Successful leadership characteristics of elementary school leaders and the impact on consecutive student achievement

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS AND THE IMPACT ON CONSECUTIVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Committee Chair: Dr. Trevor Turner
Dissertation dated December 2013

This dissertation provides important research for aspiring and current administrators. It provides data on select leadership characteristics and the impact on student achievement. The problem was inconsistent student achievement in select elementary schools of the local education agency. The Local Education Agency (LEA) selected for the study has a total of 81 elementary schools. During the 2010 and 2011 school years, 41 elementary schools achieved adequate yearly progress. The challenge in the LEA is the creation of sustained student achievement across all elementary schools. The purpose of the study was to examine if there was a significant relationship between student achievement and select leadership characteristics at the elementary school level.

The researcher chose a mixed method design to explore student achievement and select leadership characteristics. Mixed method was the chosen design because it combined the strength of both the quantitative and qualitative method. Data revealed that
school climate, instructional supervision, leadership style, structured operational
environment, teacher recognition, teacher training, team collaboration, shared leadership
and decision making, and school encouragement of parental engagement had a significant
relationship with student achievement. This is significant for all educational leaders as
we strive for positive student achievement for schools in the 21st century.
SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS AND THE IMPACT ON CONSECUTIVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

DECEMBER 2013
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education reformer Horace Mann understood that education was a natural right for every child. In 1848, Mann published a report that focused on improving society through an educated public (Duttweiler & Hord, 1987). This mindset and vision helped to create statewide common-school systems. Early leaders in education such as Horace Mann and Henry Barnard worked to establish a free elementary education accessible to everyone. Just as statewide common-school systems were an evolutionary step, so were the supervision of these schools. The supervision and administration of education in the early 1800s was the duty of the school agent. His responsibility was to make sure the school house was kept in repair, furnish fuel and utensils for the school, and employ teachers. Today’s superintendent and principal are the evolutionary descendants of the School Agent who volunteered to handle the duties of keeping the school running (Duttweiler & Hord, 1987).

The leadership of the 21st century is far more complex than the days of overseeing the operations of a one-room school house. The field of Educational Administration remains in the spotlight due to the critical role education plays in the social and economic well being of this and every other nation. School leaders in the 21st century must be good managers and excellent instructional leaders. They are responsible for articulating the vision for a successful school and increased student achievement.
The field of Educational Administration is rooted in theory, with the belief that every school administrator should be grounded in the science of administration. Regardless of the theory used to explain it, leadership has been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations throughout the centuries (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The traditions and beliefs about leadership in school are no different from those regarding leadership in other institutions. Leadership is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of all aspects of a school’s academic success.

Duttweiler and Hord (1987) stated the following:

The research shows that in addition to being accomplished administrators who develop and implement sound policies, procedures, and practices, effective administrators are also leaders who shape the school’s culture by creating and articulating a vision, winning support for it, and inspiring others to attain it.

(p. 65)

A critical component of student success is the ability of a leader to share their vision with members of the organization who play a direct role in the realization of the vision. This can be achieved through the human resources found within the organization. School leadership teams shift the focus of student achievement, from a single individual to a team of individuals. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on school leadership that quantified the effect of principal leadership on student achievement. A total of 69 studies that spanned 23 years comprised the data for the meta-analysis. Their findings yielded 21 characteristics of an effective leader. Among these characteristics were monitoring, knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and
communication. While Marzano, Waters, and McNulty examined leadership from a quantitative standpoint, Kathleen Cotton (2003) examined leadership from a qualitative approach. Cotton identified 25 categories of principal behavior that positively affect student achievement. Categories such as communication, shared leadership, and instructional leadership were identified in her review. The studies of Marzano et al. (2005) and Cotton (2003) speak to the complexity of principal leadership. When leadership responsibilities are shared among individuals in the school building, they increase the probability of accomplishing the goal of student achievement.

**Statement of the Problem**

Under the administration of Governor Joe Frank Harris, accountability to improve Georgia's educational system had begun. In 1985, Governor Harris passed the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE). QBE required the state of Georgia to implement a Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). The curriculum specified what students were expected to know in each subject and grade. A 2002 audit of the QCC conducted by Phi Delta Kappa found that the curriculum did not meet national standards. The QCC lacked depth and could not be covered in a reasonable amount of time. This led to the development of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). GPS were developed to provide clear expectations for instruction, assessment, and student work. The Georgia Performance Standards, enabled a teacher to determine "how good is good enough." The performance standards isolated and identified the skills needed to problem-solve, reason, communicate, and make connections with other information. They also told the teacher how to assess the extent
to which the student knew the material and could apply the information (Georgia Performance Standards, 2012).

In order to streamline education and establish a shared set of clear educational standards, the Georgia State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. On July 8, 2010, the Georgia State Board of Education joined with forty-seven other states to develop a set of core standards for K-12 in English/Language Arts and Math. The Common Core standards provide a consistent framework to prepare students for success in the college and/or the 21st century workplace. The Common Core Standards are a set of expectations across the states for what students are expected to know in English/Language Arts and Math. For the students of Georgia, this means rigorous knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and/or careers, consistent expectations across the states, and relevant content and application of knowledge through high-order thinking skills.

In 2002, when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law, by then President, George W. Bush, this was the beginning of a greater focus on accountability for all educators. One of the cornerstones of the No Child Left Behind Act was Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP was a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. NCLB required all states, to establish state academic standards and a state testing system that met all federal requirements. The federal law required that each state set high academic standards and implement an extensive student testing program which was aligned to the standards and measured students’ achievement based on these standards. AYP required schools to meet standards
in three areas: test participation of students (math and reading), student academic performance (math and reading), and a third indicator (attendance or graduation rate). AYP held each local school district and each individual school accountable for the academic success of students. Georgia used the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) as the AYP assessment tool for elementary schools (CRCT/AYP, 2012). No Child Left Behind set the date of 2014, for all elementary students in the state of Georgia to be academically proficient.

Several states across the nation, applied for flexibility in implementing the mandates of the NCLB Act. President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan proposed an initiative that would give states flexibility in meeting the looming deadline of 2014. So, on February 9, 2012, Georgia, along with nine other states was approved for flexibility in exchange for initiating reforms under the Race to The Top Grant. This meant that Georgia no longer had to meet the 2014 targets set by NCLB. The state must establish new performance targets for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps (U. S. Department of Education, 2012).

The flexibility from NCLB also meant that states must adopt and have a plan to implement college and career-ready standards. They must also create a comprehensive system of teacher and principal development, evaluation, and support that include factors beyond test scores, such as principal observation, peer review, student work, or parent and student feedback (U. S. Department of Education, 2012).

Even though Georgia and the Local Education Agency (LEA) are not required to meet the NCLB 2014 targets, students will still be tested annually and state and local
targets will be set in an effort to improve student test performance and close existing achievement gaps.

By the end of the 2011 school year, the LEA selected for this study, located in the Metro Atlanta region, educated more than 46,000 elementary students. Of these students, 15,283 were in grades 3 and 5 and were administered the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test in Reading and Math. In the area of Reading, third graders, exceeded the standard by 33%, 54% met the standard, and 13% did not meet the standard. In the area of math, 27% exceeded the standard, 51% met the standard, and 33% did not meet the standard. Fifth graders exceeded the reading standard by 29%, 62% met the standard, and 10% did not meet the standard. In the area of math, fifth graders exceeded the standard by 30%, 54% met the standard, and 15% failed to meet the standard (CRCT/AYP, 2012).

The problem is inconsistent student achievement in select elementary schools of the Local Education Agency. The LEA has a total of 81 elementary schools. During the 2010 and 2011 school years, 41 elementary schools achieved adequate yearly progress. Twenty-two elementary schools failed to achieve consecutive AYP status (missing AYP goals either during the 2010 or 2011 school year). Eighteen elementary schools failed to achieve AYP status during both the 2010 and 2011 school years. The challenge in the LEA is the creation of sustained student achievement across all elementary schools. Table 1 describes the AYP status of schools selected for this study.
Table 1

*Schools Selected for the Study*

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<td>School C</td>
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<td>School D</td>
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**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine whether sustained student achievement is related to select leadership characteristics at the elementary school level. The researcher investigated leadership characteristics of two select elementary schools that achieved academic success for at least two consecutive years as measured by Adequate Yearly Progress. In addition, the purpose was to investigate leadership characteristics in two select elementary schools that failed to meet academic achievement success for at least two consecutive years. This study identifies common core leadership traits perceived by the teachers that lead to sustained student achievement.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Monitoring Student Performance?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and School Climate?
RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Instructional Supervision?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and leadership style?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and structured operational environment?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and teacher recognition?

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Teacher training?

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Team collaboration?

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Shared leadership and decision making?

RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement?

Significance of the Study

The state of Georgia and the LEA selected by the researcher are now under a four year grant, known as Race to The Top (RTT). Race to the Top is a 4.35 billion dollar initiative, funded by the ED Recovery Act, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Race to the Top is built on the framework of comprehensive reform across four reform areas: (a) Standards and Assessments, (b) Data systems to
Support Instruction, (c) Great teachers and Leaders, and (d) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (*Race to the Top [RTT]*, Annual Performance Report, 2012). The reform area, Great teachers and leaders, is set to improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. It sets to measure the percentage of principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective or ineffective. Secondly, it measures the percentage of principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority or both who are highly effective or ineffective. Subsequently, this section makes up the highest amount of total points awarded to states (138 points) under the Race to the Top Grant. To date, Georgia has been awarded 400 million dollars.

In accordance with receiving a waiver for greater flexibility under No Child Left Behind, the state of Georgia and the Local Education Agency have accepted the challenge of implementing reform under Race to the Top. RTT puts the leadership characteristics of school leaders under greater scrutiny. The 2012-2013 school year and subsequent years will find current and future leaders examining the skills necessary to successfully manage a school and increase student achievement. Visionary, creative, knowledgeable, principled, and inspiring educational leaders are vital to building and fostering a positive school environment to help meet public education goals in the 21st century (Simonson, 2005). With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act under President Obama’s administration, the opportunity is upon us to fully understand the leadership of achieving schools and to provide principals and aspiring leaders with the training needed to move schools forward to meet current
expectations (Pepper, 2010). This research examined leadership characteristics that have promoted and retained student achievement.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** – AYP is one of the cornerstones of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments (CRCT/AYP, 2012).

**Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)** – standards that provide a consistent framework to prepare students for success in college and/or the 21st century workplace (Georgia Performance Standards, 2012).

**Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)** - The state of Georgia's standardized achievement test that determined adequate yearly progress.

**Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)** - The performance standards provide clear expectations for instruction, assessment, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know “how good is good enough” (Georgia Performance Standards, 2012).

**Instructional Supervision** - The extent, to which a principal displays knowledge of the curriculum, monitors and provides feedback on classroom instruction. It is the degree to which the leader is aware of best practices in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
Leadership Style - Teacher perceptions of the leadership traits a principals uses to impact teacher effectiveness, school climate, and student achievement.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - The local educational governing authority and a common used term for a school district.

Monitoring Student Performance - The extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school instructional practices in terms of their impact on student achievement. The extent to which the principal understands how well students are performing based on student data and assessments.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) - A federal mandate that set state standards for student achievement, passed by President George Bush.

Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) - An Act passed in 1985 by Governor Joe Frank Harris that required the state of Georgia to develop a quality core curriculum.

Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) - A curriculum that specified what students were expected to know at each grade level.

Race to the Top (RTT) - A four billion dollar grant opportunity that provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to support new approaches to school improvement (Race to the Top, Annual Performance Report, 2012).

School Climate - The extent to which the principal fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation among staff. It is the quality and character of school life. It is based on patterns of students, parents' and school personnel experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.
School Encouragement of Parental Engagement - The extent to which schools encourage parents to participate in their children’s education. This includes establishing an open line of communication with parents, encouraging parents to volunteer at school, and offering parental workshops.

Shared Leadership and Decision Making - The involvement of a school’s leadership team in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

Structured Operational Environment - A set of standard operating principles and routines established by the leadership of the school. The extent to which teachers believe the school is being run in an orderly and systematic routine that promotes student achievement.

Teacher Recognition - The extent to which the principal recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of the faculty and staff. It also focuses on the extent to which the school leader recognizes individual accomplishments.

Teacher Training - Providing teachers with professional development necessary for the successful execution of their duties.

Team Collaboration - The degree to which the school leader establishes strong lines of communication with and between faculty and staff. It involves the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, and information. It represents the extent to which the principal works toward whole-staff consensus in establishing school priorities and communicates these priorities to students and staff.
Research Limitations

The researcher acknowledges unavoidable limitations to the study. First, due to time constraints, the researcher utilized a limited sample. The researcher collected data on leadership characteristics from four elementary schools. Secondly, data collection was limited only to the certified staff and principals of each school. Parents, classified staff, and other building administrators were not included in the study. Lastly, the researcher is employed by the school system in which the four schools selected for the study are located. The researcher is currently employed at one of the schools selected for the study.

Research Delimitations

Delimiting factors controlled by the researcher include the choice of independent variables that will be used in the study. The study excluded independent variables that could conceivably affect student achievement in this population such as student socioeconomic status (SES), peer relations, and family support. Due to time constraints, four elementary schools within the same geographic region were chosen for data collection. A final delimitation of this study was the selection of AYP data as the indicator for student achievement as opposed to using ITBS test scores or benchmark data.

Research Assumptions

The researcher made the assumption that the respondents to the surveys and interview questions would give trustworthy answers to the questions. Encouragement of honesty, anonymity, and confidentiality was upheld. Participant names and school names
do not appear on any survey or interview documentation. Participants were volunteers who could withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications.

By selecting a mixed method design, the researcher made the assumption that integration of the qualitative and quantitative traditions within the same study could be seen as complementary to each other, therefore, adding to a greater in-depth understanding of student achievement.

Summary

The importance of excellent leadership has been prevalent since the one room school house emerged over 200 years ago. Today’s leaders face a complex array of challenges with the goal being student achievement. Unlike the School Agent that acted alone to secure the school, today’s leaders must rely on complex skills and human resources to create sustained achievement in our schools. Never before has the job of school leader been more important and never before has the job been more difficult. Elementary leaders are charged with the great responsibility of making sure that the youngest learners are equipped with the foundation that will prepare them to succeed in a diverse and ever changing world.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents findings in educational research directly related to the issue of student achievement. The section begins with an examination of research on the dependent variable, student achievement. The review of literature on student achievement is then followed by a review of select leadership variables that constitute the independent variables for this study. The variables reviewed in this section include:
(a) Monitoring Student Achievement, (b) School Climate, (c) Instructional Supervision, (d) Leadership Style, (e) Structured Operational Environment, (f) Teacher Recognition, (g) Teacher Training, (h) Team Collaboration, (i) Shared Leadership and Decision Making, and (j) School Encouragement of Parental Engagement.

Student Achievement

A plethora of research has provided evidence demonstrating improved academic achievement goals can be attained by effective school leaders attending to the needs of school organizations. A principal’s ability to successfully lead and manage a school is very important to the success of the students within that school (Pepper, 2010). Hallinger (2003) noted that a principal’s leadership style has an important effect on student academic success, on teacher morale, and on the environment of the school. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 years of research that
indicated that school leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement and provides guidance for experienced and aspiring administrators alike. Their findings yielded 21 responsibilities of the school leader. These findings were: affirmation, change agent, contingent rewards, communication, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement and knowledge of curriculum/instruction, and assessment, monitoring/evaluating, optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility. Similar to the findings of Marzano et al. (2005) are those of Cotton (2003). Cotton identified 25 similar categories of principal behavior that positively affect the dependent variables of student achievement, student attitudes, student behavior, teacher attitudes, teacher behaviors, and dropout rates. An important finding by Cotton in a study of 81 educational reports, noted that principal leadership does not affect student outcomes in a direct way, but leadership does affect student outcomes through the teachers.

**Monitoring Student Performance**

Holland (2009) conducted a qualitative study consisting of interviews and observations with seven principals. These principals represented two urban high schools, two urban middle schools and three elementary schools. Holland’s study analyzed views held by the principals concerning novice teachers need to learn and grow, and examined what these principals were doing to meet those needs. The principals’ responses addressed three issues: What novice teachers need to learn, how they learn, and what principals should do to help novice teachers grow professionally.
The principal saw classroom observation required for teacher evaluation as providing important feedback to a teacher about the quality of his teaching and classroom management. The principals saw observation of instruction as the best help that can be given to a novice teacher. The principals believed that observing what novice teachers are doing in their classrooms provided an opportunity to offer "tips" on effective teaching methods that the principals gained from their own teaching experience. Elementary principals described such tips in terms of particular instructional strategies.

The principals in the study saw themselves not only as the ones doing the observations and offering suggestions, but also as facilitators of a variety of observation options. Options provided by principals included visiting experienced teachers or arranging for a teacher needing help with a particular area to observe a teacher skilled in an area, and for teachers to observe a colleague using new materials or instructional strategies.

As a result of a review of almost 8,000 studies, Hattie (1992) concluded that the most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. According to Hattie, the simplest prescription for improving education must be dollops of feedback. Creating a system that provides feedback is at the core of the responsibility of monitoring/evaluating. As a result of his study of successful schools, Elmore (2000) concluded that superintendents and system-level staff were active in monitoring curriculum and instruction in classrooms and schools. Personal monitoring of school progress by the principal has been shown as a predictor of school effectiveness in most studies where it has been included as a variable (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). It is generally
held that effective principals routinely visit classrooms, participate in team-level meetings, and pay close attention to student performance within their school (Elmore, 2000). Further, it has been argued that personal interactions are the best way for a principal to effect positive change within a school (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Murphy (1990) found that effective principals utilized several monitoring strategies including (a) using assessment to inform instruction, (b) communicating information on student data to all stakeholders, and (c) constantly evaluating the instructional quality and academic progress of the school. Effective principals have also been shown to routinely use school- and student-level data to guide programmatic and instructional decisions (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

School Climate

The organizational literature in general has long spoken to the idea that a workplace culture that is open and trusting, and where the leadership is respected, is more likely to be successful in its mission (Russell, 2008). In a 2009 study examining school leadership, Matthew Ohlson (2009) discussed the role of school culture and its influence on student outcomes. It was noted that the relationship between effective teaching and effective leadership is reinforced in the vital role of school culture. A positive school culture may have a significant influence on the academic and social success of the students within the schools. When a school exhibits characteristics of a positive school culture, there are fewer suspensions, increased attendance rates, and increased student achievement on standardized test scores (Ohlson, 2009).
Interest in the construct of school climate increased when researchers began to show a relationship between positive school climate and academic achievement. Cohen (2006) underscored the significance of a positive school environment in “meeting the academic, emotional, and social needs of students” (p. 201). As a result of these findings, the U. S. Department of Justice and state agencies actively encouraged educators to foster emotionally, socially, and physically safe school communities (Cohen, 2006).

Recent increased media and legislative attention to school violence issues from the public and educators brought attention to safety concerns within the school environment. With the focus on student safety, school climate has been elevated to national attention and is now among top variables school staff and policymakers constantly evaluate (U. S. Department of Education, 2005). School climate influences not only the day-to-day experiences of the teachers and other on-site professionals; it impacts the quality and effectiveness of the educational experience for students.

According to Halawah (2005), an elementary school principal’s behavior influences students’ academic achievement. By modeling and promoting a positive instructional learning environment, the principal is able to influence positively the school’s climate and student achievement.

Black (2010) conducted a mixed-method research study consisting of 231 elementary teachers and 15 principals to determine the extent that servant leadership was correlated with perceptions of school climate to identify whether there was a relationship between principals’ and teachers’ perceived practice of servant leadership and of school climate. Upon completion of the quantitative data analysis, focus group interviews were
conducted with 10% of the sample. The data revealed a significant positive correlation between servant leadership and school climate. Servant leadership has a unique perspective on the position of the leader within the organization (Marzano et al., 2005). The servant leader is positioned at the center of the organization and is in contact with all aspects of the organization and the individuals within it. The central dynamic of servant leadership is nurturing those within the organization.

MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) conducted a study to investigate whether Exemplary, Recognized, and Acceptable schools differ in their school climates, as measured by the 10 dimensions of the Organizational Health Inventory. Significant differences were found on all 10 dimensions of the Organizational Health Inventory, with Exemplary schools out-performing Acceptable schools. The findings of this study suggested that students achieve higher scores on standardized tests in schools with healthy environments.

**Instructional Supervision**

Mitchell and Castle (2005) conducted a study to gain a better understanding of elementary school principals and instructional leadership. Data were collected through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and in-school observations. Three categories captured principals’ conceptualizations of instructional leadership: curriculum expertise, formal delivery of professional development, and informal culture building. The researchers explored how 12 elementary school principals understood and enacted instructional leadership within their schools. Their findings were that a majority of the principals equated the notion of instructional leader with that of “curriculum expert.”
The group viewed instructional leadership as having both formal and informal dimensions. The formal dimension consisted of conferences, workshops, and sessions in which experts deliver information to teachers, and they saw themselves as having limited capacity in this dimension. These principals felt they had a greater role to play in the informal dimension, where their role was to motivate others and to create a learning environment. The two overriding strategies observed were informal daily dialogue with teachers and the use of praise and encouragement with teachers and students.

In the school observations, the researchers found that a tacit agreement existed between the principals and their teachers; they would work together on the academic aspects of school life, but what the principals held important would take priority in the school. The researchers noted that instructional leadership, regardless of where responsibility was located, thrived when the principals gave priority to teaching and learning, but in schools where other agendas, such as relationship building or student conduct, were primary concerns, the instructional environment did not appear to have a high priority in school-wide discourse. It should be noted that every principal in the study, stressed that the testing agenda directed their instructional leadership initiatives.

Castle, Mitchell, and Gupta (2002) conducted a study on the instructional leadership in the educational work of school principals. One specific finding of their study was the principals' belief that they were not effective instructional leaders. In the investigation, many participating principals did not see themselves as the best person to take on that role, especially if they had been out of the classroom for a long time. The principals attached their concern to curriculum leadership rather than to a more general
understanding of instructional leadership. The study found that many of their actions were educational in nature even though the principals had not recognized them at such.

In terms of Instructional Supervision, the review of literature complied by Mitchell and Castle (2005) questioned whether school principals should take on an instructional leadership role. In response to this question, Sergiovanni (1992) contends that a community of teachers could serve as an effective alternative to a school principal. Marsh (2000) argues that principals should serve global rather than direct functions in instructional improvement. Marsh argues that the current focus on accountability, and the management necessary to meet accountability requirements, implies that personal attention to instructional leadership may not be an appropriate role for school principals to assume. He argues that principals could track results and build support, but should leave instructional leadership functions to teachers. By contrast, Hannay and Ross (1997) found that the direct involvement of principals in school improvement initiatives is absolutely crucial.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals defined instructional leadership as “leading learning communities.” This definition views principals as facilitators, guiding and encouraging an educational environment in which administrators and teachers work collaboratively to diagnose and solve the problems facing their schools (Nettles & Herrington, 2007).

Graczewski, Knudson, and Holtzman (2009) examined the relationship between the practice of site-based instructional leadership and the professional development that teachers received in the context of a district-wide reform effort in San Diego City.
Schools. Changes in the education landscape have focused attention on schools and classrooms as critical influences for improving student achievement. As a result, principals increasingly have been called to act as instructional leaders in their schools. The need for instructional leadership in schools was highlighted by the emergence of standards-based accountability and demands that principals take responsibility for student performance. One aspect of this new role for principals is that of ensuring that teachers have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and perfect their craft, on the assumption that deeper teacher knowledge leads to change in instruction, which, in turn, produces higher student achievement. If we are to improve student achievement, it is the adults' performance that has to get better (Darling-Hammond, Barber, LaFors, & Cohen, 2007). The relationship between site-based instructional leadership and the professional development that teachers receive is the focus of this article. Case studies were conducted over the course of 2.5 years at nine elementary schools. A research team visited each school six times. During each visit, the site visitors interviewed the principal, vice-principals, peer coaches, and up to 12 randomly selected teachers across the grade levels. Members of the research team also observed various professional development sessions. In addition to conducting case studies, the study team developed a teacher survey so that they could locate the findings within the context of the district as a whole, as well as quantify results with regard to leadership. Observations of professional development and other school activities, combined with interviews of other school staff, supplemented our understanding of the priorities for school leaders. The survey data showed a positive relationship between the principal's engagement in instructional
improvement and the focus of professional development on content and curriculum. The qualitative data of the case study supported a pattern similar to what observed in the survey data. The qualitative data revealed that in schools in which the principal was engaged in instructional improvement, they were more likely to see professional development that was focused on content and curriculum. Schools in which principals reported that classroom observations were important and a priority, it was found that these schools had professional development that was focused on standards-based curriculum and building teacher's knowledge. These principals also reported doing "continuous" walkthroughs and providing "immediate feedback to teachers. They also demonstrated effort to allocate resources to support staff positions and teacher release time to ensure professional development remained central to the mission. Several of these principals also had a keen sense of the instructional capacity and needs of their teachers. Also, it was observed at schools, in which the principal was able to foster a coherent vision, professional development was coherent and relevant. The survey and case study data provided evidence of a connection between practices of instructional leadership and characteristics of professional development were likely to lead to improved instruction. In particular, they found a connection between the coherence of a school's vision and goals and the coherence and relevance of their professional development opportunities.

The content knowledge of a principal or other leadership member impacts his or her ability to be a leader for instruction (Graczewski et al., 2009). Expertise can reside in various individuals, but that leaders must identify these sources of expertise and arrange
environments that facilitate interactive learning. To do this, leaders at all levels must know the subject matter, understand how students learn the material, and understand how teachers learn to teach the material. While conducting a case study, Graczewski et al. (2009) found a limitation in subject matter and pedagogical knowledge negatively impacted the principal’s influence as an instructional leader. The principal involved in the case study saw his role as a model to teachers about what it was to be a learner. The teaching staff, however, was looking for a leader with expertise, rather than a co-learner, and did not use the principal as an instructional resource. According to Graczewski et al. (2009), one teacher reported that the principal was kind and listened to the staff, but as far as being a big contributing factor to the classroom, no. When given the opportunity in interviews to name individuals they saw as leaders in the school 12 of 13 named other teachers. Only five teachers named the principal, and three specified that the principal did not provide leadership. As a result of limited principal capacity, the opportunity for an instructional leader to push the level of classroom instruction was missed (Graczewski et al., 2009). If principals are to lead schools, their legitimacy as leaders must come from classroom experience and command of instructional practice, not their mere designations as school leaders (Spillane, Hallett, & Diamond, 2003).

Stewart (2006) argued that the problem with instructional leadership is that in many schools the principal is not the educational expert. There are some principals who perceive their role to be administrative and, as such, they purposely distance themselves from the classroom environment. Hallinger (2003) notes that in many instances principals have less expertise than the teachers they supervise. This idea can be further
complicated by the fact that the principal’s authority is severely limited as he or she occupies a middle management position. In many school systems, the ultimate authority exists with administrators at the district level.

**Leadership Style**

Burns (1978) defines leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations— the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers. Burns delineates two basic types of leadership which are transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders approach followers with the intent to exchange one thing for another, whereas transformational leaders look for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engage the full person of the follower. Transformational leadership encompasses a change to benefit both the relationship and the resources of those involved. The result is a change in the level of commitment and the increased capacity for achieving mutual purposes. Later, Burns (2003), expanded on leadership in his book, *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness*. He believes that to understand leadership and change we must examine human needs and social change. He contends that leadership is a moral undertaking and a response to human wants as they are expressed in human values.

Kenneth Leithwood (1994) expanded the work of Burns (1978) to include the field of educational administration. Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994) defined transformational leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement.
Seven dimensions are used to describe transformational leadership (Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2000):

- Building school vision and establishing school goals;
- Providing intellectual stimulation;
- Offering individualized support;
- Modeling best practices and important organizational values;
- Demonstrating structures to foster participation in school decisions;
- Creating a productive school culture; and
- Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. (p. 114)

Leithwood (1994) believes that former models of transformational leadership neglected to include necessary transactional components which were fundamental to the stability of the organization. He added management dimensions which included: staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and community focus. Leithwood’s model assumes that the principal shares leadership with teachers and the model is grounded not on controlling or coordinating others, but instead on providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision (Stewart, 2006).

Leithwood et al. (2000) provided a synthesis of 34 published and unpublished empirical and formal case studies conducted in elementary and secondary schools up to about 1995. Twenty-one of the 34 studies related to specific dimensions of transformational leadership in schools; six of these were qualitative and 15 were quantitative studies. Out of these studies six were conducted on student effects. The outcome was measured on a teacher survey asking them to estimate the effects on
students of various practices being implemented in their classroom. These practices were often school-wide initiatives supported by school leaders. They found substantial evidence of high correlations between student effects and a direct measure of student achievement.

Researchers have suggested that transformational leadership is an important aspect of effective schools (Chin, 2007). Chin conducted a meta-analysis that synthesized 28 independent studies to investigate the overall relationship between transformational school leadership and school outcomes. His study found that transformational school leadership does have positive effects on teacher job satisfaction, school effectiveness perceived by teachers, and student achievement.

In contrast with the views of Leithwood (1994) on transformational leadership, Gronn (1995) outlines numerous shortcomings of transformational leadership: (a) a lack of empirically documented case examples of transformational leaders, (b) a narrow methodological base, (c) no causal connection between leadership and desired organizational outcomes, and (d) the unresolved question as to whether leadership is learnable.

Marks and Printy (2003) state that there have been few studies that empirically studied how transformational leadership and instructional leadership complement each other and contribute to student learning. They conducted a quantitative nonexperimental study that investigated the concept of school leadership and attempted to measure how leadership affected school performance. The relationship of transformational leadership and shared instructional leadership was studied in relation to the quality of teaching and
learning. Marks and Printy found that when transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist, the influence on school performance is substantial.

Structured Operational Environment

In the context of schools, Nunnelley, Whaley, Mull, and Holt (2003) define order as clear boundaries and rules for both students and faculty. In an analysis of successful schools in a large metropolitan area, Supovitz (2002) identified order as a necessary condition. He stated that groups need structures that provide them with the leadership, time, resources, and incentives to engage in instructional work.

Nettles and Herrington (2007) reexamined the direct effects of leadership on student achievement. One of the most fundamental responsibilities, cited in the article, is that of a school principal to provide a safe and orderly educational environment that allows for effective teaching and learning. Researchers have identified several factors of a safe and orderly environment that can be affected by principal behavior, including (a) the setting and communication of behavioral standards, (b) implementing effective processes to ensure that behavioral policies are applied consistently for all students, (c) assuring that discipline is used consistently and fairly, and (d) dispersing the responsibility for discipline throughout the school.

Sergiovanni (2007) described transactional leadership in education as leadership in which the principal maintains a tightly structured organizational operation. The principal who espouses this type of leadership style manages the organization with mechanical precision. The environment is clean, orderly, and predictable, with set routines and procedures. Maintaining an orderly, safe, and healthy environment has been
shown to positively influence student learning. Transactional leadership applied to this aspect of education should provide the positive environment for effective teaching and academic success for students.

**Teacher Recognition**

Affirmation is the extent to which the leader recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures Marzano et al. (2005). Kouzes and Posner's (1995) leadership practice of encouraging the heart, highlights the importance of leaders' individual and group contributions to the organization's accomplishments.

Encouragement through the celebration of successes, big and small, motivates people to continue to take risks and remain committed to the organization's goals. Such genuine care provides people with the spirit to overcome insurmountable obstacles, which is synonymous to the variable of contingent awards as identified in the McRel study (Marzano et al., 2005). Nunnelley et al. (2003) explain that the administrative leader must be proactive in recognizing the varying abilities of staff members.

Andrews (2011) calls recognition a very rewarding experience for an excellent classroom teacher and his or her students. Recognition for teachers builds off of some of the well known extrinsic and intrinsic motivational theories. Herzberg’s theory of worker motivation (as cited in Andrews, 2011) identified two levels of motivations for workers. The two levels were hygiene and motivation. The hygiene factors included pay, working conditions, relationships with co-workers, competence of supervisors, and company policies. Herzberg pointed out that these factors may not ensure that a worker will be motivated to any high degree. However, the motivational factors come into play and must
be satisfied. These factors include: achievement, responsibility or autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for advancement.

In his research, Andrews (2011) cites two studies that highlight the importance of teacher recognition. The first study conducted by Scherer in 1983, presented findings on teachers done by Teachers College at Columbia University on why experienced or veteran teachers had positive feelings about their work as teachers. The research concluded that receiving respect, from the principal encouraged positive feelings. The second study which was conducted by Amabile and Kramer in 2011, viewed diary entries of hundreds of employees of different organizations in the United States. The study found that clear goals and autonomy can uplift workers. This included encouragement and respect and collegiality by fellow workers and supervisors.

**Teacher Training**

Fullan (2001) explained that a component of school capacity was the extent to which schools garner technical resources. He suggested that instructional improvement requires additional resources such as materials, equipment, space, time, and access to new ideas and to expertise. One of the most frequently mentioned resources important to the effective functioning of a school is the professional development opportunities for teachers (Marzano et al., 2005).

Professional development describes the degree to which teachers value continuous personal development and school-wide improvement. Teachers remain knowledgeable about current and effective practices from workshops, seminars, colleagues, observations, and other professional resources (Ohlson, 2009).
Suber (2012) conducted a mixed methods study on characteristics of effective principals in high-poverty schools. One characteristic was the role taken in the planning of professional development. Professional development is vital to high-performing, high-poverty schools. It targets specific areas of needs for teachers to tailor instruction to the specific needs of their students. As school leaders, principals must provide teachers with effective professional development opportunities. These enhance teacher knowledge, skills, and outlook on the direction of the school in regard to internal structure, trusting relationships among staff, and expertise in instruction.

**Team Collaboration**

Communication in organizations has a broader purpose than simply transmitting information; rather, communication is an interpretative process of coordinating activities, creating understanding, and building acceptance of organizational goals. According to Bass (1990), effective leadership cannot be in an organization without an adequate system of intercommunication.

Giese, Slate, Brown, and Tejeda-Delgado (2009) conducted a study of 56 female high school principals to obtain their views regarding leadership practices, which they believed had been beneficial in their position as high school principals. "What are the views of female high school principals concerning individual traits that have facilitated their success as high school principals?" Principals responded to 13 individual traits. The highest rated individual traits were communication skills, trustworthiness, honesty and sincerity, and good listening skills.
Shared Leadership and Decision Making

Heck and Hallinger (1999) stated the following:

By way of illustration, the preoccupation with documenting if principals make a difference has subtly reinforced the assumption that school leadership is synonymous with the principal. Scholars have therefore, largely ignored other sources of leadership within the school such as assistant principals and senior teachers. (p. 141)

In the book The Essentials of School Leadership, Davies (2005) discusses Starrat's point of view on school leadership. Starrat indicates that there is a paucity of research that examines the contributions of non-principal leaders in the school. For example, in many schools people such as department heads and counselors provide invaluable leadership within the school and in the community. For the most part, research has focused on the principal as the source of power and leadership (Stewart, 2006).

The National Association of Secondary Principals (2004) report on high school reform, "Breaking Ranks II," identified collaborative leadership as one of several key strategies necessary for school reform. Collaborative leadership in not strictly defined in the report, but is referenced in discussions of: the principal providing clear vision, establishment of a structured means of involvement across constituency groups, partnerships with higher education, and decision-making in accord with democratic values.
Blase (2004) summarized research findings on instructional leadership and report that instructional leadership blending emphasis on supervision, staff development and curriculum development has been long accepted as important, but that “until recently little knowledge of what behaviors comprise good instructional leadership has been available in the literature” (p. 11). Blase conclude that “successful supervisory practice should no longer emphasize control and competition among teachers…” (p. 188). Rather, it should advocate for teacher empowerment and teacher leadership with shared governance based on a democratic model.

A study conducted by Mitchell and Castle (2005) highlighted Blase and Blase’s (1999) contention that the primary strategy for principal’s instructional leadership is to promote professional dialogue among the instructional staff. In their study, teachers highlighted methods used by principals to promote such dialogue: “making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions from teachers, giving praise” (p. 367).

Along a similar line, Mitchell and Castle (2005) talk about the study of Grimmett (1996) who identified the roles that educational leaders should play in collaborative inquiry: accepting tension and dealing with conflict, modeling collegiality and experimentation, focusing teach talk on action, helping teachers to frame their inquiry, and connecting action with student learning.

Russell (2008) conducted a qualitative study exploring the factors relating to enthusiastic and engaged educational leadership. Russell interviewed leaders in education at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level. Concepts that emerged
from the phenomenological study concluded that enthusiasm and engagement with work was related to a collaborative leadership style, a strong work ethic, and alignment of personal and organizational missions. Collaborating with others seems to be a key factor for educational leaders in finding joy at work. Working collaboratively to help those with whom one works achieve their goals and the organization’s goals was mentioned frequently as a benefit of their leadership work.

Pepper (2010) argued that the current use of test scores to demonstrate accountability without guidance or support for capacity building may inadvertently be creating a situation in which principals felt forced to take full responsibility for the academic programs and processes of the school. Lezotte and McKee (2006) maintain that this type of coercive management in which the administration make decisions without the input from others is ineffective and difficult to sustain for any length of time. Pepper (2010) further argues for improving curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of students would be the implementation of meaningful and sustained professional development for school and faculty and staff, focused on implementing shared decision-making processes in the school. Research supports the concept of shared decision-making as a positive force in school improvement efforts.

Elmore (2004) advocates that school faculty and staff should be involved in decision-making related to instruction and curriculum development because they have the most knowledge about the needs of the students in their school. Based on their knowledge, experience, and skills, the faculty and staff should be able to make academic decisions related to course content, appropriate methods used in teaching the content,
expectations of students, classroom structure and makeup, as well as assessment and evaluation practices. The knowledge and expertise of this group should not be overlooked.

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) conducted a study to estimate the impact of collective, or shared, leadership on key teacher variable and on student achievement. Evidence included 2,570 teacher responses from 90 elementary and secondary schools in which four or more teachers completed useable surveys. Student achievement data in language and math averaged over 3 years were acquired through school websites. The findings showed that collective leadership explained a significant proportion of variation in student achievement across schools. Higher achieving schools awarded leadership influence to all school members and other stakeholders to a greater degree than that of lower achieving schools. These differences were most significant in relation to the leadership exercised by school teams, parents, and students. Principals were awarded the highest levels of influence in schools at all levels of achievement.

School Encouragement of Parental Engagement

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 2004) defined parental involvement as: the participation of parents in regular two-way communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including assisting their child’s learning, being actively involved in their child’s education at school, serving as full partners in their child’s education, and being included in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
A school leader must be knowledgeable of the laws surrounding parental involvement. The U. S. Department of Education gives additional funding to schools that serve large populations of low income and at risk students; these school are referred to as Title One Schools. Title I schools are required to create a parental involvement policy. Parental Involvement policies guide the ways in which schools encourage parents to take a more active role in education. In addition to understanding the requirements of Title I, principals must understand the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). IDEIA supports a parent-professional collaboration in the decision-making process for the education of students with disabilities. Parents are guaranteed rights in the individual education plan (IEP) process. Acting ethically and within the constraints of the law is of utmost importance for a school principal. Rapp and Duncan (2012) presented a principal's guide to parental involvement in schools, which was endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration. Their article reiterated the importance of the principal as a knowledgeable promoter of parental involvement. Their article stressed the principal as the driving force in the creation of a parent friendly school environment. The school leader needs to begin with a mindset which focuses on a collaborative democratic leadership style. To implement this leadership style, the principal should provide opportunities for ideas and opinions to be heard. Parents should be included in decisions that impact their child. Once an atmosphere of collaboration has been initiated, parents should see positive results from their involvement.

Batt (2011) conducted a study to investigate the impact of parental involvement on student motivation in third grade special education. The data collected indicated that
students felt more motivated when their parents took an active role in their child’s education. Also, parents are willing to participate in school activities if they feel welcomed and valued from the classroom teacher.

The responsibility of community refers to the extent to which the leader is an advocate and a spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders. Cotton (2003) affirms the importance of this factor, explaining that the principal must have a willingness and an ability to communicate to individuals both inside and outside the school. Stakeholder involvement is another component of effective leadership. It is the principal’s ability to garner outside resources toward the improvement of the school. Researchers consistently cite community/stakeholder involvement as related to high-achieving schools. To this end, effective principals have been shown to (a) build the leadership capacity of teachers and staff, (b) encourage team learning focused on school wide goals, (c) use organizational flexibility to enhance effectiveness, and (d) distribute leadership responsibilities throughout the school.

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth examination of literature as it relates to student achievement. The chapter examined leadership characteristics that may have an effect on student achievement. In relation to student achievement, the review of literature presented varying points of view on the extent to which many of the select leadership characteristics may or may not impact student achievement.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the dissertation. The researcher sets to identify leadership characteristics in select elementary schools that achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years. The relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable is discussed within the chapter. The chapter presents definitions of the dependent and independent variables. The researcher investigated 10 key elements which may have an affect student achievement.

Definition of Variables and Other Terms

Dependent Variable

Student Achievement is the dependent variable of this study. As it relates to the study, student achievement is defined as an elementary school achieving AYP for at least two consecutive years on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency test for the 2010 and 2011 school years.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study include: Monitoring Student Performance, School Climate, Instructional Supervision, Leadership Style, Structured Operational Environment, Teacher Recognition, Teacher Training, Team Collaboration,
Shared Leadership and Decision Making, and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement. These terms are defined below.

**Monitoring Student Performance** is defined as the extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school instructional practices in terms of their impact on student achievement; the extent to which the principal understands how well students are performing based on student data and assessments.

**School Climate** is defined as the extent to which the principal fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation among staff. It is the quality and character of school life and is based on patterns of students, parents, and school personnel experiences of school life; it reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

**Instructional Supervision** is defined as the extent to which a principal displays knowledge of the curriculum and monitors and provides feedback on classroom instruction. It is the degree to which the leader is aware of best practices in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**Leadership Style** is defined as teacher perceptions of the traits a principal uses to impact teacher effectiveness, school climate, and student achievement.

**Structured Operational Environment** is defined as a set of standard operating principles and routines established by the leadership of the school; the extent to which teachers believe the school is being run in an orderly and systematic routine that promotes student achievement.
Teacher Recognition is defined as the extent to which the principal recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of the faculty and staff. It also focuses on the extent to which the school leader recognizes individual accomplishments.

Teacher Training is defined as providing teachers with professional development necessary for the successful execution of their duties.

Team Collaboration is defined as the degree to which the school leader establishes strong lines of communication with and between faculty and staff. It involves the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, and information. It represents the extent to which the principal works toward whole-staff consensus in establishing school priorities and communicates these priorities to students and staff.

Shared Leadership and Decision Making is defined as the involvement of a school’s leadership team in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.

School Encouragement of Parental Engagement is defined as the extent to which schools encourage parents to participate in their children’s education. This includes establishing an open line of communication with parents, encouraging parents to volunteer at school, and offering parental workshops.

Relationship among the Variables

In this study, select leadership characteristics are theorized to have an influence on student achievement (see Figure 1). The idea of educational leadership qualities impacting student achievement was documented in the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) study (Burns, 1978).
Independent Variables

- Monitoring Student Performance
- School Climate
- Instructional Supervision
- Leadership Style
- Structured Operational Environment
- Teacher Recognition
- Teacher Training
- Team Collaboration
- Shared Leadership and Decision Making
- School Encouragement of Parental Engagement

Dependent Variable

Student Achievement as measured by two consecutive years of achieving AYP status for the 2010 and 2011 school years

Figure 1. Relationship among the Variables

The researchers gave educational leaders a framework of 21 leadership skills that are important for a school leader. What makes McRel's 21 leadership responsibilities so important is that it signifies and presents researched data and practices that confirm that
school leadership can actually have a noticeable impact on student achievement. While most educational research focuses on the effect that teachers, instruction, curriculum, and assessment have on student learning, McRel’s 21 leadership responsibilities actually places the actions of school administrators into the equation of promoting effective reform and improvement for students (Fundamentals of Curriculum, 2012).

Further documentation of leadership qualities impacting student achievement can be seen in the work of Kathleen Cotton. Cotton (2003) identified 26 essential traits and behaviors of effective principals based on 81 key research articles from the last 20 years. She found that principals in high achieving schools were effective in establishing safe and orderly environments, goals focused on high levels of student learning, high expectations of students, self communication and interaction, interpersonal support, community outreach and involvement, shared leadership and staff empowerment, instructional leadership, classroom observation and feedback to teachers, teacher autonomy, support of risk taking, and professional development opportunities and resources.

Since the development of transformational leadership by Burns (1978), the theory has been useful for understanding leadership in organizations. Considered the founder of the modern leadership theory, Burns defined leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent values and the motivation of both leaders and followers. Within his definition of leadership, he saw transformational leadership as focused on change. According to Burns, transformational leaders form “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert
leaders into moral agents” (p. 4). Burns focused the relationship between the leader and the “followers.” When the relationship focuses on the continuing pursuit of higher purposes, change for the better occurs both in the purposes and resources of those involved and in the relationship itself. Whereas the transformational leader plays a pivotal role in precipitating change, followers and leaders are bound together in the transformational process (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Building on the work of Burns (1978), Leithwood (1994) developed the transformational model of school leadership. According to Liontos (1992), Leithwood found that transformational leaders pursued three fundamental goals:

1. Helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture. Transformational leaders involve staff in collaborative goal setting, reduce teacher isolation, use bureaucratic mechanisms to support cultural changes, share leadership with others by delegating power, and actively communicate the school’s norms and beliefs.

2. Transformational leaders foster teacher development. Leithwood (1994) found that teachers’ motivation for development is enhanced when they internalize goals for professional growth.

3. Transformational leaders help teachers solve problems more effectively. He found that transformational leaders used practices primarily to help staff members work smarter, not harder. Believing that transformational leaders shared a genuine belief that their staff members as a group could develop better solutions than the principal could alone.
In their research on transformational leadership, Marks and Printy (2003) found that Leithwood and colleagues (1994) described and assessed the effectiveness of transformational leadership in schools. They distinguished nine functions of transformational leadership clustered in three areas. The first area of being mission centered means developing a widely shared vision for the school, building consensus about school goals and priorities. Secondly, Leithwood found that Transformational leadership was performance centered. The performance centered area focuses on high performance expectations, providing individualized support and supplying intellectual stimulation to the school staff. Lastly, finding that transformational leadership was culture centered means that the leadership models organizational values, strengthening productive school culture, building collaborative cultures, and creating structures for participation in school decisions.

Selected theorists point to the idea of shared leadership. Unless there is a radical change in the structure of school leadership, few schools will be able to rise to the challenge of enabling all students to meet high standards, according to Anrig Professor of Educational leadership, Richard Elmore (Marzano et al., 2005). With accountability standards creating more public scrutiny than ever before, educational leaders must focus their efforts on instruction if they are to thrive and survive in the current conditions. Elmore’s solution is an organization that distributes the responsibility for leadership. Although the principal might not have the time, energy, or disposition to master the extant knowledge base regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment, others within a school might. In short, Elmore calls for the use of distributed models of leadership as
opposed to models that look to the principal to provide all leadership functions for the school (Marzano et al., 2005).

Copland (2003) suggested that the important work of improving schools must be accomplished collectively by those at the school level, and implies a change in school culture. The conceptual beginnings of distributed leadership trace back to organizational theory developed in the 1960s. McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y assumptions about human motivation were fundamental to a whole generation of scholarship on educational administration. McGregor suggested that Theory X leaders view people as lazy, work avoidant, and deviously opportunistic; and so have a fundamental distrust of employees, leading to tight controls, close supervision, and heavily centralized authority with little organizational decision making. Theory Y leaders, by contrast view people as basically honest, industrious, more inclined to delegate authority, share responsibility, and enable employee participation in making various organizational decisions (Copland, 2003).

Summary

This chapter examined the specified definitions of terms applicable to the study. The variables in this study were selected to determine if an influence exist on sustained achievement in select elementary schools. Additionally, the chapter provided the theoretical framework for the research. The explanation of variables, definitions pertinent to the research and diagram of the theoretical framework are included to further classify the basis for the research.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if select leadership characteristics impacted student achievement in select elementary schools. This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research design, description of setting, participant selection, instrumentation, and data collection procedures for the use of mixed methods methodology.

Research Design

The researcher chose a mixed method design to explore student achievement and select leadership characteristics. Mixed method was the chosen design because it combined the strength of both the quantitative and qualitative method. According to Creswell (2009), its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. It can be argued that quantitative research is weak in understanding the context or setting in which people talk. The voices of participants are not directly heard in quantitative research. On the other hand, qualitative research is seen as deficient because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher, ensuing
biases, and the difficulty in generalizing findings to a large group because of the limited number of participants studied. Quantitative research, it is argued, does not have these weaknesses. By combining both methods, the researcher aimed to provide a complete picture of select leadership characteristics and student achievement.

The mixed method design chosen by the researcher was the concurrent triangulation mixed method. The design is a one phase design in which the researcher implemented quantitative and qualitative methods during the same time frame and with equal weight. It involved the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher could best understand the research problem. The two data sets were analyzed separately in a results section, and then the two sets of results were merged together during the interpretation or discussion phase. This design was chosen because of its efficient design of simultaneous data collection and the utilization of techniques traditionally associated with qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Description of the Setting**

The school system selected by the researcher is located in the Southern Region of the United States. The school system was established in 1873. The large suburban public school system sits in metropolitan Atlanta and educates approximately 100,000 students. Four Title I elementary schools, within the school system were selected by the researcher as a focal point of the study. School A has the largest student enrollment of the schools included in the study. Due to subsequent school closings, the school population is approximately 870 students. The population of School A is predominately
African American. The school achieved Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2010 and 2011 school years. School B opened in the late 1960s and serves approximately 580 students. Located within a subdivision in the southern part of the school district, 90% of this school’s population is considered economically disadvantaged. The school achieved Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2010 and 2011 school years. School C, has the lowest enrollment of all the schools, with a total of 386 students. Of these students, 97% are African American and 95% are considered economically disadvantaged. The school achieved AYP for the 2010 school year, but failed to achieve AYP for the 2011 school year. School D is located in the southern district of the school system. It has approximately 576 students. The school which is situated amongst several apartment complexes has a population that is 98% African American and 80% of these students are labeled as economically disadvantaged. The school achieved Adequate Yearly Progress for the 2010 school year, but failed to achieve AYP for the 2011 school year.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher accessed CRCT/AYP data from the LEA’s website. This data were used to determine which elementary schools achieved or did not achieve AYP status for two consecutive years. The researcher then used clustered purposeful sampling to select four schools within the same geographic location that met the criteria. The four schools selected, shared a similar geographic location, socio-economic status, and student demographic population. This sampling method allowed the researcher more valid comparison of schools that are similar environmentally and geographically. The certified staff of each elementary school was selected to complete the survey. The population of
certified staff from the four selected elementary schools had an equal chance of completing the survey.

**Working with Human Subjects**

The researcher maintained the integrity of confidentiality of the participants and survey instrument responses. Surveys did not include the participant’s name or school name. Completed surveys are being kept in a locked file cabinet. The researcher completed the Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board requirements for working with human subjects.

**Instrumentation**

The quantitative and qualitative instruments that were used in the study were developed by the researcher. To ensure instrument validity, the instruments were developed, critiqued, and tested for face validity, under the direction of the researcher’s advisor and dissertation committee. The instruments were also critiqued by the Human Subjects Committee of Clark Atlanta University to ensure instrument validity and clarity of instructions and items. The variables were subject to Item-to-Scale correlation analysis to test for construct validity (see Appendix A), and the Cronbach’s Alpha was used to test for reliability (see Appendix B).

The quantitative data collection instrument was a survey. The survey was designed to collect data on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics. The questions on the survey were closed-ended items and were structured using the Likert format. The survey items were derived from the independent variables in the study. Each survey item was clustered under the independent variable that it represented. In the
survey, five choices were provided for every statement. The choices ranged from highly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, and highly agree. The Likert survey was the selected survey type, enabling participants to answer the survey easily.

The qualitative data collection instrument was a leadership questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of ten open-ended questions that were discussed during an interview with each principal. Open-ended questions provided more depth and a greater understanding of leadership characteristics and student achievement.

**Participants/Location of Research**

Certified staff from the four selected elementary schools in local educational agency (LEA) that taught at each respective school during the 2010 - 2011 school years were asked to participate in the survey. Survey administration took place at each respective school during a faculty meeting, with an agreed upon time chosen by the school administrator. Each principal of the four selected schools participated in an individual interview with the researcher. The interviews took place in the principal’s office. The principal and researcher decided on an appropriate time to conduct each interview.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Using the concurrent triangulation design, the researcher obtained qualitative data (Principal interviews) and quantitative data (teacher surveys) concurrently. Data collection took place for approximately one month. Data collections began approximately during the week of January 17, 2013 and ended approximately during the week of February 18, 2013. During this time frame, the researcher visited each
elementary school, spoke with the principal about the research, obtained informed
consent, and distributed surveys and conducted principal interviews (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Data Collection Model**

Teachers' perception of leadership characteristics were collected through the
administration of a survey to the teachers. School-based CRCT results and Adequate
Yearly Progress data were also collected through the district's website. The method of
administering the survey was the self-administered approach. The surveys were
administered to the certified staff of each respective school. The researcher distributed
surveys during a faculty meeting at the discretion of the principal. Each school received
a different color coded survey to complete. This was done to keep surveys separate and
aligned with each principal interview. School A received yellow colored surveys, School B received green colored surveys, School C received pink colored surveys, and School D received blue surveys. Surveys were collected by the researcher at the conclusion of each faculty meeting.

Principals of each selected school were interviewed separately to gauge leadership styles and characteristics they implement in managing their schools. Interviews were open-ended and tape recorded to ensure accuracy. Interviews occurred at an agreed upon time between the researcher and principal.

**Statistical Applications (Quantitative)**

The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The program provided the necessary tools to analyze the responses that were gathered from the survey instrument. The survey instrument was further tested for validity and reliability after data collection using item-to-scale correlation for validity (see Appendix A) and Cronbach Alpha for reliability (see Appendix B).

**Description of Data Analysis Methods (Qualitative)**

Once principal interviews concluded, the researcher began the data analysis process. The process started with the researcher listening to each tape recorded interview multiple times. Subsequently, the researcher jotted reflective notes about key insights that were discovered during this data preparation time. Once the researcher was familiar with the data, the researcher transcribed interview notes and tape recordings. The researcher then cross-check typed interview data with taped recordings and interview notes. This was done to make sure that data did not contain any obvious mistakes made
during the typing process. This method of cross-checking ensured reliability of the data. Through a method called member checking, each principal received a typed copy of their interview responses via email. This method of member checking ensured validity, allowing each participant to check the final copy of their responses for accuracy.

After transcribing the data, the recordings from the interviews, the data were formatted for coding. Each principal’s response to the interview questions was carefully read and coded to note similarities, differences, and emerging themes. The coding of responses was done manually. To keep the researcher’s data organized, a codebook was utilized. A codebook is a compilation of the codes, their content descriptions, and a brief example for reference. To ensure reliability of the coding process, the researcher entered into an intercoder agreement in which a member of the researcher’s dissertation committee cross checked codes (see Figure 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Sample Method of Qualitative Data Analysis
Summary

This chapter examined the design of the research. The researcher used the concurrent triangulation method to determine if select leadership characteristics impacted student achievement in select school. Participants in the research completed a 46-item survey instrument, which was designed to gather data on selected variables. Additionally, the researcher conducted four principal interviews for the qualitative portion of the study. The researcher analyzed the collected data and prepared the findings, which are further explained throughout the following chapters of the study.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to determine if select leadership characteristics impacted student achievement in select elementary schools. The data analysis process was based on the research questions derived from the theoretical framework which concentrated on determining the relationship among the independent variables: (a) Monitoring Student Performance, (b) School Climate, (c) Instructional Supervision, (d) Leadership Style, (e) Structured Operational Environment, (f) Teacher Recognition, (g) Teacher Training, (h) Team Collaboration, (i) Shared Leadership, and (j) School Encouragement of Parental Engagement. The dependent variable is Student Achievement. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, respectively.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher distributed surveys to four select elementary schools within the same local educational agency, to gauge teacher perceptions of select leadership characteristics and sustained student achievement. The researcher collected a total of 100 surveys from certified teachers employed at each respective school during the 2010 and 2011 school years. The researcher collected 29 surveys from School A, 26 surveys from School B, 22 surveys from School C, and 23 surveys from School D. The survey consisted of 46 questions representing independent variables: Monitoring Student
performance (survey items 1-5), School Climate (survey items 6-11), Instructional Supervision (survey items 12-16), Leadership Style (survey items 17-20), Structured Operational Environment (survey items 21-25), Teacher Recognition (survey items 26-29), Teacher Training (survey items 30-34), Team Collaboration (survey items 35-38), Shared Leadership and Decision Making (survey items 39-42), and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement (survey items 43-46). The survey items were developed and measured utilizing a Likert-scale with the following response options: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Summary analysis was conducted utilizing SPSS software.

With regard to the statement of the problem and in accordance with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Monitoring Student Performance?

From Table 2 it can be seen that there is no relationship between Student Achievement and Monitoring Student Performance. The table shows the coefficient of .086 and the level of significance as .397; this is above the acceptable level of .05, indicating no significant relationship.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Climate?

From Table 2 it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Climate. The table shows the coefficient of .203 and the level of significance as .043; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Climate.
Table 2

**Correlations: AYP Status and Independent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AYP Status</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MonStuPer</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchClim</td>
<td>.203*</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InstrucSup</td>
<td>.220*</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadStyl</td>
<td>.266**</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StrucOpEnv</td>
<td>.302**</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>100</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AYP Status</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MonStuPer</td>
<td>.274**</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchClim</td>
<td>.210*</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>InstrucSup</td>
<td>.232*</td>
<td>.020</td>
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<td>LeadStyl</td>
<td>.276**</td>
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<tr>
<td>StrucOpEnv</td>
<td>.328**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Instructional Supervision?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Instructional Supervision. The table shows the coefficient of .220 and the level of significance as .028; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Instructional Supervision.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Leadership Style?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Leadership Style. The table shows the coefficient of .266 and the level of significance as .007; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Leadership Style.
RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Structured Operational Environment?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Structured Operational Environment. The table shows the coefficient of .302 and the level of significance as .002; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Structured Operational Environment.

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Recognition?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Recognition. The table shows the coefficient of .274 and the level of significance as .006; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Recognition.

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Training?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Training. The table shows the coefficient of .210 and the level of significance as .036; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Teacher Training.

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Team collaboration?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Team Collaboration. The table shows the coefficient of .232
and the level of significance as .020; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Team Collaboration.

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Shared leadership and decision making?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Shared Leadership and Decision making. The table shows the coefficient of .276 and the level of significance as .005; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and Shared Leadership and Decision making.

RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement?

From Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement. The table shows the coefficient of .328 and the level of significance as .001; this is below the acceptable level of .05, indicating a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement.

From Table 3, the Regression Statistics model shows that the independent variable School Encouragement of Parental Engagement was the most predictable. The School Encouragement of Parental Engagement variable shows a level of significance as .001, this is below the acceptable level of .05. This indicates a significant relationship between Student Achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement.
Table 3

Regression Statistics - Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>11.812 1 98 .001</td>
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</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), ParentEngage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unstandardized</td>
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<td>Models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ParentEngage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: AYP Status

In the regression model, School Encouragement of Parental Engagement was the most predictable, in fact, no other independent variable was found in the regression to have a significant influence on student achievement. School Encouragement of Parental Engagement was the only independent variable found to have a significant influence on student achievement.

Qualitative Data Analysis

As a result of the data collection method (interviews), the qualitative data were analyzed by noting emergent themes and trends. The researcher conducted four face-to-face individual interviews. The interviews were conducted with the principals of each
elementary school included in the study. These interviews were conducted with four African American principals, two male and two female. Principal A is female and has 14 years of experience as a Principal. Principal B is male and has 10 years of experience. Principal C is female and has 8 years of experience as a Principal. Principal D is male and has 4 years of experience as a principal (see Figure 4). The individual interviews were conducted in each principal’s office and lasted between 20 to 25 minutes and were guided by a set of questions that related to the independent variables.

![Principal Years of Experience Bar Chart]

**Figure 4.** Principal Years of Experience

Qualitative analysis involved the researcher jotting notes and using a tape recorder with the consent of each participant. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed, to determine the emergent themes. Personal interviews were conducted and coded for analytical interpretation. The researcher discovered the emergence of several themes after coding each interview question. The following themes emerged: (Q1) Data Meetings-DM, (Q2) Safe Climate- SC, (Q3) Collaboration- C, (Q4) Working Together (WT), (Q5) Structure-ST and Focus- FC, (Q6) Personal Notes- PN,
The researcher presented the following questions to guide the interview.

Abbreviated principal responses accompany each interview question (IQ = Interview Question):

IQ-1: As the school leader, how do you monitor the academic performance of the students in your school?

When principals were asked about monitoring student performance, the utilization of data rooms to conduct data meetings (DM) was an emerging theme from principals A, B, and C. Principal A noted, “I created a data room that is teacher and grade level student specific because it informs us how we are performing as a grade level” (personal communication, January 28, 2013). Principal B stated, “We have data team meetings with all with all grade levels” (personal communication, January 30, 2013). Principal C noted, “Weekly RTI meetings during teachers planning and discuss classroom data and individual student data” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Principal D expressed "leading a collaborative team to a shared vision of educational improvement" (personal communication, February 5, 2013).

IQ-2: How would you characterize the climate of your school?

A safe climate (SC) was the emerging theme. Principals B, C, and D felt their climates were safe. Principal B stated, “I would describe the climate as improving; I do feel that it is a safe school” (personal communication, January 30, 2013). Principal C expressed, “You need that safe feeling for students” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Principal D noted, “I would characterize the climate of our school as safe and
orderly, with positive school morale” (personal communication, February 5, 2013).

Principal A felt "the climate of the school was warm and genuine" (personal communication, January 28, 2013).

**IQ-3:** As the school leader, how would you describe your instructional supervisory procedures/practices?

Principal A felt collaboration was the best approach in terms of instructional supervisory procedures and practices. Conducting walk-throughs on a weekly basis was seen as important. Principal B expressed that it was important to rely on the Assistant Principal and Instructional Coach for instructional supervisory procedures and practices. Principal C felt a hands-on approach was best. Principal D felt a collaborative team was important for educational improvement. Collaboration (C) was the emerging theme.

**IQ-4:** Describe your leadership style(s). How does your leadership style foster student achievement?

Working together (WT) was seen as an emergent theme. Principal A believed in practicing democratic leadership. Democratic leadership draws its strength from the team members, allowing them to voice their views and opinions. Principal B varied leadership style with the situation. Principal B believed in working together, but also knowing when to make the necessary decision. Principal C described herself as a relationship leader, in that, “Teachers know that there are times when they can and cannot be a part of decision making” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Principal D believed in leading by example.

**IQ-5:** In your opinion, how does a structured operational environment enhance student achievement?
Structure (ST) and focus (FC) were the emergent themes of this question. Principal A noted that when students experience learning in a structured environment they are more successful academically because there are no surprises and there is clear understanding of expectations of routine. Principal B stated, “Students cannot learn in chaos” (personal communication, January 30, 2013). Therefore, if structured appropriately teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn. Principal C noted: “When a program is very orderly and structured, it strongly enhancing student achievement, students can then focus on the content” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Principal D answered the question, “I believe students cannot learn in a state of chaos. If the environment is controlled and calm, students will ultimately be more successful” (personal communication, February 5, 2013).

**IQ-6: How do you recognize the accomplishments of your teachers/staff?**

Principals A and B felt personal notes were important ways to acknowledge teachers for their accomplishments. Principal C believed in verbal acknowledgements. Principal D noted voting for teacher of the year as the method for acknowledging teacher accomplishments. Personal notes (PN) were seen as the emergent theme of question 6.

**IQ-7: How do you encourage the professional development of your staff?**

Principals A, B, and C discussed using PD360, an online professional development website, to assist with professional development. PD360 (PD) was the emergent theme. Principal D felt sharing and presenting professional development opportunities with staff on a regular basis was important for teacher professional growth.

**IQ-8: How do you foster teacher collaboration in your school?**
Common planning (CP) was the emerging theme in terms of fostering collaboration. All principals felt that teachers needed a common planning time to collaborate. Scheduling weekly grade level meetings were seen as an important factor in collaboration.

IQ-9: As the principal, how do you foster shared leadership and decision making in your school?

A principal having a leadership team (LT) was the emergent theme when principals discussed shared leadership and decision making. Principals A, B, and D saw leadership teams as essential for professional growth and development. By involving all stakeholders, information and suggestions are taken into consideration for implementation and change.

IQ-10: How do you encourage parental involvement at your school?

In terms of parental involvement, Principals A and D spoke of the importance of parent workshops and student achievement. Principals B and C spoke of making parents feel welcomed and respected at the school. Parent workshops (PW) and Respect (RS) were emerging themes for question 10.

Summary

This data analysis chapter presented results of both the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The Quantitative data identified a significant relationship between student achievement and the following independent variables: School Climate, Instructional Supervision, Leadership Style, Structured Operational Environment, Teacher Recognition, Teacher Training, Team Collaboration, Shared Leadership, and
School Encouragement of Parental Engagement. Several themes emerged from the principal interviews in relation to the independent variables and student achievement.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to identify and provide explanatory value to the foremost results from the research study. The conclusions were based on the findings and implications as determined by the research. Recommendations were made for providing policies, procedures, and a framework for improving and sustaining student achievement at the elementary school level. Additionally, this chapter provides recommendations for proposed future research in the area of leadership characteristics and student achievement. The study was designed to examine the following factors: (a) Monitoring Student Performance, (b) School Climate, (d) Instructional Supervision, (d) Leadership style, (e) Structured Operational Environment, (f) Teacher Recognition, (g) Teacher Training, (h) Team Collaboration, (i) Shared Leadership and Decision making, and (j) School Encouragement of Parental Engagement, and the impact of student achievement in select elementary schools.

Findings

A summary of the findings, inclusive of quantitative and qualitative data, contributes to the nominal amount of previous research regarding select leadership characteristics and student achievement. This research determined whether there was an
existence of a significant relationship between select leadership characteristics and student achievement.

Monitoring Student Performance

During the principal interviews, data meetings emerged as an important factor in relation to monitoring student performance. Principals shared the following regarding monitoring student performance and student achievement. Principal A stated, “I also created a data room because it informs us how we are performing as a grade level and as a school” (personal communication, January 28, 2013), Principal B responded, “We have data team meetings with all grade levels” (personal communication, January 30, 2013), and Principal C stated, “Weekly RTI meetings during teachers planning and discuss classroom data and individual student data” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). The quantitative data did not support a relationship of monitoring student performance and student achievement.

School Climate

Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicated the significance of school climate and student achievement. The quantitative data showed the importance of school climate as it relates to student achievement by indicating a strong relationship of significance at the .04 level. Certified staff answered questions on the survey instrument related to principals modeling respectful behavior, whether the school environment was safe for teachers and students, whether the staff respect the students, if the students respect the staff, if student enjoy going to school, and whether teachers can articulate the
mission and vision of the school. During the principal interviews, a safe climate was the emergent theme. Principals felt schools should be warm, safe, and positive.

**Instructional Supervision**

The quantitative data showed the importance of instructional supervision and student achievement by indicating a strong relationship of significance at the .028 level. Teachers answered questions on the survey instrument related to the degree in which principals were knowledgeable of the curriculum. They responded to their perceptions of feedback on lesson plans, the degree to which the principal monitors classroom instruction, perceptions on feedback of classroom instruction, and the degree of their perception of the principal's knowledge in relation to grade level assessments.

During the principal interviews, collaboration and monitoring performance were emergent themes in terms of instructional supervision. Principals revealed the following regarding instructional supervision. Principal A stated, “I tend to take a collaborative approach. I display the data and we have conversations about the data. I conduct walk-throughs on a weekly basis” (personal communication, January 28, 2013). Principal B said, “By monitoring teacher performance in the classroom, I am able to ensure that learning is taking place in the school” (personal communication, January 30, 2013).

**Leadership Style**

Both the quantitative and qualitative data findings indicated the significance of leadership style and student achievement. The quantitative data showed the importance of leadership style as it relates to student achievement by indicating a strong relationship of significance at the .007 level. Teachers answered questions on the survey related to
principal’s ability to adapt leadership style to the needs of specific situations, whether their principal was very directive and allowed little participation in decisions, if principals encouraged group discussion and decision making, and if principals gave freedom to the staff to make instructional decisions.

In relation to the independent variable, leadership style and student achievement, the principals revealed the overarching theme, of “working together.” The principals revealed the following thoughts on democratic leadership. Principal A responded:

I practice democratic leadership. This form of leadership draws its strength from the team members allowing them to voice their views and opinions. A democratic leader hopes for mutual consensus, on how to archive the given targets, by allowing team members to come forth with innovative ideas.

(Personal communication, January 28, 2013)

Principal B said, “This style fosters student achievement by allowing different stakeholders to have a say in how we are teaching and what we are teaching. The collaboration of administrators and teachers supports a strong instructional environment” (personal communication, January 30, 2013).

**Structured Operational Environment**

The independent variable, structured operational environment showed a strong significant relationship with student achievement, based on the identified significance level of .002. To gauge teacher perceptions of a structured operational environment, the following survey statements were given: The school has a set of standard operating procedures and routines, school follows a school wide discipline plan, principal protects
instructional time from interruptions, teachers are protected from internal and external
distractions, and my principal provides and reinforces clear rules and procedures for staff.

During the principal interview question, “In your opinion, how does a structured
operational environment enhance student achievement,” Structure and Focused were
emergent themes. Principals revealed the following regarding a structured operational
environment. Principal A stated, “When students experience learning in a structured
operational environment they are more successful academically because there are no
surprises and there is a clear understanding of expectations of routine” (personal
Therefore, if structured appropriately, teachers are able to teach and students are able to
learn” (personal communication, January 30, 2013). Principal C responded, "Because of
the structure of the reading program we use, students can focus on the content” (personal
communication, February 11, 2013), and Principal D reported, "If the environment is
controlled and calm students will ultimately be more successful” (personal
communication, February 5, 2013).

Teacher Recognition

Data analysis revealed a significant relationship between student achievement and
teacher recognition. Data analysis indicated the level of significance as .006. Teachers
answered questions on the survey related to: principals acknowledging individual
accomplishments, school accomplishments, and level of appreciation for the work that
was done.
During principal interviews, the following statements were given. Principal A responded, “When observing teachers, I always leave a note of something positive that I noted during my visit” (personal communication, January 28, 2013); Principal B stated, “Whole school emails that recognize the accomplishments of teachers, personal notes, announcements over the intercom, bulletin boards recognizing achievements” (personal communication, January 30, 2013); and Principal C stated, “I’m going to start teacher and auxiliary person of the month” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Personal Notes were an emerging theme from the independent variable, teacher recognition.

Teacher Training

Both quantitative and qualitative data findings indicated the significance of teacher training and student achievement. The quantitative data showed the importance of teacher training to student achievement by indicating a strong relationship of significance at the .036 level. Teachers answered questions on the survey related to school having on-going staff development, principal encouragement of staff development opportunities, meaningful staff development opportunities, and adequate staff development on Georgia Performance Standards.

When principals were asked the question, “How do you encourage the professional development of your staff,” qualitative data analysis revealed one overarching theme. The implementation of PD360 was the emerging theme in relation to teacher training. PD360 is an online professional development website utilized by the LEA included in this study. It is an online professional development tool that can be
utilized by teachers 24/7. Teachers can view videos and articles relating to their staff development needs.

Team Collaboration

The independent variable, team collaboration, has a significant relationship with student achievement. Quantitative data analysis shows a level of significance as .02 indicating a strong significant relationship between student achievement and team collaboration. To gauge the teachers' perception of team collaboration, the following statements were posed to the teachers: My principal encourages open communication, my principal encourages collaboration among the staff, my grade level has a common planning time, and teachers have the opportunity to communicate with one another to discuss student data.

When principals were asked about team collaboration and student achievement, the following answers were given. Principal A said, “Our teachers are provided with team time that occurs during common planning at least twice a week” (personal communication, January 28, 2013). Principal B responded, "if possible, scheduling so that teachers have the opportunity to collaborate” (personal communication, January 30, 2013), Principal C said, "Common planning time” (personal communication, February 11, 2013), and Principal D reported, “Weekly grade level meetings” (personal communication, February 5, 2013). Common planning was noted as the emerging theme during qualitative data analysis for team collaboration and student achievement.
Shared Leadership and Decision Making

The independent variable, shared leadership and decision making has a significant relationship with student achievement. Quantitative data analysis shows a level of significance as .005 indicating a strong significant relationship between student achievement and shared leadership and decision making. Teachers responded to the following statements, regarding shared leadership and decision making: the leadership team shares in decision making, my principal provides opportunities for the staff to be involved in developing school policies, my principal provides opportunities for staff input on all important decisions, and my principal values my suggestions/ideas.

The establishment of a leadership team emerged as a prevalent theme, when principals were asked about shared leadership and decision making in their schools. Principal A stated:

I believe that sharing information amongst and across the grade levels is essential for professional growth and development. As a result of this belief, there is a Leadership team established that includes representatives from each area throughout the building. Teachers that are empowered with current research, workshops, and relevant academic information are allowed to share and re-deliver this information via faculty meeting, grade level meeting, and/or via a leadership team meeting. (Personal communication, January 28, 2013)

Principal B reported, “When necessary and appropriate I utilize transactional leadership which allows for shared decision making. This is truly evident in the leadership team” (personal communication, January 30, 2013).
School Encouragement of Parental Engagement

Quantitative data analysis revealed a strong significant and predictable relationship between student achievement and School Encouragement of parental engagement. Data analysis indicated the level of significance as .001. Teachers answered questions on the survey related to: encouragement of parents to volunteer at the school, offering parental workshops, establishment of a line of communication, and establishing a structure that allows parents to be involved in the decision making relative to school policy.

The principals interviewed by the researcher, thought parental involvement could best be encouraged through parental workshops and having respect for parents. Principal A shared the following: “I strive to be visible to address the needs of our parents and communicate with them often at our different functions that occur at our school (math and science night, curriculum night, and international night)” (personal communication, January 28, 2013). Principal B stated, “Making sure the parents/guardians know that they are welcome anytime in the school. Removing barriers to having parents volunteer or visit classrooms” (personal communication, January 30, 2013). Principal C said, “I just talk to my parents, have a parent breakfast, second cup of coffee, we have a good relationship, they always see me, my door is always open, open dialogue, respect their time, and care about their children” (personal communication, February 11, 2013). Principal D stated, “We offer parent workshops and seminars to assist with helping our students achieve success” (personal communication, February 5, 2013).
Conclusions

Based on survey results yielded through quantitative analysis, the findings indicated that all independent variables indicated a significant relationship with student achievement, with the exception of Monitoring Student Performance which did not yield a significant relationship. To further test the association between the independent variables and student achievement, the statistical method, regression was used to obtain the results. Regression results indicated that school encouragement of parental engagement was the only variable found to have a predictable and significant influence on student achievement.

Qualitative analysis revealed emerging themes that could impact student achievement at the elementary level. When principals were asked questions based on the independent variables in relation to their roles as principals, the following themes emerged. Student achievement can be enhanced through the use of data meetings to discuss and plan for student achievement. School Climates that are safe and inviting enhances student achievement. Collaboration emerged as a strong method in the area of instructional supervisory procedures. Principals felt that the democratic leadership worked best at the school level. Principals agreed that a school needs clear expectations and a structured environment for learning to occur. When the question concerning staff recognition was discussed, majority of principals believed a personal note worked best. In terms of professional development, all principals mentioned the new on-line training, PD360 as a means of enhancing professional development opportunities. In terms of fostering collaboration, the theme of common planning to discuss student data emerged.
Leadership teams emerged as a major finding when principals were asked about shared leadership and student achievement. When principals were asked about parental engagement, parent workshops and respect emerged as themes.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Monitoring Student Performance?

Quantitative results indicated there was not a significant relationship between student achievement and monitoring student performance.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and School Climate?

Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and school climate.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Instructional Supervision?

Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and instructional supervision.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and leadership style?

Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and leadership style.

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and structured operational environment?
Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and a structured operational environment.

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and teacher recognition?

Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and teacher recognition.

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Teacher training?

Results indicated there was a significant relationship between student achievement and Teacher training.

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Team collaboration?

Results indicated a significant relationship between student achievement and team collaboration.

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and Shared leadership and decision making?

Results indicated that there was a significant relationship between student achievement and shared leadership and decision making?

RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between student achievement and School Encouragement of Parental Engagement?

Results indicated a significant relationship between student achievement and parental engagement.
Implications

The findings of this study indicated that select leadership variables positively correlate to sustained achievement. The results of this research support the premise that when these select leadership characteristics are implemented on a consistent basis, positive student achievement is possible. Based on the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, a collective effort is needed to assist with implementation of the selected leadership characteristics. Also, the claim can be made that professional development on the selected leadership characteristics can enhance school administrators and teachers in improving student achievement. The evidence of this study indicated a strong and significant relationship between student achievement and school encouragement of parental engagement. The regression statistics model (Table 3), showed that school encouragement of parental engagement was the only independent variable found to have a predictable and significant influence on student achievement. We cannot negate the importance of parental engagement and the role it plays in improving and sustained student achievement. School reform should always include a systematic and purposeful inclusion of parents in every aspect. Through qualitative data analysis, training in the practical applications of the select leadership characteristics can enhance an administrator’s ability to carry out these needed skills.

The data from Table 2 revealed that leadership style, teacher recognition, shared leadership and decision making were highly influential for positive student achievement. This is significant, because the data shows that new and veteran principals cannot overlook the importance of the human resources within a school building, when adapting
a leadership style. From the data, we can draw the conclusion that positive student achievement is highly dependent upon a principal recognizing faculty and staff for their accomplishments. By the same merit, involving faculty and staff in the decision making of the school should also be taken into consideration. When we look at these two independent variables, teacher recognition and shared leadership and decision making, we see that the correlations with student achievement are .006 and .005, respectively. We see an influential relationship on positive student achievement. Leithwood’s (1994) model of transformational leadership, notes that school leaders should provide personal attention to individual staff members. This personal attention can be accomplished through teacher recognition. The transformational model believes in converting followers into leaders. This conversion can be made possible through integrating teacher recognition, and shared leadership and decision making into a principal’s style of governance.

We have an obligation in the quest for student achievement to provide and nurture current and aspiring administrators with the skill set needed to move schools forward to meet 21st century expectations. As noted in the significance of the study, the LEA selected by the researcher is under the Race to the Top (RTT) initiative. Georgia was awarded 400 million to implement its RTT plan and the LEA included in the study received $34 million in RTT funds. RTT is built on the framework of comprehensive reform and school improvement. RTT has four education reform areas: (a) Standards and Assessments, which focuses on adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
(b) Data systems to Support Instruction, focuses on building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve student instruction; (c) Great teachers and Leaders, involves recruiting, preparing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals; and (d) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, involves the selection of one of four intervention models, that include turnaround (replacing principals), conversion to charter, school closure, or transformation (replacing principal and utilization of a combination of strategies in the other reform models (Race to the Top, Annual Performance Report, 2012).

When we take a closer look into the reform areas, the successful implementation of these reforms have a direct relationship with the leadership characteristics discussed in this study. Standards and Assessments, Data systems to Support Instruction, and Great teachers and Leaders, can be tied to the leadership characteristics discussed in the study.

Standards and Assessments is the section that focuses on the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), which was implemented during the 2012-2013 school year. Also listed under this reform is the professional development involved in the implementation of CCGPS. The leadership characteristic, Instructional Supervision focuses on the degree to which the leader is aware of best practices in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This leadership characteristic focuses on curriculum and can be relevant in carrying out the reform section Standards and Assessments. Being that professional development is also listed
under this reform area, the leadership characteristic, teacher training is also relevant in
the successful implementation of this reform.

Data systems to Support Instruction focus on the creation of a statewide
longitudinal data system for grades K-12. It is designed to improve instruction by
delivering student data, curriculum standards, and instructional resources to the teacher’s
desktop thorough a district’s student information system. It sets to provide seamless data
access to all users throughout K-12. This reform can be tied to the independent variable
monitoring student performance, which is the extent that the principal understands how
well students are performing based on student data and assessments. The independent
variable, teacher training is also an important factor in the implementation of data
systems to support instruction. Teachers will need professional development in the use of
any new data systems or innovations. Instructional Supervision will factor into a
teacher’s use of any data system once professional development has ended. Principals
will have to monitor a teacher’s use of the system in making instructional decisions based
on student data. From the research, shared leadership and decision making showed a
significant relationship with student achievement. With this finding, a principal will need
the assistance of a leadership team with the monitoring of any new reform set in place.

At the heart of the Race to the Top reform initiative is increasing the overall
effectiveness of teachers and leaders. Their effectiveness is a critical factor in increasing
student achievement. To monitor this effectiveness, Georgia piloted and implemented
Teacher Keys Evaluation (TKES) and the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES).
Teachers will be assessed on Performance Standards and Student Growth and Academic
Achievement. The Leader Keys Evaluation System consists of three components: Leader Assessment on Performance Standards, Student Growth and Academic Achievement, and Student Achievement Gap. The new evaluation systems focus on improving student achievement from the teacher and principal perspective. Both stakeholders are held accountable for student achievement. Under this reform area, leadership characteristics, which have shown to have a significant relationship with increased student achievement, such as monitoring student performance, school climate, Instructional supervision, leadership style, structured operational environment, teacher recognition, teacher training, team collaboration, shared leadership and Decision Making, and parental engagement will be needed to accomplish the tasks set forth in RTT. It is important for future and current leaders to understand the expectations of current legislation.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges unavoidable limitations to the study. First, due to time constraints, the researcher utilized a limited sample. The researcher collected data on leadership characteristics from four elementary schools. Secondly, data collection was limited only to the certified staff and principals of each school. Parents, classified staff, and other building administrators were not included in the study. Lastly, the researcher is employed by the school system in which the four schools selected for the study are located. The researcher is currently employed at one of the schools selected for the study.
Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

1. Principals should adapt a democratic leadership style to promote positive student achievement. Quantitative and qualitative data revealed principals should stress collaboration, working together, distribution of responsibilities, sharing of ideas, and promote high expectations. This form of leadership will aid in the execution of select leadership characteristics that impact student achievement.

2. School Principals should communicate high expectations on a regular basis. This will send a consistent message on the expectations of teaching and learning. This communication will also assist with enhancing instructional supervision and establishing the climate for the school building.

3. Principals should establish a set operating procedure for faculty and staff meetings. All meetings should begin with a reminder of the mission and vision of the school and district. All meetings should end with acknowledging teachers for individual and group accomplishments. Teacher and staff recognition should close out any meeting in which the entire faculty and staff are present. This will allow the principal to stress expectations of student learning and job performance, the importance of teacher recognition, and team collaboration.
4. To improve classroom instruction, principals should visit classrooms on a regular basis and provide meaningful and timely feedback on best teaching practices to promote student achievement.

5. In an effort to improve instructional supervision and increase shared leadership and decision making, principals should allow not only assistant principals, but also instructional data coaches to assist in the observation of classroom teachers. Lead teachers and teachers who have demonstrated leadership ability should be allowed to assist with informal observation of fellow teachers. This practice will allow for a collaborative effort of ensuring best teaching practices are being successfully executed in the classroom.

6. To maximize time on task, development of daily school schedules should be a collaborative effort. Principals should allow the leadership team of the school to provide input in the development of schedules. This can include input from grade level teacher representatives, as well as support personnel in the building. Well developed school schedules will assist in maintaining a structured school environment.

7. Teacher recognition can be strengthened through the school principal. Principals should always show appreciation to staff members who are doing their jobs effectively. Teacher recognition can be private, in terms of written notes or emails sent by the principal. Teacher recognition can also be public, occurring during faculty meetings, on school websites, school bulletin boards, and publicized school newsletters.
8. To demonstrate the importance of team collaboration, school administrators should seek input from faculty and staff when making operational and instructional decisions. Collaboration should be a representation of the school staff (grade level representation, teachers who are in charge of non-academic subjects should be represented, in addition to the support personnel in the building (school counselor, librarian, etc.).

9. All principals should set an example of teacher training, by engaging in their own professional development of current educational trends, issues, and research. Engaging in professional development sets an example for teachers and allows principals share important information with faculty and staff.

10. Data revealed that the independent variable, School Encouragement of parental engagement has an influence on student achievement. Principals should include in the consolidated school improvement plan, professional development on communication and relationship building with parents. Professional development should focus on positive ways to interact and engage parents.

11. To increase school encouragement of parental engagement, involve parents in the development of ideas for parent workshops, ideas they have on school projects, and ideas on ways they would like to be involved in the school. Schools can use this feedback to plan activities and workshops that would increase parent participation.
12. Principals should encourage the development of a parental involvement committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and parents for the benefit of increasing parental engagement at the school level. The parental involvement committee would serve as a liaison between the parents and the school. Developing and implementing ideas that would increase parent participation.

13. The creation of a parent center at the local school level can be utilized to increase parental engagement. This room can serve a variety of functions, such as a meeting place to conduct workshops for parents, a resource for acquiring academic materials and books, as well as a resource for social information such as (continuing adult education and social agencies).

14. To foster collaboration and enhance teacher training, principals as well as teachers should be encouraged to join a professional organization to develop professional relationships with their peers.

15. To assist with collaboration at the building level, principals should schedule common planning for teachers. This will give teachers the opportunity to collaborate on student data and receive grade level information at the same time.

**Recommendations for Policy**

1. To develop an understanding on how to utilize leadership traits at the building level, local school districts should have field trips for new administrators to observe and shadow veteran administrators at their respective schools. These field trips can help new principals improve instructional supervisory practices.
2. To assist school principals with improving decision making and shared leadership skills, local school districts should develop a formal method for conducting data team meetings. This method should be outlined and required by all principals. The method would require principals to have a data team, that's representative of the school personnel population. This would ensure that all personnel groups within the school are represented. Local districts should give principals a standard outline to follow during data meetings. This standard method allows for uniformity of collaboration on data and instructional improvements within the district.

3. To acquire a better understanding of student data, school districts should train principals on a systematic method of developing data rooms that would be used to display and discuss student data.

4. To assist principals with developing and maintaining leadership traits, local school districts can develop a monthly “leadership characteristic” focus trait. The local school district would focus on a monthly leadership trait (such as teacher training). Local districts would provide principals with detailed information of the leadership trait and examples of how to implement the trait at the local school. This will give principals the chance to demonstrate an understanding of the leadership trait and show evidence that it was implemented at the building level.

5. Within the local school district, mentorship programs should be mandatory for principals with less than three years of experience. This allows novice
principals to receive guidance from veteran principals. The mentorship program should be mandatory for the first year of employment.

6. Within the district, an administrator’s academy should be developed to keep new and veteran administrators abreast of current practice and educational developments. The administrator’s academy can occur during the summer and occur on-line during the school year.

7. It should be mandatory for new principals to have quarterly meetings with the Superintendent. This will keep the focus of district policies and expectations at the forefront for all administrators.

8. Being that Parental engagement was the most predictable variable in relation to student achievement, any instructional program chosen by the district, should encompass a parental involvement section. All instructional programs should be vetted for strong parental engagement research and methods, before being purchased by the district.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

1. While this study only included four elementary schools within the same district, additional schools would allow a researcher to gain perspectives from a larger sample.

2. To further strengthen the findings of this study, research could be expanded to the middle and high school level to gain their perspective on leadership characteristics and student achievement.
3. In addition, data analysis revealed the importance and predictability of parental engagement. Parents could be interviewed and surveyed to gain thoughts and insights into their role in student achievement.

**Summary**

This concluding chapter summarized the data gathered from the quantitative and qualitative research by the researcher. It further outlined the major findings from the study. Implications were derived to present the major findings and the meaning the data holds for school administrators. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future and present administrators, school districts, and future researchers.
APPENDIX A

Item-to-Scale Correlations

(Construct Validity)

Monitoring Student Performance

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

School Climate

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Appendix A (continued)

**Instructional Supervision**

### Correlations

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**Leadership Style**

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**Structured Operational Environment**

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**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Appendix A (continued)

Teacher Recognition

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Teacher Training

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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<tr>
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</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Appendix A (continued)

Shared Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShareLead</td>
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<tr>
<td>ShareLead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

School Encouragement of Parental Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ParentEngage</td>
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<tr>
<td>ParentEngage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
APPENDIX B

Reliability Test of Variables

(Cronbach Alpha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
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<td>Instructional Supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structured Operational Environment</td>
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<td>Teacher Recognition</td>
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<td>Teacher Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Collaboration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Leadership and Decision Making</td>
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</tr>
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<td>School Encouragement of Parental Engagement</td>
<td>.828</td>
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## APPENDIX C

### Excluded Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
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<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Correlation</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
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<td>ShareLead</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), ParentEngage  
b. Dependent Variable: AYPStatus
## APPENDIX D

### Principal Interviews Questions and Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal A (1)</th>
<th>Research Question #1</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As School leader, how do you monitor the academic performance of the students in your school?</td>
<td>Teachers fill out a progress monitoring form that I created. The form specifies what areas the students are failing in and what strategies/interventions have been put in place to ensure that the student is receiving the necessary support to be successful. I also have created a data room that is teacher grade/level student specific because it informs us how we are performing as a grade level and as a school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>created a progress monitoring form that teachers complete on students that are failing. Created a data room to discuss how students are performing. (Progress monitoring forms/Data Room)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal B(2)</th>
<th>Research Question #1</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I perform formal and informal classroom observations. We have data team meetings with all grade levels and 4.5 week progress report reviews</td>
<td>formal and informal observations are important, I meet in the data room and discuss 4.5 week progress reports (Data Room meetings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal C(3)</th>
<th>Research Question #1</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly RTI meetings during teachers planning and discuss classroom data and individual student data</td>
<td>Weekly data meetings to discuss how students are doing (data meetings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal D(4)</th>
<th>Research Question #1</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By leading a collaborative team to a shared vision for educational improvement and developing a plan to attain that vision. By monitoring and evaluating the use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to provide timely and accurate feedback to students, parents, and to inform instructional practices.</td>
<td>Being a collaborative team; using diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment and using it to guide instructional practices (Collaboration), (using tests to guide instruction)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences

* Data Meetings (DM)
* Collaborations
### Research Question #2

How would you characterize the climate of your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (1)</td>
<td>We have a genuine climate. We are typically warm and friendly which allows us to have those tough conservations when needed.</td>
<td><strong>Warm and genuine climate</strong> (warm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (2)</td>
<td>I would describe the climate as improving. Student behavior has been challenging. However, I do feel that it is a safe school.</td>
<td><strong>Improving climate/safe school</strong> (safe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (3)</td>
<td>Collegiality, everyone working together, however feeling overwhelmed, good working environment, but the stress is high. You need that safe feeling for students.</td>
<td><strong>Good working climate, but the stress is high (safe feeling, good working climate, but stressful)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (4)</td>
<td>I would characterize the climate of our school as safe and orderly, with positive school morale.</td>
<td><strong>Safe school, positive school morale</strong> (safe/positive)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences**

- *Warm*
- *Safe (SC)*
- *working climate*
**Research Question #3**

As the school leader, how would you describe your instructional supervisory procedures/practices?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal A (1)</th>
<th>Collaborative, we have conservations about data, instructional leader, conduct walk-throughs (collaboration, walk-throughs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal B (2)</td>
<td>I rely heavily on the Assistant Principal and Instructional coach for instructional procedures and practice. However, by monitoring teacher performance in the classroom, I am able to ensure that learning is taking place in the school. It is also my desire to continue learning about the elementary level by attending conferences and broadening my understanding of the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C (3)</td>
<td>A hands-on leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D (4)</td>
<td>I would describe my supervisory procedures as functional and once again a collaborative team to a shared vision for educational improvement and developing a plan to attain that vision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Research Question #4
Describe your leadership styles(s). How does your leadership style foster student achievement?

| Principal A (1) | I practice democratic leadership. This form of leadership draws its strength from the team members allowing them to voice their views and opinions. In other words, a democratic leader participates in a team building exercise and seeks the active participation of team members. A democratic leader hopes for mutual consensus, on how to archive the given targets, by allowing team members to come forth with innovative ideas. This approach is particularly useful when the course of action is unclear. I use this style because I know where I want the teachers to go in regards to moving students academically; however, my goal as a democrat leader is to allow them to see what direction they need to go so when they go back into the classroom they own the data and they own the student achievement or lack thereof; therefore, driving them to take ownership of their own students since they know them best. | democratic, allowing teachers to voice their views and opinions, team building  
(working together/listening to the opinions of others, but knowing when to make decisions) |
| Principal B(2) | My leadership style varies with the situation. I would consider myself both transactional and transformative. I combine working with others in making decisions and when necessary switching to making the decisions myself. Honestly, it depends on the decisions needing to be made. This style fosters student | transactional and transformative, working with others and making decisions when necessary, collaboration  
(working together but knowing when to make the necessary decisions) |

### Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences

- working together (WT) but knowing when to make decisions when necessary
- Leading by example
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #4</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe your leadership styles(s). How does your leadership style foster student achievement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievement by allowing different stakeholders to have a say in how we are teaching and what we are teaching, The collaboration of administrators and teachers supports a strong instructional environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C(3)</td>
<td>Principal D(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship leader/with a little bit dictator/ my teachers know when they can and cannot be apart of the decision making- I am honest with them,</td>
<td>I certainly try to lead by example and communicate effectively and model core values through interactions with students and teachers. More importantly, I show that I care for and have genuine concern for children. When students know you care about them and their well being they tend to want to please you and go the extra mile for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teachers know that there are times when they can and cannot be apart of decisions making)</td>
<td>Lead by example, show that I care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Leading by example)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal A (1)</th>
<th>Research Question #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When students experience learning in a structured operational environment they are more successful academically because there are no surprises and there is clear understanding of expectations of routine. When there is a structured operational environment, the students and teachers are aware that there is order, an understanding and respect of time, and routines are evident and clear leaving for little or no time of time off task. When an environment is structured and operational, student achievement is enhanced because learning time is optimized due to set guidelines and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students are more successful, clear understanding of routines and expectations, order, little time for off task behavior, learning optimized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B(2)</td>
<td>Students cannot learn in chaos. Therefore, if structured appropriately teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(when everything is structured teachers can teach and students can learn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C(3)</td>
<td>The structure of the reading program/ every child has something to do, its very orderly and structured—strongly enhancing student achievement, students can focus on the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(students are focused, so learning takes place)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D(4)</td>
<td>I believe students can not learn in a state of chaos. If the environment is controlled and calm, students will ultimately be more successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Controlled environment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences

* clear expectations
* understanding of routines
* structure (ST)
* focused, so learning takes place (FC)
## Appendix D (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #6</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you recognize the accomplishments of your teachers/staff?</td>
<td>leave a note for the teacher, acknowledge staff in weekly staff meetings, personal notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal A (1)</strong> When observing teachers, I always leave a note of something positive that I noted during my visit. I also acknowledge teachers for their hard work in our weekly staff newsletter. I also provide them with my personal notes that highlight great thing about their bulletin boards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal B (2)</strong> Whole school emails that recognize the accomplishments of teachers, personal notes, announcements over the intercom, bulletin boards recognizing achievements.</td>
<td>emails, personal notes, announcements over the intercom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal C (3)</strong> Very vocal in staff meetings, I'm going to start teacher and auxiliary of the month, verbal</td>
<td>Verbal acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal D (4)</strong> We vote for a teacher of the year and support staff of the year. Teachers are often rewarded with gift cards or special privileges.</td>
<td>Vote for teacher of the year; give out gift cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences

- *personal notes (PN)*
- *emails*
- *verbal acknowledgements*
- *vote for teacher of the year*
### Research Question #7

**How do you encourage the professional development of your staff?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal A (1)</td>
<td>PD360, my teachers are getting ready to receive training on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B(2)</td>
<td>PD360 training, academic coach, sending information out via first class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C(3)</td>
<td>In previous years, I did book study, common core PD, behavior PD, PD 360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D(4)</td>
<td>By constantly sharing and presenting professional development opportunities. Sharing current data with them to show our areas of need.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Inductive Codes**

- PD360

**Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences**

*PD360-An online professional development website utilized in the district (PD)*
### Appendix D (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do your foster collaboration in your school?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal A (1)</td>
<td>Our teachers are provided with team time that occurs during common planning at least twice a week. Also, with use of Title One funds, three ½ days of professional collaboration amongst and across grade levels are provided. Our teachers are also allowed to share during faculty meetings, professional development opportunities, and grade level meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B(2)</td>
<td>Expectations communicated during pre-planning. Monitoring of the collaboration. If possible, scheduling so that teachers have the opportunity to collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C(3)</td>
<td>Common planning time, grade level meeting notes, a day of common planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D(4)</td>
<td>Weekly grade level meetings, allowing teachers to present to staff at faculty meetings. Assigning mentor teachers to newly hired teachers and teachers that need support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences**

*Common Planning (CP)*

*weekly grade level meetings*
Appendix D (continued)

| Principal A (1) | As an administrator I believe that sharing information amongst and across the grade levels is essential for professional growth and development. As a result of this belief, there is a Leadership team established that includes representatives from each area throughout the building. The leadership team is led by administration for the first two months then the leadership is released to the team to present, conduct, and preside over the meetings. Teachers are allowed to share their opinions and stop by as needed to discuss areas of concern that may need to be disseminated throughout the staff. Also, teachers that are empowered with current research, workshops, and relevant academic information are allowed to share and re-deliver this information via faculty meeting, grade level meeting, and/or via a leadership team meeting. | sharing information, leadership team with representatives from each area throughout the building |
| Principal B (2) | When necessary and appropriate I utilize transactional leadership which allows for shared decision making. This is truly evident in the leadership team. | leadership team |
| Principal C (3) | When I share the decision making I do, I just ask the teachers. I don’t do any surveys | I just ask the teachers about their thoughts/feelings, get input from teachers |
| Principal D (4) | By involving all stakeholders through weekly, monthly, and quarterly meetings. Taking the information and suggestions into consideration and implementing their ideas for change. Staff and parents surveys are given as well. | Stakeholder meetings |

Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences
- leadership team (LT)
- stakeholder meetings
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principal (1)</th>
<th>Research Question #10</th>
<th>Inductive Codes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
<td>How do you encourage parental involvement at your school?</td>
<td>We have parental involvement liaison, we have parent workshops, strive to be visible to address the needs of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B</td>
<td>Making sure the parents/guardians know that they are welcome anytime in the school. Removing barriers to having parents volunteer or visit classrooms.</td>
<td>making sure parents know they are welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C</td>
<td>I just talk to my parents, have a parent breakfast, second cup of coffee, we have a good relationship, they always see me, my door is always open, open dialogue, respect their time, and care about their children</td>
<td>Open door policy, respect them and their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal D</td>
<td>Monthly newsletter, invited parents out for parent/teacher conferences. We host grandparents and parents for special luncheons. We have quarterly PTA meetings as well as school council meetings. We offer parent workshops and seminars to assist with helping our students achieve success.</td>
<td>Parent workshops, special luncheons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging Themes/Similarities and Differences

*parent workshops (PW)
*feeling of respect (RS)
*feeling welcomed
APPENDIX E

Interview Questions for Principals

1. As the school leader, how do you monitor the academic performance of the students in your school?
2. How would you characterize the climate of your school?
3. As the school leader, how would you describe your instructional supervisory procedures/practices?
4. Describe your leadership style(s). How does your leadership style foster student achievement?
5. In your opinion, how does a structured operational environment enhance student achievement?
6. How do you recognize the accomplishments of your teachers/staff?
7. How do you encourage the professional development of your staff?
8. How do you foster teacher collaboration in your school?
9. As the principal, how do you foster shared leadership and decision making in your school?
10. How do you encourage parental involvement at your school?
11. How many years have you served in the capacity of a principal? How many years of experience at this school?
APPENDIX F

Letter of Informed Consent

November 16, 2012

Dear Colleague:

I am currently enrolled as a graduate student at Clark Atlanta University. As a requirement for my Doctoral of Education degree, I will be conducting a research project entitled Successful Leadership characteristics of Elementary School Leaders and the Impact on Consecutive Student Achievement. The purpose of this research is to identify leadership characteristics that have a successful impact on student achievement. I am requesting your permission to include you, as a participant in this project.

This project will begin on January 17, 2013 and end approximately on February 18, 2013. The project will involve the one time completion of a survey on leadership characteristics for all certified staff members. The survey takes approximately ten minutes to complete. It will be distributed for completion during your school’s faculty meeting at an agreed upon time with your school administrator. As a part of this research, I will also examine your school’s CRCT and AYP data through the district’s website.

If you are serving in the capacity of building administrator, you will be asked to participate in an interview on leadership characteristics and student achievement. The interview will take approximately twenty minutes. Interviews will be scheduled at an agreed upon time between the researcher and administrator.

The participants will benefit from the research, knowing that their information will serve as a collaborative tool to narrow the achievement gap and therefore help all students achieve their academic potential and prepare them to compete in a global society. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts for participants in this project. Personally identifiable information will be kept confidential. Your name, the name of your school and/or school district will not be included in the final report.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide that you will not participate in this research project. If you decide to participate in this project, you may discontinue
Appendix F (continued)

participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You have the right to inspect any instrument or materials related to the proposal. Your request will be honored within a reasonable period after the request is received.

Researcher's name Deborah Wilson
Researcher's school Clark Atlanta University
Researcher's phone number (770) 483-0955
Researcher's email address dwilson@bellsouth.net

Institutional contact's name Dr. Trevor Turner
Institutional contact's affiliation Clark Atlanta University
Institutional contact's phone number (404) 880-8980
Institutional contact's email address TTTurner@cau.edu

If you agree to participate in this research, please complete the information below:

Participant’s Name (please print) Participant’s Signature Date

Return to Deborah Wilson by Friday, January 14, 2013
APPENDIX G

Leadership Survey

**Directions:** Complete each statement as it relates to your school. Indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes your school by checking the appropriate response (only one response per statement). Do not include your name or the name of your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Monitoring Student Performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) My principal discusses student data with me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) My principal is knowledgeable of student performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) My principal is concerned when students are not performing well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) My principal stresses improved student performance throughout the building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) My principal makes systematic and frequent visits to my classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. School Climate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) The principal models respectful behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The school environment is safe for teachers and students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) The staff respect the students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) The students respect the staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) The students enjoy going to your school</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Teachers can articulate the mission and vision of the school</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Instructional Supervision</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) My principal is knowledgeable of the curriculum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) My principal provides feedback on my lesson plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) My principal monitors classroom instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) My principal gives feedback on classroom instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) My principal is knowledgeable of the assessments required for my grade level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Questions

#### 4. Leadership Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>My principal adapts leadership style to the needs of specific situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The principal is very directive and allows little participation in decisions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>The principal encourages group discussion and decision making</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>The principal gives complete freedom to the staff to make instructional decisions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 5. Structured Operational Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>The school has a set of standard operating procedures and routines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The school follows a school wide discipline plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>The principal protects instructional time from interruptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Teachers are protected from internal and external distractions</td>
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<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>My principal provides and reinforces clear rules and procedures for staff</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6. Teacher Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>My principal acknowledges my accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The principal acknowledges school accomplishments</td>
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<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>I feel appreciated for the work that I do</td>
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<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>The principal acknowledges the accomplishments of others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 7. Teacher Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>My school has on-going staff development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>My principal encourages staff development opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Staff development training at my school is meaningful and relevant to the grade/subjects I teach</td>
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<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>I received adequate staff development in the implementation of Georgia Performance Standards for Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>I received adequate staff development in the implementation of Georgia Performance Standards for Math</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 8. Team Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) My principal encourages open communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) My principal encourages collaboration among the staff</td>
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<td>c) My grade level has a common planning time</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Teachers have the opportunity to communicate with one another</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 9. Shared Leadership and Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The leadership team shares in decision making</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) My principal provides opportunities for the staff to be involved in developing school policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) My principal provides opportunities for staff input on all important decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) My principal values my suggestions/ideas</td>
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</tbody>
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### 10. School Encouragement of Parental Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Highly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Parents are encouraged to volunteer at the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) My school offers parental workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) My school has a good line of communication with parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) My school has an established structure that allows parents to be involved in decision making relative to school policy</td>
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REFERENCES


