specify)
**Principal Questionnaire**

6. How many years have you worked as a teacher? Round up to the nearest whole number.
   
   Other (please specify)

7. How many years have you worked as an administrator? Round up to the nearest whole number.
   
   Other (please specify)

8. How many years have you worked as an administrator at this school? Round up to the nearest whole number.
   
   Other (please specify)
## Principal Questionnaire

### School Information

**9. Which of the following best describes your school?**

- [ ] Charter school (released from some or all district or state requirements)
- [ ] Magnet school (offers enhancements such as special curricular themes or methods of instruction to attract students from outside their normal attendance area)
- [ ] School of choice (open enrollment, but not necessarily a programmatic focus)
- [ ] Regular public school
- [ ] Other (please specify) [ ]

**10. Does your school offer any of the following programs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I Targeted Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title I School-Wide Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Compensatory Education Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
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<td>Bilingual Education</td>
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<td>English as Second Language</td>
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<td>Gifted and Talented Program</td>
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<td>Medical Health Care Services</td>
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<td>Mental Health Care Services</td>
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<td>Before or After School Day Care Program</td>
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<td>Parenting Education Program</td>
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<td>School Breakfast/Lunch Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>GED (General Education Degree)</td>
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</table>
- [ ] Other (please specify) [ ]

Page 4
## Principal Questionnaire

11. During the current school year (2012-2013), did your school receive funding from any of the following sources to support school improvement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Size Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eisenhower Professional Development Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freely Associated State Education Grant Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund for the Improvement of Education</td>
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<td>Innovative Education Program Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovative Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnet School Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships in Character Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smaller Learning Communities Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and Local Education Systematic Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Literacy Challenge Fund</td>
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<td>Title I, part C (migrant) funds</td>
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<td>Title 7 bilingual education funds</td>
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<td>Title 9 funds for Indian Education services</td>
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<td>Training and Advisory Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>

12. Please enter the name of any comprehensive school reform models or research-based reform programs in which your school participated this school year.
## Principal Questionnaire

13. During the current school year (2012-2013), was this school formally identified as "in need of improvement" or placed in a formal status requiring school improvement by any of the following agencies or programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The State Education Agency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Federal Title I Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>The NCLB Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>The School District</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other agency (please specify):

14. Does your school have a written school improvement plan?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, but we are in the process of developing one.
- [ ] No, and we are not currently developing one.
## Principal Questionnaire

### School Improvement Plan

15. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was an important priority in your school’s improvement plan this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Not in our plan</th>
<th>In the plan, but not top priority</th>
<th>A top priority</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving the School’s Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving School Climate (making school safer, foster respect for others)</td>
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<td>Improving parent participation</td>
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<td>Improving student attendance</td>
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<td>Improving the health and welfare of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the reading/language arts program</td>
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<td>Improving the mathematics program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the school’s library, technology, or media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving another academic program or programs</td>
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## Principal Questionnaire

### The School District

**16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school district’s curriculum frameworks are specific and clear.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district’s assessment program provides specific and clear</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information about what students should know and be able to do.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district’s instructional policies give teachers clear</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information about what and how to teach.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District standards for student learning drive much of our improvement</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agenda in this school.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district is an important source of funding for our school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvement agenda.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district provides flexibility in how resources are allocated at</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this school (e.g., time, materials, personnel).</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district's staff provides important information and expertise</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that support our school improvement efforts</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a great deal of turnover in the central office in the district.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong consensus among district leaders about priorities for</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school improvement.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office policies and procedures change frequently in this district.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school district's improvement agenda makes it difficult for us to</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>create a school improvement plan tailored to the specific needs of this</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>school.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district's personnel policies and practices make it difficult to hire</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff with the expertise and interest we need for school improvement.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Principal Questionnaire

#### Personal Areas of Expertise

17. Please indicate to what extent you currently have personal mastery (knowledge and understanding) of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Sufficient</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and implementing strategic plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Different types of assessments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied motivational theories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures for forming and using teams in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum design, evaluation, implementation, and refinement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures for coaching teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Models and strategies of change and conflict resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods for creating learning cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>What students should know and be able to do at each grade level in mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective consensus-building and negotiation skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What students should know and be able to do at each grade level in reading and writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elements of school design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult learning and professional development models</td>
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<tr>
<td>The change process for systems, organizations, and individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerging issues and trends that have a potential impact on the school community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied learning theories</td>
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<tr>
<td>The conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community</td>
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<tr>
<td>School cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful models of school, family, business, community, government, and higher education partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student growth and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>The role of public education in modern society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective instructional practices in mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>The role of public education in an economically productive nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>The values of the diverse school community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation and assessment strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Questionnaire</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various ethical frameworks and perspectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The political, social, cultural, and economic systems and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>processes that have an impact on schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence-based procedures for assessing struggling students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information sources, data collection, and data analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligning instruction, assessments and materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence-based practices for intervening with struggling</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective decision-making processes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective instructional</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practices in English/Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures for monitoring teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Principal Questionnaire

### Data Usage

### 18. To what extent do you use data for each of the following purposes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Not used in this way</th>
<th>Used minimally</th>
<th>Used moderately</th>
<th>Used extensively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying individual students who need remedial assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting learning goals for individual students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring instruction to individual students' needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing recommendations for tutoring or other educational services for students</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning or reassigning students to classes or groups</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and correcting gaps in the curriculum for all students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging parent involvement in student learning</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying areas where teachers need to strengthen their content knowledge or teaching skills</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining topics for professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting school improvement goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating the achievement of school goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Principal Questionnaire

#### Interactions with Others in the School

19. This school year, how often do you have scheduled meetings with other teachers in this school to discuss and plan curriculum or teaching approaches?

20. Does this school have a team of staff members that has responsibility for overseeing, managing, or coordinating instruction in the school?
**Principal Questionnaire**

**Interactions with Others in the School Cont’d**

For the next set of questions, we would like you to refer to staff in your school who are responsible for overseeing, managing, or coordinating instruction in the school. We refer to these staff as the "leadership team."

### 21. Please indicate which of the following staff are members of the leadership team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/language or English specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math specialist teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents or community members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other (please specify)**

### 22. How often do you interact with other members of the leadership team in the following settings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times throughout the year</th>
<th>A few times per month</th>
<th>1-2 days per week</th>
<th>More than 2 days per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In formally schedule meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In informal meetings (for example, stopping by teachers’ classrooms or catching each other in the hallway between classes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 23. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the leadership team in your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of the leadership team openly express their professional views during meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the leadership team are willing to question one another’s views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do a good job of talking through views, opinions, and values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the team work together closely to lead this school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power to make decisions is equally shared among members of the leadership team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The team usually tries to come to consensus when making decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few people in the team seem to dominate the decision-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not usually involved in the decision-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Principal Questionnaire

### Personal Practice

24. During the current school year, 2012-2013, how often did you do any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times throughout the year</th>
<th>A few times per month</th>
<th>1-2 days a week</th>
<th>More than 2 days a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervise clerical, cafeteria, and maintenance staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor public spaces, such as the cafeteria, hallways, playgrounds, etc.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with emergencies and other unplanned circumstances</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with students and their parents on discipline/attendance issues</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete routine paperwork (such as reports and record keeping)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend district- and board-organized meetings</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with local community members or community organizations</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate instructional practices and/or the use of curricular materials in a classroom</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe a teacher who was trying new instructional practices or using new curricular materials</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine and discuss what students were working on during a teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine and discuss standardized test results of students from a teacher’s class</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame and communicate broad goals for school improvement</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Principal Questionnaire

#### Personal Practice

**25. During the current school year, 2012-2013, how often did you do any of the following?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times throughout the year</th>
<th>A few times per month</th>
<th>1-2 days a week</th>
<th>More than 2 days a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examine the school's overall progress toward its school improvement goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Set explicit timelines for instructional improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify expectations or standards for students' academic performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop the staff development program in the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personally provide staff development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Troubleshoot or support the implementation of school improvement efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work on plans to improve the teaching of specific curricular units or objectives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor the curriculum used in classrooms to see that it reflects the school's improvement efforts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor classroom instructional practices to see if they reflect the school's improvement efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain programs for special education students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for participating in this study.
Appendix B
School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)


JPEGs From SurveyMonkey

(10 pages)
School Staff Questionnaire

1. Study Title: Perception, Policy, and Theory: A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

By clicking 'yes' below, you acknowledge that you have given your consent to participate in this study and that you have been given a signed copy of your consent form.

☐ Yes
☐ No
### Biographic Information

#### 2. Please indicate your gender.

- [ ]

#### 3. Indicate your racial/ethnic background.

- [ ] Hispanic, regardless of race
- [ ] Black, not of Hispanic origin
- [ ] White, not of Hispanic origin
- [ ] Asian or Pacific Islander
- [ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native
- [ ] Biracial/Multiethnic
- Other (please specify) [ ]

#### 4. Please indicate your highest level of education.

- [ ] Bachelors
- [ ] Masters in Education
- [ ] + 30
- [ ] Ed Specialist
- [ ] EDD or PhD
- Other (please specify) [ ]

#### 5. Indicate your level of certification. Check all that apply.

- [ ] Level 1-3
- [ ] A, B, C certificate
- [ ] Educational Leadership
- [ ] Counseling Endorsement
- [ ] National Board Certification
- Other (please specify) [ ]
School Staff Questionnaire

6. Indicate what courses you teach.

- [ ] Math
- [ ] Math Intervention
- [ ] ELA/Reading
- [ ] Reading Intervention
- [ ] Social Studies
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Physical Education
- [ ] Elective
- [ ] Other (Indicate your role or position)

[ ]

Page 3
## School Staff Questionnaire

### Teaching experience

7. Indicate what grade level(s) you teach. Check all that apply.

- [ ] 06
- [ ] 07
- [ ] 08
- [ ] CKAP

8. How many years have you worked as a teacher? Round up to the nearest whole number and include the current school year.

[ ]
### School Staff Questionnaire

#### Work Experience at this School

9. How many years have you taught/worked at this school? Round up to the nearest whole number and include the current school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Staff Questionnaire

#### Responsibilities

10. How many teachers in this school do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Less than half</th>
<th>About half</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Nearly All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for helping one another do well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help maintain positive student behavior in the entire school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for improving the overall quality of teaching in the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. How much influence do teachers have over school policy in each of the areas below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiring professional staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the curriculum and instruction program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining the content of in-service programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting standards for student behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining goals for improving the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Staff Questionnaire

#### About the Principal

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the school where you work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel respected by the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the principal at his or her word</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s ok in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the school where you work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school clearly communicates expected standards for reading/language arts or English instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school clearly communicates expected standards for mathematics instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school encourages teachers to raise test scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school communicates a clear vision for our school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school communicates clear standards for student learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the school where you work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school carefully tracks student academic progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school knows what’s going on in my classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school actively monitors the quality of math instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school actively monitors the quality of reading/language arts or English instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal at this school works directly with teachers who are struggling to improve their instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Staff Questionnaire

#### Instruction

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the school where you work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a detailed plan for improving instruction in our school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The steps for improving instruction are carefully staged and sequenced</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps that teachers should take to improve their teaching are clearly outlined</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been exposed to many examples of the kinds of work that is expected of my students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been exposed to many examples of the kind of teaching that is expected in this school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kinds of changes expected in this school require me to make major changes in my classroom practices</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly value the kinds of changes expected at this school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult and unmotivated students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am uncertain how to teach some of my students</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students’ peers influence their motivation more than I do</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of a student’s performance depends on the home environment, so I have limited influence.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Do you hold a formal role such as assistant principal or instructional leader?  

☐  

---

Page 8
## School Staff Questionnaire

### In-school Networking

17. To whom do you turn to in this school for advice or information about instruction? (List up to 7 people in the order that you would most likely go up to first)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for participating in this study.
Appendix C
End of Day (EOD) Log

Adapted with permission.

JPEGs from electronic form.

(5 pages)
End of Day Log

Directions for Completing the Electronic Form

1. Using the dropdown box in each cell, please indicate when, for how long, and with whom you worked in each of the following areas today. Only indicate an answer for the areas in which you worked.

2. Click in the box to type answers to questions 3-4.

3. Use the dropdown boxes to answer questions 5-7.

4. Click in the text box to answer questions 8-9.

5. After answering all questions, click save as and use the following format:

   a. Your Name, Date, EOD log (ex. Marcia Speed, March 11, EOD log)

6. Print form and submit copy with an original signature in ink to Ms. Speed
## End of the Day Log

**School:** Painterland Middle School  
**Name:** INSERT NAME HERE  
**Date:** INSERT DATE HERE

1. Did you work today?  
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No (sick day, vacation day, personal day, etc.)  
   **[STOP HERE]**

2. Using the dropdown box in each cell, please indicate when, for how long, and with whom you worked in each of the following areas today. Only indicate an answer for the areas in which you worked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Before School</th>
<th>Block 1</th>
<th>Block 2</th>
<th>Block 3</th>
<th>Block 4</th>
<th>Block 5</th>
<th>After School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Operations</strong> (Schedules, space allocation, building maintenance, vendors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finances and Financial Support</strong> (Preparing budgets, budget reports, seeking grants, managing contracts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community or Parent Relations</strong> (Formal meetings and informal interactions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School District Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Affairs</strong> (Counseling, discipline, behavior clinic, formal meetings and informal interactions with students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your Professional Growth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty</strong> (Before school, lunch, after school, for after school activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong> (Please Specify) Insert Here</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Revision**
PLEASE ANSWER ONLY IF YOU CHECKED “INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP” IN QUESTION #2

3. Check all that apply

- **Working with teachers or students**
  - Communicating goals for teaching and learning
  - Working with teachers to gain acceptance of instructional improvement goals
  - Encouraging teachers to perform at a higher level
  - Publicly recognizing, praising, or rewarding teachers
  - Publicly recognizing, praising or rewarding students

- **Changing procedures or policies related to curriculum and instruction**
  - Redesigning instructional strategies used by teachers
  - Redesigning assessment strategies
  - Changing the school schedule to support teacher development
  - Taking steps to align curriculum, assessments or standards

- **Supporting teachers’ efforts to improve their practice**
  - Securing resources for instructional improvement efforts (Including preparing instructional packets)
  - Encouraging collaboration between teachers
  - Coaching a teacher or teachers in instructional practices
  - Working with a teacher or teachers on specific issues from their class

- **Monitoring or observing**
  - Observing a classroom
  - Assessing teachers’ understanding of standards
  - Monitoring whether teachers are using instruction practices called for by your school’s redesign efforts
  - Talking with students about their class work

- **Teaching**
  - Teaching a class
  - Reading to a class

- **Analyzing data or student work**
  - Examining student work
  - Analyzing assessment results
PLEASE ANSWER ONLY IF YOU CHECKED “YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH” IN QUESTION #2

4. Check all that apply
   □ Read instructional materials from a professional development program (either paper or online materials)
   □ Completed computerized exercises from a professional development program
   □ Read books, journal articles, reports or case studies
   □ Attempted to apply ideas I’d learned in a professional development program to my work
   □ Participated in a formal professional development session
   □ Worked with a staff member of a professional development program
   □ Received coaching or training from another principal
   □ Attempted to learn about effective leadership, teaching, or learning by studying a successful school

5. Thinking about the activities you checked in question 4, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree about the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>While engaging in these activities:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I became more confident that my typical leadership practices are effective</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I reflected on how well my typical approaches to solving problems worked</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought about seeking additional information from another school leader, teacher, or some other source</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought about an aspect of my practice in a new light</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to do things differently than I have in the past</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I questioned some of the leadership practices I use</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I questioned some of my beliefs and assumptions about which leadership practices work best</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Revision
6. Thinking about the activities you participated in today, please indicate to what extent you worked to increase your knowledge in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a Small Extent</th>
<th>To a Great Extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards-based instructional systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The standards in my district or state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for school restructuring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective student learning in reading/language arts or English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective student learning in mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective student learning in science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective student learning in social studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective student learning in PE and electives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective reading/language arts or English instruction practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective math instruction practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective science instruction practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective social studies instruction practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective PE and electives instruction practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to help teachers develop their professional knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Would you say that today was a typical day for you?  
   [ ] Yes  
   [ ] No

8. What was the most consequential decision you made today?  
   **TYPE RESPONSE HERE**

9. Why do you believe the decision was consequential?  
   **TYPE RESPONSE HERE**

Log completed by: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Appendix D
Observation Protocol

Adapted from EOD log with permission.

JPEGs from electronic form.

(2 pages)
Observation Protocol

Site: **Painterland Middle School**  Person Observed: INSERT NAME HERE  Date: INSERT DATE HERE

Using the dropdown box in each cell, please indicate when, for how long, and with whom you worked in each of the following areas today. Only indicate an answer for the areas in which you worked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before School</th>
<th>Block 1</th>
<th>Block 2</th>
<th>Block 3</th>
<th>Block 4</th>
<th>Block 5</th>
<th>After School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Operations</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schedules, space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allocation, building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance, vendors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finances and Financial</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support (Preparing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budgets, budget reports,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Summary of Observation/Notes/Things I Have Questions About: START SUMMARY HERE
Appendix E
Sample Interview Questions

(1 page)
Sample Interview Questions

1. Who is the person that visits your class the most?
2. About how many times have you had walkthroughs of your classes this year?
3. Do you get feedback after every visit to your classes?
4. Have you ever seen the principal or other leadership team member instructing a class?
5. What types of data do you turn in?
   a. To Whom?
   b. How often?
6. What/Who influences how you change your instructional practices the most?
7. What types of activities do you see your principal engage in on a regular/daily basis?
8. Who does the principal usually involve in instructional activities?
9. Who does the principal involve in decision-making?
10. Describe, or give an example of, effective practices that your principal engages in.
11. How do these practices affect you?
    a. Do they influence how you do your job? Give an example.
    b. How do these practices effect student achievement?

Sample Principal Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. Who is responsible for the success of your school?
3. Who are the key persons that you go to for help in making decisions?
4. How do you believe your practices effect student achievement?
5. What do you think you spend the majority of your workday doing (on an average day)?
7. Is there anything that you want to change about your practices as a result of what you did today?
Appendix F
Sample Signature Sheets

(3 pages)
Perception, Practice, and Theory
A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

Researcher: Marcia Speed, Doctoral Student, LSU

Signature Sheet for the Leadership Team

Name of Participant: ________________________________________

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Perception, Practice, and Theory
A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

Researcher: Marcia Speed, Doctoral Student, LSU

Signature Sheet for Principal

Name of Participant: ________________________________

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Perception, Practice, and Theory
A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

Researcher: Marcia Speed, Doctoral Student, LSU

Signature Sheet for Teachers

Name of Participant: ____________________________________________

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Appendix G
Sample Teacher Debriefing Interview Protocol

(1 page)
TEACHER DEBRIEFING INTERVIEW

Participant:

Summary of Interview 1 & 2:

Participant additions to summary:

New Questions:

Participant Signature: ___________________________ Date: _____________
Appendix H
Consent Forms

Letter to Superintendent and JPEGs of Approved Consent Forms.

(3 pages)
February 22, 2013

Dear Superintendent,

I am requesting permission to visit Painterland Middle School to collect data for a research study. I am conducting the study as part of my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University. The purpose of the study is to determine stakeholder perceptions of leadership practice and of their effects, if any, on student outcomes. The study may yield valuable information about the nature of leadership practices taking place at the school that could aid in school improvement planning efforts.

My research includes all safeguards as established by LSU’s Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu. Additional information for consent is listed on the following page. Thank you for your consideration in allowing me to conduct this study.

Sincerely,

Marcia Speed
1. Study Title: Perception, Policy, and Theory: A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

2. Performance Site: [Redacted]

3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study: Marcia Speed, m speedy@tigers.lsu.edu

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to determine stakeholder perceptions of leadership practices and of their effects, if any, on student outcomes.

5. Subject Inclusion: Teachers, Teacher Leaders, School Administrators

6. Number of participants: 80

7. Study Procedures: Participants will spend approximately 45 minutes completing a questionnaire. Administrators and teacher leaders will also participate in 3-5 interviews each, complete daily practice logs, and participate in one observation each. Six teachers will each be interviewed 3 times based on teacher survey results.

8. Benefits: The study may yield valuable information about the nature of leadership practices taking place at the school that could aid in school improvement planning efforts.

9. Risks: No participant names will be included in the final report. Pseudonyms will be used for each participant included in the study. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

10. Right to Refuse: Participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures:
The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

☐ I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

☐ I do not agree to participate in the study described above.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
1. Study Title: Perception, Policy, and Theory: A Case Study of Leadership in an Urban Middle School

2. Performance Site: [Redacted]

3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study: Marcia Speed, mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to determine stakeholder perceptions of leadership practices and of their effects, if any, on student outcomes.

5. Subject Inclusion: Teachers, Teacher Leaders, School Administrators

6. Number of participants: 80

7. Study Procedures: Participants will spend approximately 45 minutes completing a questionnaire. Administrators and teacher leaders will also participate in 3-5 interviews each, complete daily practice logs, and participate in one observation each. Six teachers will each be interviewed 3 times based on teacher survey results.

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☐ I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator’s obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

☐ I do not agree to participate in the study described above.

Signed: [Signature] Date: [Date]

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692, www.lsu.edu/irb
Appendix I
Permission to use Instruments

JPEGs of email permission.

(8 pages)
From: "May, Henry" <hmay@udel.edu>
Subject: RE: Request for permission to use your survey
Date: October 2, 2012 8:46:26 AM CDT
To: 'Marcia Speed' <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu>

Glad to help.
-H

From: Marcia Speed [mailto:mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, October 02, 2012 9:49 AM
To: May, Henry
Subject: Re: Request for permission to use your survey

Ok. Thank you. I will still use the SSQ survey. I just wanted to make sure I had as much reliability data as possible for it. I really appreciate your help and quick replies. I know your schedule is demanding.

Have a great semester,

Marcia Speed

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 2, 2012, at 8:43 AM, "May, Henry" <hmay@udel.edu> wrote:

Hi Marcia,

Sorry, we don't have such a guide. Reliabilities were calculated separately for each of our studies and are not available for all parts of the survey.

-Henry

From: Marcia Speed [mailto:mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, October 02, 2012 9:28 AM
To: May, Henry
Subject: Re: Request for permission to use your survey

Dr. May,

Thank you for permission to use the full survey. Until now, I only had those parts that were included in articles, such as your work with Dr. Supovitz, and some articles from Dr. Spillane. Do you by any chance have a guide for the researcher who is using the survey that includes the most up-to-date reliability data or can you point me in the direction of where I can find it? I have searched through many articles, but have only found partial data because the studies only used portions of the survey.

I greatly appreciate your help,

Marcia Speed

On Sep 20, 2012, at 11:05 AM, "Henry May" <hmay@ipre.upenn.edu> wrote:

Hi Marcia,

You have permission to use any part of our survey. The full version is attached.

Best of luck,
From: Marcia Speed [mailto:m-speed1@tigers.lsu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, September 19, 2012 2:44 PM
To: hemay@ose.upenn.edu
Subject: Request for permission to use your survey

Dr. May,

My name is Marcia Speed and I am a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. After reading your article, The Scope of Principal Efforts to Improve Instruction (2011), I am interested in obtaining permission to use the teacher surveys in my dissertation. I am interested in addressing gaps that exist in current research about what leaders actually do during the school day. I will be conducting a case study that will include documenting the daily actions and scope of the practices of the principal. I would like to add your surveys from the aforementioned article to other instruments that will be used in my study.

I have been trying to contact Dr. Supovitz via email. I also tried to call the CPRE office to speak with a secretary, but no one answered during the times I called. Can you please assist me in determining whether I can have permission to use the surveys in my dissertation?

Also, if there is any documentation that you need (i.e. copy of approved IRB), or any other conditions for use, please let me know what is needed. I can also submit a final copy of my findings to you.

I would greatly appreciate your help.

Thank you for your time,

Marcia Speed
<School Staff Qnaiue S05 Final.pdf>
From: James P Spillane <j-spillane@northwestern.edu>
Subject: Re: Request to use Survey
Date: October 18, 2012 8:02:38 PM CDT
To: Marcia Speed <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu>
Cc: Katie Merz <k-merz@northwestern.edu>

Dear Marcia,

Please see below in re. Unfortunately the demand on my time is such that I am unable to respond to every email as with over 100 emails per day it is simply impossible. Here is the best I can do.

My best,
jim

From: Marcia Speed <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu>
Date: Thursday, October 18, 2012 12:01 PM
To: Jim Spillane <j-spillane@northwestern.edu>
Subject: Re: Request to use Survey

Hello Dr. Spillane. I just wanted to check in with you about my questions with the questionnaires. I have searched many articles and have found a good bit of information on the SSQ. I also have the full CPRE version of the survey. However, for the PQ, can you send me the full questionnaire?

Katie, can you please dig out a version of the PQ from the NSL study — it is likely on the NSL website, talk to me tomorrow if this is unclear. Once you find, send to Marcia. I have a hard copy in my office as a last resort which you can mail.

I have found reliability data for portions of the questionnaire I don’t have [in an article by Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May, 2010]. I only have the questions from part of your work with Hunt, 2010, where the principal reports their perceptions of their competency in various areas. I’ve found some reliability data that I think is for this part, in online draft documents from previous AERA conferences [One you authored with Donner, Pareja, and Huff, 2008; another with Goldring, Huff, and Barnes, 2006]. Is it okay to use that data?

You have my permission to use all these data. Also, please note that in both the PQ and SSQ we relied on constructs and measure from prior work over the past 20 or 30 years and relied on validity and reliability work from those studies. For me to dig out which studies and which measures would take far too long, I fear you will have to do that.

Also for the SSQ, can I reproduce the reliability data from your article, Paris and Spillane 2010?

Yes of course.

In order to meet the guidelines of my school, I have to obtain explicit permission to use the survey and to use the reliability data, specially since it’s located in different articles. I am also going to have to email Dr. Camburn because some of the reliability data on the PQ ad EOD logs is from some articles he published as well. I will inform him that I have your permission to use the surveys.

You have my permission to do this. If you need a more formal letter, work with Katie on the content of that letter and she will explain it to me and have me sign if it appropriate.

I apologize for all of my questions. I greatly appreciate your help.

Thank you,

Marcia Speed

On Tue, Oct 2, 2012 at 8:46 AM, Marcia Speed <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu> wrote:

Hello Dr. Spillane, I just wanted to check in with you about my questions with the questionnaires. I have searched many articles and have found a good bit of information on the SSQ. I also have the full CPRE version of the survey. However, for the PQ, can you send me the full questionnaire? I have found reliability data for portions of the questionnaire I don’t have [in an article by Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May, 2010]. I only have the questions from part of your work with Hunt, 2010, where the principal reports their perceptions of their competency in various areas. I’ve found some reliability data that I think is for this part, in draft documents from previous AERA conferences [One you authored with Donner, Pareja, and Huff, 2008; another with Goldring, Huff, and Barnes, 2006]. Is it okay to use that data?

Would you prefer me to check with Dr. Camburn?

Thank you,

Marcia
Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 13, 2012, at 11:22 AM, James P Spillane <jspillane@northwestern.edu> wrote:

Hi Marcia

I am on vacation and next week giving a paper at Conference in Europe. Perhaps Katie might be able to find it but please look for papers that I have co-authored with Eric Camblan ... at least one of those should have this information. If not, hit me back at the end of the month and I will try and find it.

From: Marcia Speed <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu>
Date: Thursday, September 13, 2012 11:16 AM
To: Jim Spillane <jspillane@northwestern.edu>
Subject: Re: Request to use Survey

Dr. Spillane,

Thank you so much for allowing me to use the instruments. I have the information I need for the principal logs, but I haven't found the actual reliability coefficients for the PQ and SSQ. I saw that the surveys were likely first implemented as a part of a grant project, which is where I saw a draft of how the instruments were constructed with reliability data. However, I don't know if that draft information is the final data used for the survey. Also, the reliability data wasn't listed in the 2010 Days of our Lives... article from the Journal of Curriculum Studies. Can you direct me on where I can locate the reliability information? I have to include it in order to use it for my study. I apologize if I am overlooking the information somewhere, but I haven't been able to locate it.

Thank you for your time and help,

Marcia Speed

On Sep 6, 2012, at 10:46 AM, James P Spillane <jspillane@northwestern.edu> wrote:

Dear Marcia

You should feel free to use the instruments, just acknowledge when you publish on the work. Various publications either on my website or listed on their address the validity of different parts of these instruments including social network questions and EOD logs. Good luck with the work.

Best

From: Marcia Speed <mspeed1@tigers.lsu.edu>
Date: Wednesday, September 5, 2012 3:52 PM
To: Jim Spillane <jspillane@northwestern.edu>
Subject: Request to use Survey

Dr. Spillane,

My name is Marcia Speed and I am a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. After reading the article Days of their lives: a mixed-methods, descriptive analysis of the en and women at work in the principal's office (2010), I am interested in obtaining your permission to use the teacher and principal survey in my dissertation. I am interested in addressing gaps that exist in current research about what effective leaders actually do during the school day. I will be conducting a case study, seeking to explore the daily actions and scope of the practices of the principal. I would like to add your surveys from the aforementioned article to other instruments that will be used in my study.

If it is okay for me to use the surveys, is there a description for the categories used in the surveys and reliability testing data that can be cited to support its credibility? May I also use the End of Day Log for principals that is found on your distributed leadership website?

Also, if there is any documentation that you need (i.e. copy of approved IRB), or any other conditions for use, please let me know what is needed. I can also submit a final copy of my findings to you.
I would greatly appreciate your help.

Thank you for your time,

Marcia Speed
Hi Marcia,

Nice to hear from you and I'm excited to hear you're using the instruments from our study. I assume by "PQ" you mean the principal questionnaire? That survey was administered during three times in Spring 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007. The survey changed very little each year. I'm attaching the different versions of the survey.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Best,

Eric Camburn

On 10/18/2012 12:13 PM, Marcia Speed wrote:

Dr. Camburn,

My name is Marcia Speed and I am a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. After reading several articles that use End of the Day Logs, the Principal Questionnaire, and the School Staff Questionnaire, I contacted Dr. Spillane and obtained permission to use these instruments in my dissertation. I am interested in addressing gaps that exist in current research about what effective leaders actually do during the school day. I will be conducting a case study, seeking to explore the daily actions and scope of the practices of the principal.

In order to meet the guidelines for LSU, I must obtain written permission to reproduce the reliability data that I have found in my study. I am aware that many authors have used portions of the aforementioned surveys in many different articles. From the following articles that you co-authored and would like permission to reproduce the reliability data:

- Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010)
- Camburn, Huff, Golding, and May (2010)

I was given permission to use the questionnaires. I have the full QPRE version of the SSQ. However, I only have a portion of the PQ that was used in one of the articles I've read. Do you by chance have access to the full questionnaire and may I have permission to use it? I noticed in one of your articles, you provided reliability for portions of the questionnaire that I do not have and I would like to see the full version to determine if there are any additions sections that could be used in my study.

I greatly appreciate your help,

Marcia Speed
From: Eric Camburn <ecamburn@education.wisc.edu>
Subject: Re: Permission to use Reliability Data in Dissertation
Date: October 24, 2012 10:24:39 PM CDT
To: Marcy Speed <mspeed1@lfsa.lsu.edu>

Yes you have my permission Marcia. Thanks for asking and good luck with your research.

Eric Camburn

On 10/24/2012 2:46 PM, Marcy Speed wrote:

Dr. Camburn,

Thank you so much for sending me the questionnaires. In order for me to meet my school's guidelines, I need to have your permission to reproduce your reliability data for the instruments. I currently have found reliability data for the Principal Questionnaire and the End of Day log in: Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010) and Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May (2010). Do I have your permission to use this reliability data in my study? I will be sure to cite where it was obtained.

Thank you again,

Marcia

On Oct 23, 2012, at 12:52 AM, Eric Camburn wrote:

Hi Marcia,

Nice to hear from you and I’m excited to hear you’re using the instruments from our study. I assume by “PQ” you mean the principal questionnaire? That survey was administered during three times in Spring 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007. The survey changed very little each year. I’m attaching the different versions of the survey.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Best,

Eric Camburn

On 10/18/2012 12:13 PM, Marcy Speed wrote:

Dr. Camburn,

My name is Marcia Speed and I am a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. After reading several articles that use End of the Day logs, the Principal Questionnaire, and the School Staff Questionnaire, I contacted Dr. Spillane and obtained permission to use these instruments in my dissertation. I am interested in addressing gaps that exist in current research about what effective leaders actually do during the school day. I will be conducting a case study, seeking to explore the daily actions and scope of the practices of the principal.

In order to meet the guidelines for LSU, I must obtain written permission to reproduce the reliability data that I have found in my study. I am aware that many authors have used portions of the aforementioned surveys in many different articles. From the following articles that you co-authored and would like permission to reproduce the reliability data:

Camburn, Spillane, and Sebastian (2010)
Camburn, Huff, Goldring, and May (2010)

I was given permission to use the questionnaires. I have the full CPRE version of the SSSQ. However, I only have a portion of the PQ that was used in one of the articles I’ve read. Do you by chance have access to the full questionnaire and may I have permission to use it? I noticed in one of your articles, you provided reliability for portions of the questionnaire that I do not have and I would like to see the full version to determine if there are any additions sections that could be used in my study.

I greatly appreciate your help,

Marcia Speed

<Qnaire_Final_S2006_from_Inquisite.doc>
Marcia,

Feel free to use the survey, just acknowledge its source in any reports you produce.

Best,

Jon

Jonathan Supovitz
Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education
Co-Director, Consortium for Policy Research in Education
University of Pennsylvania
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Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-898-0700 x230
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Marcia Speed

My name is Marcia Speed and I am a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. After reading the article The Scope of Principal Efforts to Improve Instruction (2011), I am interested in obtaining your permission to use the teacher survey in my dissertation. I am interested in addressing gaps that exist in current research about what effective leaders actually do during the school day. I will be conducting a case study, seeking to explore the daily actions and scope of the practices of the principal. I would like to add your survey from the aforementioned article to other instruments that will be used in my study.

Also, if there is any documentation that you need (i.e. copy of approved IRB), or any other conditions for use, please let me know what is needed. I can also submit a final copy of my findings to you.

I would greatly appreciate your help.

Thank you for your time,

Marcia Speed
Vita

Coming from a small, rural town in Louisiana, Marcia finished high school at the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA). She received her Bachelors of Arts Degree in Sociology from LSU May 2002.

After working her first year in the private sector, and starting an alternative certification Master’s degree program, Marcia began her career in public education. She has had the opportunity to work in one of the largest school districts in Louisiana, and has gained several years of experience working in the urban school setting.

After completing her Master’s of Arts in Education degree at Southeastern Louisiana University in May 2005, Marcia next began her pursuit of her doctorate. While attending graduate school at LSU, Marcia was selected as a UCEA Jackson Scholar for the 2008-2010 school year. She also became a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

Currently, Marcia works as an Instructional Specialist, where she continues her work in Educational Leadership at the K-12 level.