AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

PRINCIPALS IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Latoya M. Garrett

March 2017

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Dedication

This Doctoral Thesis is dedicated to my husband and father. To my husband, Joel, I cannot express enough how grateful I am to have someone who motivates me to achieve and pursue my dreams. I appreciate the sacrifices you made that allowed this dream of mine to come true. You inspire me to always expand my vision. To my father, Delton, I love that you have always believed in my potential and encouraged me to excel in everything I do. I appreciate your craziness that reminds me to be light-hearted and your entrepreneurial spirit that reminds me that there should never be a ceiling on my abilities. To both of these men, I owe much gratitude.

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My family has always been a huge advocate for me to pursue my dreams. For this, I thank you. To my parents and mother-in-law who always knew this desire was in my heart and who encouraged this pursuit, I thank you. To my siblings, who I always strive to be an example for, I thank you for being your unique individual selves which reminds me of why I love education and working with students. To my grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and family members, I thank you for always believing in me.

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AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Abstract

The principal of a campus plays a critical role in the success of the school. Principals

must utilize leadership strategies that make an impact and improve student achievement.

There are a variety of strategies that can be utilized by leadership and this study explored

the strategies that are used most often. The purpose of this study was to examine the

leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in one suburban district,

specifically which strategies are utilized most often and the ways in which those

strategies varied depending on the schools' socioeconomic status and level of student

achievement. This study utilized the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale

(PIMRS) to collect data. A large Texas suburban school district with 14 middle schools

was surveyed. Eight of the 14 principals elected to participate and complete the survey

instrument. First, mean scores per question and subscale of the PIMRS were calculated

to determine the most and least utilized strategy by all principal groups. Next, mean

scores were analyzed to determine differences in scores based on school demographics

and assessment scores. Third, standard deviations were calculated to determine the

amount of variance in ratings on each question and subscale. Standard deviations were

compared to determine the extent to which the principal ratings vary and the amount of

dispersion in ratings based on demographic or assessment scores. The results showed

principals rated the strategy of framing school goals the highest and of providing

incentives for learning the lowest. This was consistent when compared across all

principal groups. The amount of dispersion of scores varied based on question.

Similarities exist in the use of strategies among principals regardless of school type.

Further studies should investigate the amount of variance and dispersion of ratings.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I

Introduction

The principal of a campus plays a critical role in the success of the school. The leadership of a school must utilize leadership strategies that can make an impact and improve student achievement. There are a variety of strategies that can be utilized by leadership, but the question is, which strategies are used most often and how do those strategies relate to student achievement at a campus? The focus of this study was an examination of the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in one suburban district and the ways in which those strategies relate to student achievement on those campuses. By examining the leadership strategies currently implemented by active leaders, other and aspiring middle school leaders can gain greater insight into which strategies are utilized most often on the campuses with higher student achievement.

Background of Educational Policies

Educators encounter various issues and challenges in the school setting every day. School leaders are charged with leading their organizations and ensuring success for all of their students. One of the challenges of leading a school is meeting the needs of all students given the numerous academic challenges, statutory requirements, and students who face issues of poverty. This section will provide an overview of educational policies, both current and past, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind and the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The impact and challenges of educating all students has led to an examination of student success and school needs. The gap in achievement scores between students in poverty and students not in poverty has created an increased concern in the education

field. Policy makers and educational leaders want to ensure that all students are afforded a quality education, and this has led to the implementation of several federal policies. Indeed, the high poverty rate among students and the need for improved schools was a driving factor of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The ESEA was the beginning of the federal government's involvement in education and part of this act was to assist the needy (Groen, 2012). The Title I component of ESEA had the intention of improving the quality of education for disadvantaged and low-income students (Groen, 2012). The ESEA law provided additional resources to high-poverty schools to assist in providing the same educational level as low poverty schools (Mills, 2008).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education released *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. This report highlighted several problems with the educational system in the United States. These problems centered on the four themes of content, expectations, time, and teaching in the educational system. The document showed that a better curriculum was needed, student expectations were low, the time in the classroom was poorly managed, and better teachers and teaching were needed (Jones, 2009). Educators were confronted with meeting the required needs that were outlined in *A Nation at Risk*.

In 2002, ESEA was reauthorized in the form of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. NCLB was created as a way to add accountability through student assessment mandates to previous versions of the law (Gosnell-Lamb, O'Reilly, & Matt, 2013). NCLB set clear academic goals that challenged school leaders. One of the academic goals was that all students would achieve at grade level by 2014 without regards to race, income level or disability (Brockmeier, Starr, Green, Pate, & Leech, 2013). The newly

added responsibility of federal accountability requirements created a continued need to improve schools and develop strong leadership skills. As federal legislation has changed and evolved over the years, school leaders have sought out the best methods to meet the changing needs and requirements. The legislation changes highlighted above have been complex, and these changes provide an additional layer to the demands to school leaders.

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed. ESSA was designed to replace the NCLB legislation, but still contains some of the components of the NCLB legislation such as annual testing for students, achievement measures, meeting the needs of students in poverty and providing report cards for schools. The changes with ESSA were designed to improve upon measures in NCLB by allowing more state input in academic standards and accountability system, requiring assessment in higher-order thinking skills (Weiss & McGuinn, 2016) and requiring state accountability plans to include indicators of school or student success (Aragon, Griffith, Wixom, Woods, & Workman, 2016).

The various federal policy changes over the past decades have created new legislation requirements and needs that school leaders must meet. All schools and their leaders must operate under the legislation put in place by the federal government and stay abreast of the requirements while navigating the challenges of leading a school to success. Middle school leaders face additional student level challenges as they lead the grade levels of sixth to eighth grade.

Middle School Challenges

Expectations for school leaders are high. School leadership is expected to lead schools to high levels of student achievement (Brockmeier et al., 2013). Leadership

exhibited by principals can have a positive effect on the achievement of students. There are, however, specific challenges to leading an effective school, and middle school environments face issues sometimes unique to the middle school level age of students.

Middle school students are facing physical, social and emotional changes that are some of the most significant and rapid changes they will experience as they develop into adults (Kinney & Tomlin, 2013). School leaders must understand that the changes happening with the students they educate can have an impact on how the school can best serve the students. In particular, students in middle school are susceptible to peer pressure and are concerned with establishing their personal identity as they begin their teenage years (Green & Cypress, 2009).

The success of students during the middle school years is critical to their future options beyond high school. As middle school students are developing their personal identity, educators can have a profound effect on the students by leading and guiding them. School leaders can employ strategies that help students be successful during this time of change. At the same time, research shows that students who may potentially drop out of high school can be identified as early as middle school (Balfanz et al., 2014). According the Balfanz and Fox (2011), the warning signs of potential high school drop outs can begin as early as sixth grade based on the drop out indicators of the student's attendance, behavior and course performance.

An attitude of courageous leadership is needed in today's middle schools (Peterson, 2005). Educators are faced with the challenge of ensuring success for all students. Middle school leaders must account for developmental challenges and legislation challenges of leading a school that is conducive to learning for all students.

All school leaders should work to provide the best educational opportunity for their students. Jackson (2014) states that, "the difference between a highly effective principal and an average one is equal to two-to-seven months of extra learning per year for each child in the school" (p.1). This improvement in student learning is most likely attributed to the impact a principal may have on teacher quality over time as they have more decision making in the hiring and retention of teachers the longer they serve at a school (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012).

Leadership truly makes a difference, and the strategies found at successful schools are important to examine. Researchers and educational leaders have studied numerous frameworks and strategies that are common among successful schools. The next section will provide an overview of a few of those leaders and frameworks.

Educational Leaders and Leadership Frameworks

Many researchers have studied what it takes to be an effective leader. Education experts, including Dr. Lawrence Lezotte, Robert Marzano, and Elaine McEwan-Evans, have provided strategies and tools they have shown to be effective in schools. These industry leaders provide a guide to ideas that work in schools and help students achieve. Other educational leaders, such as Kathleen Cotton, have also provided additional information and characteristics for school leaders to examine. The findings and research these educators have provided will guide this study.

Dr. Lawrence Lezotte began researching the correlates of effective schools in 1991. He has led the educational field in the Effective Schools Movement (www.effectiveschools.com) for the past 26 years and has determined several correlates that are common in successful schools. In 2010, Lezotte reexamined the correlates along

with Kathleen Snyder in their book, *What Effective Schools Do: Re-Envisioning the Correlates.* According to Lezotte and Snyder (2010) there are seven correlates of effective schools. The seven correlates identified by Lezotte and Snyder (2010) include instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home-school relations, and opportunity to learn with student time on task. These correlates, or leadership strategies, are important to schools since they are shown to influence student learning (Lezotte & Snyder, 2010). This influence on student learning can help increase the positive academic environment for low-income students.

Marzano (2003) has provided guidance on effective practices for schools and outlines varying success factors that schools can implement. His work has highlighted five influential factors that a school can implement to increase a student's academic success. According to *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action* (Marzano, 2003), a school can impact a student's education by ensuring there is a guaranteed and viable curriculum, setting challenging goals and providing effective feedback, gaining parent and community involvement, establishing a safe and orderly environment, and creating a school system of collegiality and professionalism. Marzano (2003) argues that schools can increase academic performance of students by enacting policies that ensure the five factors are met.

In *School Leadership that Works*, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 categories of behaviors that have a statistically significant relationship to student achievement. The authors call these categories of behaviors "responsibilities" on which school leaders must take action. These 21 responsibilities include: (a) giving

affirmations; (b) being a change agent in the school; (c) providing contingent rewards; (d) establishing strong communication; (e) improving and shaping culture; maintaining discipline in the school; (f) having flexibility to meet the needs of the school; staying focused on the school goals; (g) expressing strong ideals/beliefs; (h) gaining input from leaders in the school; (i) providing and encouraging intellectual stimulation; (j) involvement in curriculum/instruction and assessment; (k) knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (l) monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness; (m) staying optimistic; (n) maintaining order; (o) reaching out to others for support; (p) building relationships with staff; (q) ensuring there are necessary resources; (r) maintaining situational awareness; and (s) staying visible in the school.

Another educational leader, Elaine McEwan-Evans, has researched traits that lead to an effective school. McEwan-Evans (2009) has identified 10 traits as being important to creating an effective school. These traits are: (a) strong instructional leadership; (b) research-based instructions; (c) having a clear academic focus; (d) building in trust; (e) creating opportunities for learning; (f) having accountability; (f) maintaining alignment; (g) establishing collaboration; (h) having and maintaining high expectations; and (i) monitoring results.

In *Principals and Student Achievement: What the Research Says* (2005), Kathleen Cotton describes a category of behaviors of principals that contribute to student academic success. There are five categories identified by Cotton encompassing a total of 26 principal behaviors. The categories identified by Cotton (2005) include establishing a clear focus on student learning, principal interactions and relationships, the school culture, a focus on instruction, and having accountability.

These educational leaders help provide a basis of research about what they have determined to be effective in schools. The use of these strategies is important when investigating the success of a school.

Statement of the Problem

School leaders face many challenges while establishing effective environments to educate students. These challenges are increased when the legislation of NCLB, and the accountability of state mandated testing are considered. The challenges increase again when students who are in poverty comprise a large part of the school's demographics. Students in poverty are more likely to earn lower scores on standardized tests of knowledge and achievement (Sanders, Haselden, & Dixon, 2010).

Leading a successful school becomes increasingly complex with the demands of managing teachers, federal mandates, Title I component needs, as well as student factors. Unfortunately for many schools, history and statistics have shown that lower income students do not perform as successfully as their higher income peers. Specifically, high-income students tend to have high achievement in schools, and low-income students have low achievement in schools (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2013). Schools can create successful environments for students when they have excellent leaders (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2013). Determining and establishing effective leadership strategies by principals is critical to creating opportunities for all students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study analyzed the leadership strategies and characteristics found at middle schools in a suburban school district. A comparison of the schools was made based on their student demographics to understand the commonalities and

differences in the strategies utilized by the campuses. The study also compared the leadership strategies utilized by the principals and the student achievement of those campuses.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools?

2. Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?

3. Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?

Research Design

This research focused on principals at middle schools in a large suburban school district in Texas. All the middle schools in the district were invited to participate in the study. The district contained a total of 14 middle schools.

This descriptive study generated data through the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) questionnaire (Hallinger, 2008), which was completed by the eight middle school principals who chose to participate. This questionnaire focused on three domains of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. A total of 10 instructional leadership functions were assessed under the three domains on the PIMRS. The results were analyzed to determine the most and least utilized strategy by all principals.

Once the PIMRS questionnaire was analyzed for strategies utilized by all

principals, a comparison was made between the principals based on the school

demographics of whether the school had more or less than 40 percent of students who

qualified for free or reduced lunch. Next, a comparison was made between the principals

based on whether or not the schools achieved an overall passing score of 80 percent or

higher in each of the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social

studies in the all grades category on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic

Readiness (STAAR) assessment with the leadership strategies utilized by each school.

Assumptions and Limitations

The research and educational resources available to school leaders is vast and

numerous. There are many leaders in the field who provide insight and proven success

strategies. The central assumption of the study was that there would be common

leadership strategies utilized by the school leadership teams from the various campuses.

The second assumption was that the strategies utilized would differ based on the school

demographics or achievement level of the school.

The limitations of the study started with the small sample size and location of the

research. This study only examined one suburban school district. The area of focus was

a suburban school district in the Houston, Texas area; other geographic areas were not

considered for this study. Due to the small sample size of the study, a description of any

identified relationships could only be given, and any significance of the relationships

could not be tested. The second limitation was the focus of using the STAAR assessment

as the measure of student success. There are limitations with using an accountability

system and the accountability system's scores to determine the success of a school. The

STAAR test is less than five years old, and comparisons may need to be made between

the STAAR test and the state's previous accountability test of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The third limitation was the time to complete the study. This study was conducted during one year's time, which may not provide as adequate of time for analysis as would a study of lengthier time. Another limitation was that many principals may utilize multiple strategies as they lead their campus. The exact relationship was unable to be determined between specific leadership strategies and student achievement or school demographics. The last limitation was the research use of the self-reporting scale of the PIMRS. For the completion of this study, other methods were not used that may have provided additional data.

Terms

Middle School refers to a secondary school that is comprised of grades sixth through eighth.

Title I refers to schools where over 40% of the students are eligible for free or reduced meals. This federal program provides additional funding to schools that qualify.

Success refers to schools that have met the state standard for the percentage of students who have passed the state assessment.

High Performing refers to schools in which over 80% of their students meet the passing standard on STAAR.

STAAR is the abbreviation for the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness. This assessment is the testing and accountability system used in Texas to assess students at selected grade levels to determine mastery of the content. In middle school, students are assessed in reading/mathematics (grades 6 through 8), writing (grade 7), social studies (grade 8) and science (grade 8).

Leadership refers to the principals of the studied campuses.

Leadership Strategies refer to the practices established and utilized by the leadership of the campus.

Poverty rate refers to the income threshold established by the United States Census Bureau, which determines a threshold income amount based on the size of a family. Families whose income is below this threshold are considered to live in poverty. (Census.gov)

Significance

This study was significant because the leadership strategies utilized by current middle school campuses were examined to determine which strategies were utilized the most and least. This study compared practice to research. The leadership strategies found at the middle schools were compared and analyzed for mean scores and variability in PIMRS ratings. The ratings were analyzed based on the student achievement of the campuses and the school demographics of those campuses. A description was provided of the mean scores obtained and the dispersion of scores for each subscale between the leadership strategies utilized.

The instructional leadership strategies implemented at the middle schools were analyzed to determine the most utilized strategies and least utilized strategies along with the variability in the ratings based on school demographics and student achievement. By understanding the most commonly utilized and least commonly utilized strategies, future researchers can investigate which strategies have the most significant impact to help create high-performing middle schools. With tools in place to create more high-performing middle school campuses, school leaders will be better equipped to meet the

increased and varied challenges of guiding students. This information provides better

insight into the leadership strategies that are actively used by current principals.

Chapter II

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is a literature review centered on school leadership. The chapter begins with an examination of the history of educational policies and legislation that has impacted school leaders. The second part of the chapter outlines a background of leadership including the leadership styles of servant leadership and transformational leadership along with an overview of leadership characteristics and traits. The role of the principal is highlighted followed by an overview of the relationship between the principal and student achievement. The chapter is completed by the conceptual framework of the study with an in-depth review of instructional leadership and the strategies that comprise a strong instructional leadership.

History of Education Policies

The legislation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), an overview of the Title I program, and state accountability systems will be examined in this section of this chapter. The research in this study is based on Texas schools and the state assessment system of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

No Child Left Behind. NCLB legislation was enacted in 2001 with the intention of enhancing the educational opportunities for students. One of the central focuses of NCLB is the intent "to hold schools accountable for ensuring that all their students achieve mastery in reading and math, with a particular focus on groups that have traditionally been left behind" (Fordham Institute, 2009). The legislation requires states

to ensure that schools are held accountable for all students by incorporating adequate testing measures. These testing measures contain specific grade levels and subjects that must be assessed. NCLB requires that students who are enrolled in grades 3–8 be tested annually (Casey, 2014). Once the testing results are received, schools and districts analyze the data to assess for the strongest scores, top schools, and students who were not able to achieve the required passing standard. The legislation aimed to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and math, and that all schools make the appropriate progress each year. This progress is called adequate yearly progress (AYP).

There are several guiding principles of the NCLB Act, according to the ed.gov website, which include:

- Improving the academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged

- Preparing, training, and recruiting highly qualified teachers and principals

- Language instruction for limited English-proficient and immigrant students

- Giving parents choices and creating innovative education programs

- Making the education system accountable

- Making the system responsive to local needs

- Helping children with disabilities

NCLB was criticized for various reasons. One point of criticism was the legislation's heavy reliance on English language arts and mathematics at the expense of other subjects (Jones & Workman, 2016). The increased assessment in the two subject areas of English and mathematics led to a focus on those subjects over others and a perception of teaching to the state assessment so the school scores would remain high.

School leaders faced challenges with meeting the requirements of the NCLB legislation. One of the challenges was the "classification of schools as making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or not making AYP based largely on annual tests in reading in mathematics, disaggregating school performance by student subgroups, and requiring that all school reach 100% proficiency" (Weinbaum, Weiss, & Beaver, 2012, p. 1). As Schraw (2010) states, "the most commonly mentioned weakness is that the ultimate goal of 100% efficiency in statistically unattainable" (p. 71). Schools that serve students who historically have low achievement are at a disadvantage when they try to achieve 100% efficiency. The standard of 100% created a challenge for all schools, even the highest performing schools, and very few were able to achieve this mastery percentage. Additionally, the emphasis on high stakes testing and accountability may take precedence over the additional components needed with teaching and learning. Due to this, school administrators sometimes believe they have little choice in how they lead; and thus, encourage teaching to the test (Sternberg, 2009). These challenges make it even more important to have strong, effective leadership in schools.

Title I program. As a component of the NCLB and the more recent ESSA legislation, the Title I program was developed as part of the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to assist schools that service economically disadvantaged students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016), more than 20% of students were living in poverty in 2014. In the southern region of the United States, 41% of school districts have student populations where at least 10% of their students live in extreme poverty (Southern, 2010). In Texas during the 2013–2014 school year, 60.1% of students were identified as economically

disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2014).

Increased levels of poverty can have a profound effect on a child's education. Districts with a child poverty rate at or above 10% have an average of 63% of their students score satisfactorily on state assessments, whereas districts with fewer than 5% of their students in extreme poverty achieve passing rates of 78% (Southern, 2010). Poverty levels often predict a student's success in school and future earnings (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2013).

The Title I program provides additional funding to schools that have a student population in which over 40% are eligible to receive free or reduced-fee meals during the school day. With the additional funding, schools must ensure the components of the Title I program are met. Some of these components, according to the ed.gov website, include the following:

- Ensure high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum and instructional materials

- Close the achievement gap

- Distribute and target resources sufficiently

- Provide an enriched and accelerated educational program

- Increase parental involvement

- Recruit highly qualified teachers and provide ongoing professional development

According to the 2010 Census, 15.8% of the US population earned income below the poverty level (Bishaw & Fontenot, 2014). In Texas, the poverty rate is over 17% (Census, 2010). The number of families living in poverty have created schools that serve a high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-fee meals. According to

the ed.gov website, in the 2009–2010 school year, more than 56,000 public schools in the United States access Title I funding. Title I funding is currently being utilized to assist in the education of 59% of kindergarten through grade 5 students (ed.gov), 21% for secondary campuses, and more than 21 million children in the United States (ed.gov). In Texas, 64.6% of students were enrolled in Title I programs during the 2013–2014 school year (TEA, 2014).

  Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was signed and enacted in 2015 with the intent to improve upon the NCLB legislation that was put in place in 2002. Some of the key changes, according the ed.gov website, include:

- Adding college and career ready standards

- Dedicating funding for lowest performing schools

- Includes Pre-Kindergarten

- Competitive programs for innovation, replicating charter schools and support systems

In addition to the above changes noted by the ed.gov website, The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 2015) noted key changes in regards to how each state and school is accountable for student achievement. The added measures for increased accountability requires that each state incorporate systems that include:

- Performance goals for each student subgroup

- Measure graduation rates annually

- Measure student growth in elementary and middle schools

- Assess schools in which any subgroup in consistently underperforming

  The ESSA legislation is designed to ensure that all students achieve at high levels

academically in a variety of areas (Chenoweth, 2016). The added measure of measuring student growth increases the need for school leaders to ensure that the various student groups from underachieving students to high achieving students continue to grow and learn each year. The legislation gives more local control to states in some of the ways that non-academic achievement is measured (UCLA, 2015) and seeks to expand to an assessment of a better-rounded educational frame (ECS, 2016).

The added assessment components of the ESSA legislation create a challenge for school leaders as each school will be measured not only on academic scores but also on additional factors including student growth, graduation rates, college/career readiness for students and addressing the performance of consistently underperforming students. The state of Texas, which is a focus of this study, utilizes the assessment titled the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness.

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Texas Education Agency (TEA) governs the implementation and creation of new testing systems for students. TEA implemented a new accountability system to align the state's goals with mandates put in place by NCLB. This new accountability system was called the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and was put in place in 2010. The STAAR accountability system replaced the previous testing system of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR test was established to better monitor student progress and the alignment between what is taught and tested. This test creates a more rigorous assessment than the previous test and evaluates students based on readiness and supporting skills. The STAAR test is administered in selected content areas beginning in the third grade and continues through high school.

The STAAR test assesses students at a higher cognitive level and evaluates their critical analysis skills and writing ability. As results for the assessment are sent to districts, individual schools are assessed for factors such as the passing rates of the students, higher level scores earned by the students, and whether the schools met the minimum criteria on various indicators. Once all of the factors and information are received, each school is rated as to whether they met the standard and earned distinctions. The schools are then evaluated based on the criteria set in the NCLB legislation and now ESSA legislation to determine the success of the school.

The work of school leaders is effected by the demands of state accountability systems. School leaders must stay abreast of the assessment requirements and academics goals needed to ensure a positive state rating for their school. Principals are challenged with meeting the needs of all learners and ensuring that all learners have a successful outcome as evidenced by their state test. Leaders must prepare for these assessment measures while balancing the needs of leading a school organization.

Background of Leadership

Leadership is critical to the success of any organization and a key component of the success of a campus (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). The way a leader chooses to lead and manage his or her organization, business, school, or other entity will determine the trajectory of that group. There are numerous historical and current-day leadership stories that exemplify both great and terrible leadership. The stories with leaders that are inadequate lead their company or school into ruins to the detriment of their employees and students. The stories with great leaders propel their organizations to achieve more, succeed, and improve at much higher levels than expected. These positive stories

provide lessons from which leadership qualities and lessons can be learned and emulated.

A leadership lesson can be learned from Ernest Shackleton from 1916 (Morrell & Capparell, 2002). Shackleton utilized his leadership skills to guide his expedition team to safety after their ship sank. The team faced a crisis of hunger, safety concerns, weather elements, and the despair that came when they were not sure if they would be rescued. The leadership he provided ensured that none of his team died during the ordeal they faced. Shackleton knew that the one thing his crew needed most was hope, and he effectively became "a dealer in hope" (Morrell & Capparell, 2002), which he kept in constant supply.

Information learned from Shackleton can be applied to multiple areas and arenas. These lessons are important as educators face the task of leading schools during ever changing times. Morrell and Capparell (2002) asserted that Shackleton faced many of the same issues that are faced today, which include bringing diverse groups together to work toward a common goal, handling the constant naysayer, bucking up the perpetual worrier, keeping the disgruntled from poisoning the atmosphere, battling boredom and fatigue, bringing order and success to a chaotic environment, and working with limited resources.

Leaders must face issues they encounter head on and be ready and equipped to meet the needs of their particular organization or school. Each school environment is unique and requires tools specific to their needs, but common leadership characteristics are often found across various schools, districts, and regions. These characteristics are important to hone and refine in order to promote a successful school.

Leadership qualities and characteristics. There are numerous leadership qualities and characteristics that the most effective leaders possess. While not all leaders

will possess every attribute, it is important for a leader to possess several of the common

qualities and develop other qualities to lead a successful school. There are numerous lists

of leadership qualities and what leaders need to do to be successful. While not the

primary focus of the study, a few of those ideas will be discussed here to provide a

general background of information.

   Leaders create a shared focus. As Sanborn (2015) suggests, leaders create a

shared focus. A leader must be able to garner support for an idea or vision for their

school. This vision must become a shared focus or mission for the entire staff and

community to follow. The leader cannot be the only one working toward the vision. As

Frey (2011) states, "Principals promote a shared vision that empowers school staffs to set

high standards and continuously improve student achievement" (p. 24). It takes a

community of support to move the organization further along to be successful.

   Leaders communicate openly and frequently. Tardanico (2013) asserts that

leaders must keep the communication lines open even if all the answers are not known.

This open line of communication allows for the staff to know that they are not alone in

their quest of the mission they are pursuing. It also allows the staff to understand that the

leader may not know all of the answers and therefore the battle will be won with a joint

effort. Sanborn (2015) states that "leaders develop power with people" not over them.

Staff members appreciate when the main leader shares information, seeks out answers

they may not have and communicates any progress or setbacks.

   Leaders care about their team. Leadership is about truly caring for those whom

you serve and "not about the leader" (Myatt, 2012). Leadership is about the members on

the team or staff. A good leader will focus on the needs of the many in order to pursue

the larger picture of what is needed. Leaders must know how to win followers (Sanborn, 2015) and sustain the care and concern that each member needs. A person is not a leader if no one is following! Credit should be given to others who are succeeding (Tardanico, 2013), and they should be acknowledged for their accomplishments. We learn from Shackleton's story that leaders must know how to make their staff feel appreciated, inspired, and how to bolster morale (Morrell & Capparell, 2002).

   Leaders have real conversations. One aspect of leadership is the ability to have open, candid conversations, both when things are going well and when things are going poorly. *Crucial Conversations* (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012) teaches that there are conversations that must be held and not avoided, but it also teaches that there is a way to communicate that leads to successful and desired outcomes. Leaders must avoid a staff member becoming a toxic threat to the team or school's performance (Tardanico, 2013). Real and genuine conversations are needed when progress is not being made or when staff members are not completely on board with the vision.

   Leaders lead change. Leaders must be at the forefront of the change process and implementation. Their leadership and willingness to give their time and attention to the issue is critical to generate the momentum needed to sustain the vision. Leaders create change and implement new ideas (Sanborn, 2015). Leaders must bring people along in the change process for them to engage (Tardanico, 2013).

   These highlighted leadership qualities are just a few of the various traits needed by a leader of a school or organization. There are many other qualities that are just as valuable and relevant. While leaders must possess these leadership traits and qualities, not all leaders will lead in the same manner. The style of leadership utilized by the leader

is dependent on their personality type and the needs of their organization or school. A few of the numerous leadership styles will be explored.

Leadership styles. Leaders utilize and employ different leadership styles based on their own individual personality and the needs of their campus. Each leadership style varies in terms of focus, goals and effectiveness. The leadership styles examined here will include servant leadership and transformational leadership as an example of leadership styles leaders may utilize. The concept of instructional leadership, which is the focus of this study, will be examined later in the chapter.

Servant leadership. Greenleaf first coined the term *servant leadership* in 1970 in his essay "The Servant as Leader." Servant leadership is leadership that focuses on being a servant first and a strong leader second. Greenleaf (2002) stated that, "the great leader is seen as servant first." The tenets of this style are that there should be mutual power and influence, collective and collaborative follower participation, high levels of follower learning, and an emphasis on significant follower empowerment (Lowder, 2009). Spears (2005) stated that there are 10 characteristics of a servant leader that are critical. Some of these components are explored below.

Listening. A servant leader must value listening to concerns, feedback, and suggestions in order to progress. A leader must be willing to hear the unfiltered feedback from team members (Tardanico, 2013). Listening to the team will give the leader new perspectives and allow the leader to understand the impact that is being made "in the trenches." Crippen (2010) stated that there is a "need for silence, reflection, meditation, active listening, and actually—hearing both what is said and what is unsaid." Greenleaf (1970) stated that, "true listening builds strength in other people."

Empathy. A servant leader must show empathy to the staff and members that are actively working on the vision and goal. The leader's support and empathy will encourage the members of the team to continue to keep pressing forward even in the face of hard situations. People are able to achieve when those who lead them empathize and accept them (Greenleaf, 1970).

Awareness. A leader must be aware of the situation and environment around them. They must be able to look critically and assess the plight of the school and the direction that is needed to keep progressing. Tardanico (2013) stated this as the ability to confront reality head on and know the true current state of the team. A servant leader must have a real and current understanding of the needs, strengths, and challenges of their organization.

Persuasion. A servant leader wants to convince others, not coerce compliance (Spears, 2005). Leaders persuade (Sanborn, 2015). A servant leader understands that members will be moved to action once they are convinced and persuaded to the mission. This persuasion does not happen as a top-down mandate but rather as a side-by-side explanation and clear vision sharing. Servant leaders use their power of persuasion by taking the time for consensus building through sharing power within the group (Crippen, 2010).

Conceptualization. A servant leader must generate a broad concept or vision for their school. This vision is critical to know the direction of the school and be able to lead the school to a greater destination. The leader must understand that there are short-term goals included in the longer term plans. As Myatt (2012) states, leaders must be "able to focus on short-term objectives without losing sight of long-term value."

Building community. A servant leader understands they must serve first and be a leader second. They focus on building a community environment that is determined and focused on meeting the goals of the entire group. They must work toward "breaking down barriers not building them" (Myatt, 2012) and stay committed to growing the people in their organization.

Servant leaders believe in people, listen to others, allow opportunities for growth, and create a shared vision for their organization (Lowder, 2009). The focus of a servant leader is the growth of others. They are committed to meeting the needs of their staff and securing the development of the staff to meet the needs of the organization.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on shared or distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leaders are "those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes" and "develop their own leadership capacity" (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These leaders want to restructure the school through improving school conditions (Stewart, 2006). The leader utilizing this style equips the team members with the necessary resources to achieve their goals and the larger mission of the school or organization. In a study by Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015), a statistically significant positive relationship was found between the factors of transformational leadership and the dimensions of school climate. Lowder (2009) analyzed four constructs of transformational leadership. Those four constructs are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized influence. Transformational leaders are driven visionaries that are able to see the needs of their organization and changing environment (Lowder, 2009).

Leaders must craft an appealing vision that takes into consideration the underlying needs

and values of the key stakeholders (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999). The leader is

able to implement and maintain conditions that are conducive to the needs of the staff and

team members while addressing any challenges as they arise. These leaders are admired,

trusted, and respected (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The leader seeks to make a positive

influence by modeling, maintaining a focus on other's needs, and upholding a positive

conduct (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Lowder, 2009).

Inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders lead their team by

exemplifying the behavior they expect to see in their staff. They create a strong culture

through modeling their expectations, maintaining a positive attitude, and demonstrating

in their own actions the actions they expect of those around them (Lowder, 2009). They

are able to motivate their staff, challenge others, and generate enthusiasm (Stewart,

2006). This focus on behaviors from the leader motivates staff members to model and

emulate the leader's actions and words.

Transformational leaders set high expectations for the success of the vision and

reward the behaviors and actions that help fulfill that goal (Eisenbach et al., 1999). They

engage staff members in helping to build a shared vision, which is key to strengthening

staff motivation and commitment (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). Staff members

need motivation and a constant reminder of the vision to stay focused and encouraged

toward the mission of the school. Transformational leaders help keep this motivation

high and inspire those around them (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation refers to the amount of academic

knowledge that the leader implements and encourages with the staff. School leaders

should continually educate the staff on current research practices and models. The staff should be given the resources and opportunities to think and explore new ideas based on best practice. The leader should encourage an environment of dialogue and continuous learning. To meet the needs of intellectual stimulation, leaders should 1) continually expose staff to cutting edge research and theory in effective schools, 2) keep informed themselves on current research and theory, and 3) foster discussion opportunities for the staff (Marzano et al., 2005).

A transformational leader encourages free-thinking within the group and intellectual stimulation. They encourage taking intellectual risks, rethinking how jobs can be performed and reexamine assumptions (Leithwood et al., 2010). They promote the creation of a culture that encourages team-decision making and behavioral control (Eisenbach et al., 1999). Transformational leaders allow their staff to create and implement ideas that will guide them toward the vision. These leaders encourage staff to greater innovations and creativity (Bass & Riggio, 2006). They support multiple ideas and embrace ideas that are generated by everyone in the organization.

Individual consideration. Transformational leadership includes a focus on the leadership being shared between all. The leader evaluates the individuals in the school and determines the unique characteristics, abilities, and beliefs that each member possesses. The leader then takes these into consideration and builds upon and encourages each member. This aspect of individualized consideration encourages individuals to achieve their own maximum potential and encourages their renewal (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The members feel valued and respected through this model. Their individual needs are addressed to the betterment of the whole.

There are a variety of leadership styles utilized by leaders. Many of the leadership styles have similarities between them. Most leadership styles include a component of creating a shared vision, giving staff support, setting high expectations, working closely with staff, and being open to feedback. It is the job of a principal to determine their individual leadership style and ensure that their style is conducive to what their school needs. The role and responsibilities of the principal is ever changing and demanding. School leaders are faced with the task of determining the appropriate leadership style while they adapt to their role as a leader.

School leadership characteristics and traits. In *School Leadership that Works*, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) examined 69 studies to examine the link between leadership characteristics and student achievement. They determined that highly effective leaders have a positive influence on student achievement. The purpose of their study was to determine which characteristics of leaders have the greatest impact on student success. The authors call these characteristics "responsibilities" and determined that there are 21 responsibilities that leaders should act upon to create an effective school for students.

In *10 Traits of Highly Effective Principals: From Good to Great*, McEwan-Evans (2003) examined and identified the 10 traits most often utilized by the highest performing principals. McEwan-Evans researched current literature surrounding leadership, management, and education, and then surveyed 175 individuals with a list of 37 leadership characteristics, asking them to decide which 10 traits were most important for a highly effective principal to possess. The surveyed 175 individuals resulted in 108 responders from the convenience survey. McEwan-Evans combined the results of the

survey with extensive research and determined the 10 traits of highly effective principals.

In *10 Traits of Highly Effective Schools*, McEwan-Evans (2009) studied five sources of information to determine the 10 common traits of effective schools. The author studied previous research on effective schools, which included the Effective Schools Movement and the International School Effectiveness Research Project. McEwan-Evans reviewed research on topics including instructional leadership and effective instruction, and also examined case studies of highly effective schools. The fourth source of data collected was interviews with various people who helped shaped certain effective schools, such as principals, consultants, and central office administrators. The last source of research utilized was McEwan-Evans's own personal experiences as a school administrator.

A compiled list of characteristics and traits of effective schools will be examined next. These characteristics and traits provide further background information and a general guide to traits and behaviors of schools that are effective.

Affirmation. Marzano et al. (2005) refer to affirmation as the extent to which the school leader acknowledges the successes and failures of the school. The school leader has a responsibility to publicly recognize student and staff success but also to publicly recognize the failures of each group. When a school leader only acknowledges the successes, and ignores the failures during the year, it can set a poor example to those who are working the hardest to increase the success. Affirming behavior states that school leaders must recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of students and teachers while also recognizing the failures of the entire school.

Contingent rewards. When a school leader recognizes a staff member for a job well done, that leader is operating under a contingent rewards behavior. School leaders should reward individual accomplishments and demonstrate to the staff that they notice when staff members go above and beyond in their profession. School leaders should use the hard work of staff members as the basis for any recognition and rewards and base the rewards on performance and not seniority. Administrators should recognize specific contributions and actions by staff and reward those staff members so they know they are appreciated.

Culture. A strong leader develops a culture that has a positive impact on the campus. A positive culture is key to influencing the teachers who then influence the students. In order to achieve the vision for the school, an effective principal must know how to shape the culture of the school (Spiro, 2013). Each school determines the needs of their students and therefore the needs that the school culture should embody. The school culture can vary between a focus on specific reading goals, a high percentage of graduations, maintaining achievement goals and many other aspects. Marzano et al. (2005) define culture as "the extent to which the leader fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation among staff" (p. 48). The authors determined that there are four behaviors associated with the responsibility of culture: 1) leaders promote cohesion among staff, 2) leaders promote a sense of well-being, 3) leaders develop an understanding of purpose, and 4) leaders develop a shared vision (Marzano et al., 2005).

Principals are a key agent in building, maintaining, and developing the culture of their school. They are charged with the task of shaping the relationships, behaviors, and attitudes that are exemplified every day in their school building. School leaders can only

be a strong agent for building culture if they have a strong reputation and personal

accountability in their actions. The stakeholders of a school are following the actions of

the leaders, and as McEwan-Evans (2003) states, "a culture builder is an individual who

communicates and models a strong and viable vision based on achievement, character,

personal responsibility, and accountability" (p. 101). The leader should walk the walk

and not just say what is expected to be heard.

 Flexibility. Flexibility is important when leading any organization. This

flexibility allows the leader to determine the needs of their organization and make the

necessary adjustments and modifications. When school leaders are faced with the tough

task of leading a school, flexibility is a key component for the leader to be able to adapt

and adjust the leadership skills being utilized to a leadership skill that may be more

conducive to the needs of the school. A leader must be able to determine the goal of a

situation and be flexible if the current leadership skills being utilized are not working.

The four specific behaviors specified with this responsibility are 1) adapting leadership

styles to the needs of the specific situation, 2) determining if the situation warrants a

directive or a nondirective approach, 3) encouraging all staff members to express

contrary and diverse opinions, and 4) being comfortable to make changes that may have a

major effect on how things are done (Marzano et al., 2005).

 Input. School leaders should value the input of their staff members on important

decisions and practices that are employed by the school. Seeking input from staff

members helps leaders determine effective systems, supports, and goals for the campus.

The leader will be able to make decisions based on current issues and topics specific to

their campus. The specific behaviors that align to input are 1) providing opportunities for

staff to be involved in developing school policies, 2) seeking input from all staff on important decisions, and 3) utilizing leadership teams in decision making (Marzano et al., 2005).

Optimizer. An optimizer is one who can inspire staff to implement changes and make a positive difference for students. Optimizers establish a positive environment in the school and share this enthusiasm with the staff at all times. This optimism aids the staff in staying focused on the goals and visions for the school. School leaders must be optimizers to inspire their staff members to create systems of success for students. School leaders who are optimizers demonstrate the following behaviors: 1) inspire teachers to accomplish things usually beyond their grasp, 2) be the driving force behind major initiatives, and 3) portray a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things (Marzano et al., 2005).

Relationships. Strong and positive relationships are central to any organization's success. A school leader must create and maintain positive, professional relationships with all stakeholders. To create a positive school climate, there must be value placed on various relationships involving students, teachers, family, administration, staff, and community members (Noonan, 2005). Relationships and connections should be made with staff members so they know the leader is concerned with their well-being and success along with that of the school overall. School leaders should be intentional about building relationships and becoming invested in their staff members' lives. Behaviors associated with this responsibility are 1) being informed about specific personal issues in the lives of staff, 2) being aware of personal needs of teachers, 3) acknowledging significant events in the lives of staff members, and 4) maintaining personal relationships

with teachers (Marzano et al., 2005).

     ***Situational awareness*.** Leaders should be aware of current situations in their school. They must pay careful attention to the environment and any issues that may arise. School leaders must know how to respond to challenges and work proactively to minimize distractions to the learning environment. In order to fulfill the responsibility of situational awareness, leaders must demonstrate the behaviors of 1) accurately predicting what could go wrong from day to day, 2) being aware of informal groups and relationships among staff, and 3) being aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord (Marzano et al., 2005).

     ***Educator*.** McEwan-Evans (2003) determined from the study that the trait that received the second highest amount of responses was that of an instructional leader. McEwan-Evans chose to call this trait "educator" because it encompasses the terms *instructional leader*, *ability to teach adults*, *ability to teach students*, and *knowledgeable about teaching and learning*. McEwan-Evans found that schools that contain principals who are strong instructional leaders produce students who are stronger academically. A principal as an educator is able to teach and instruct both adults and students by modeling continuous learning. Principals who are successful educators are able to accomplish this by focusing on instruction believing that all students can learn, and they develop programs to help them succeed. They create learning communities, develop teacher leaders, and provide training and support for teachers. McEwan-Evans (2003) also states that educators create cognitive dissonance and encourage discussion about long-held beliefs. It is important that they establish, implement, and achieve academic standards while paying attention to what matters most, which is the teaching and learning in the

school.

Envisioner. One of a principal's roles in leading a school is setting a strong

vision for that school. The principal must be able to "see" where they would like their

school to be in the future and take actions toward that vision. Principals of both high-

and low-performing schools must have expectations of success for their school and

students.

McEwan-Evans (2003) defines an envisioner as "an individual who is motivated

by a sense of calling and purpose, focused on a vision of what schools can be, and guided

by a mission that has the best interests of all students at its core" (p. 52). The researcher

has determined that there are seven benchmarks of principals who see themselves as an

envisioner. Envisioners are hedgehogs and block out any unnecessary elements. They

can see the invisible, know where they are headed, and establish a mission statement.

They have compelling visions and can articulate their visions and make them happen.

Envisioners have resolve, goals, and life-vision and feel called to help students.

Facilitator. School leaders have the unique responsibility to organize a diverse

group of stakeholders into one unit to accomplish the most important goal of educating

students. The principal as a facilitator must be able not only to build relationships but

maintain those relationships, as well. The facilitator must be able to create a unified team

that consists of parents, teachers, students, and community members.

McEwan-Evans (2003) states that facilitators value diversity, bond people into a

community of leaders, and say "we" instead of "I." They favor people over paperwork,

tap the potential of people, and share the "power pie" with staff members. Facilitators

build up emotional bank accounts with others and remember to cultivate their own well-

being and take care of themselves. Facilitators accentuate the positives and celebrate accomplishments frequently. They also promote parental involvement and spend time with students.

Change master. Educators are faced with changes in the educational system constantly. A highly effective principal, according to McEwan-Evans (2003), is a leader who can navigate the waters of change and motivate the staff during any changes. McEwan-Evans defines change master as "a flexible, futuristic, and realistic leader, able to motivate as well as manage change in an organized, positive and enduring fashion" (p. 86). To be an effective change master, principals must be able to reach and achieve the benchmarks identified by McEwan-Evans.

Change masters can handle uncertainty and ambiguity, respect resisters, and are motivators. They know that the power is within, great ideas come from current staff, and they trust their teams. Change masters plan for short-term victories, provide resources, and look toward the future. They understand the change process, value the process, and are willing to change themselves. They know which approach to use in each situation.

When a school leader acts as a change master, they are challenging the practices that have been in place in their school previously. The leader must critically analyze whether policies and procedures that have been in place over the years are adequate for the current needs of the school. The leader must be willing to accept and mitigate through the adversity and pushback that may come from staff members when changes are being implemented. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) asserted that first-order changes and second-order changes are important, and the distinctions between the two should be addressed. First-order changes are based on previous beliefs and are simple,

minor changes that do not challenge the values, beliefs, or structures of the school.

Second-order changes will dramatically break with the past expectations and challenge

existing values, norms, and expectations (Waters et al., 2004). Skilled leaders understand

the value and importance of both levels of changes and take careful steps during the

implementation process.

The leader must also stay resilient and committed to any new changes that are

imposed. Change masters must 1) consciously challenge what has been done, 2) be

willing to lead change without knowing the outcomes, 3) consider new and better ways of

doing things in a conscious manner, and 4) operate on the edge of the school's

competence versus the center of it (Marzano et al., 2005).

Activator. Highly effective principals are ones who are able to activate the

strengths of those around them. This can entail activating teachers to try new ideas or

partnering with neighboring businesses for innovations needed at the school. School

leaders who are activators are not afraid to take risks and seek out new opportunities.

They are ready and willing to try those ideas that may be beneficial for the students and

are willing to risk being told no. Activator principals are the ones who are the first to

volunteer for exciting initiatives and are motivated to try the next great thing. Principals

who are activators embody the 10 benchmarks, according to McEwan-Evans (2003).

They mobilize people without micromanaging. Activators are outrageous,

entrepreneurial, and cheerleaders for their school. These leaders don't wait to be told, are

risk takers, ask for forgiveness rather than permission, and make things happen. They

run to daylight and take advantage of opportunities.

Character builder. McEwan-Evans (2003) defines a character builder as "a role

model whose values, words, and deeds are marked by trustworthiness, integrity, authenticity, respect, generosity, and humility" (p.149). A principal leads their community by building character every day through their own individual actions. There are eleven benchmarks that should be exemplified by these leaders. Character builders are human, humble, and learn from their mistakes. They are trustworthy, authentic, consistent, respectful, and generous. These leaders have integrity, hire staff members with character, and lead by example, not by exhortation. Character builders also seek to develop the character of students.

Contributor. McEwan-Evans (2003) identified the trait of being a contributor. The four benchmarks that are needed by leaders who are contributors sum up the characteristics and needs. A principal must contribute to the school environment in a positive and effective manner. The leader should not take from the school but consistently give strong input to the school through service, actions, and deeds. Contributors lead by serving others and are self-aware and reflective. They are good stewards and have strong wills.

Relational trust. Relational trust is developed when there is mutual respect among a school's stakeholders of parents, students, staff, and administrators. This trust is important for stakeholders to take ownership of the mission and goals of the school and aid in improvement. Staff and parents must have a mutual respect without regard to social status or personal beliefs. The staff members should show parents that they care about them and their students through their actions. Teachers and administrators must show that they are competent to complete their job and educate the students. All staff members must show a personal regard for the needs of the parents and students to aid in

the development of relational trust and must uphold to a high standard of integrity.

*Accountability***.** A trait highlighted by McEwan-Evans (2009) is the trait of

accountability. Highly effective schools hold themselves accountable to the achievement

of their students. Accountability becomes the norm of a school when a majority of the

teachers believe that student achievement is possible. Highly effective schools maintain

internal accountability and are externally accountable. They believe internally that they

are responsible for their students' success and hold high expectations for their students.

These schools are held externally accountable by state testing standards and requirements

of NCLB and now ESSA. Effective schools adhere to a continuous improvement cycle

that celebrates success while setting the next level of goals for the students and the school

as a whole.

Role of the Principal

The expected role of the principal has changed over the years. Principals were

thought to be fully responsible for being the "manager and responsible for management

of the local school" (Ediger, 2014, p. 265). As regulations and requirements of schools

and school leaders have changed through the implementation of NCLB, the principal role

has evolved to include increased instructional leadership. The principal now serves as an

aspirational leader, a team builder, a coach, and an agent of visionary change (Alvoid &

Black, 2014). The principal's role must "shift from a focus on management and

administration to a focus on leadership and vision" (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 438).

Principals establish a vision and purpose for their school to create an effective

school environment. Principals utilize a variety of strategies and resources in order to

maintain an effective school. The principal is still responsible for the management of the

school building and oversees the necessities of schedules, safety, and daily operations. The increased roles of the principal now include building climate and culture, mentoring and leading teachers, and guiding instruction. Habegger (2008) wrote, "Today's principal is constantly multitasking and shifting roles at a moment's notice" (p. 42).

The focus of principals and assistant principals has changed from the concept of "busses, butts and books" mentality to that of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is described by King (2002) as "anything that leaders do to improve teaching and learning in their schools and districts" (p. 62). School leaders focus on instructional leadership by planning professional development, assessing data, making data-driven decisions, and spending time focused on teaching and learning. They are consistently focused on the particular needs of their school. Administrators must determine the most pressing issues and needs for their campuses, which can range from assessing student achievement data, increasing the rigor, creating a safe school environment, and many more focus points (King, 2002). Principals often utilize a diversity of approaches to achieve successful instructional leadership (Dwyer, 1984). Along with achieving high levels of instructional leadership, Dufour (2004) asserts that principals should also address matters of the heart while leading schools.

School leaders are presented with many challenges in their roles as leaders. They often serve in the capacity of facilities manager, assessment expert, educational visionary, and more (Tobin, 2014). They must understand the requirements of the school while addressing the needs with all of stakeholders' interests and desires in mind. An effective leader must know positive characteristics of leaders, the various styles of leadership, the needs of their campus, and the components that work in schools to create an effective

environment. High-performing schools have historically had strong leadership from the building principal (Wilson, 2011).

The Principal and Student Achievement

While teachers are the most important factor for a student's success, principals play a critical role in the achievement of the students on their campus. Leadership is the second most important factor that contributes to student learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The ideas and systems that a principal establishes for their students can help aid in the achievement of the students. Gaziel (2007) states that although teachers have a direct impact on student achievement, there is an indirect influence on student learning where the principal creates a school environment that helps facilitate student learning.

Principals shape the achievement of students by the practices and policies they enact in their schools. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) note that the principal's positive behavior can positively impact the school climate and their teachers which can have a positive impact on student achievement. Principals need to be aware of the behaviors that influence the teachers to have an added effect on student achievement (Onorato, 2013). A case study by Ovando and Cavazos (2004) revealed that the common characteristics of principals in two high performing high school schools served as instructional leaders by shaping the schools' culture, monitoring the instructional program and empowering teachers. Principals with effective leadership improve teaching and learning by influencing the teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning (Brockmeier et al., 2013).

Leithwood, et al. (2004) constructed the following framework to explain the critical role principals play in impacting student learning through involving stakeholders, navigating school and classroom conditions, accounting for family backgrounds and leading teachers. Principals are able to play this important role with the impact of district state and background factors at hand.

1
State leadership, policies, and practices

e.g.

standards

testing

funding

2
District leadership, policies, and practices

e.g.

standards

curriculum alignment

use of data

9
Leaders' professional learning experiences

e.g.

socialization

mentoring

formal preparation

3
Student/ family background

e.g.

family educational culture

4
School leadership

5
Other stakeholder

e.g.

unions

community groups

business

media

6
School conditions

e.g.

culture/ community

school improvement planning

7
Teachers

e.g.

individuals' capacity

professional community

8
Classroom conditions

e.g.

content of instruction

nature of instruction

student assessment

10
Student learning

Figure 1. How leadership influences student learning framework.

Adapted from Leithwood, K, Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved January 28, 2017 from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.pdf

The principal's role in student achievement does matter. School leadership influences student achievement (Soehner & Ryan, 2011). Soehner and Ryan (2011) conclude that principals at any school level are the foundation for instructional leadership. The leadership by a principal has been known to be instrumental in the success of a school (Wilson, 2011). Schools that have transformed from low performing to high performing could not have achieved the increased student achievement with a strong leader (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Strong leaders understand the importance of improving instructional practices for their schools and supporting teachers. They consistently engage in the daily work that improves learning. These leaders are focused on monitoring students, analyzing data, guiding the instruction in the classrooms and enabling the factors that create an effective school.

Conceptual framework: Creating an effective school environment. The conceptual framework for this study is guided by the theory that there are specific strategies utilized by principals to create an effective school environment which can relate to increased student achievement. Establishing an environment of effective leadership in a school system is critically important for the success of the school. Marzano (2003) found that students in an effective school outperform students in ineffective schools. The beginning of an effective school starts with the leadership of that school. The leadership of the school has the task of determining the needs of the school, creating a plan to address those needs, and then putting systems in place for the plans to be successful. This task of placing plans in place does not come by chance. There must be leadership strategies in place for the plans to take root, gain commitment from the school community, and gather success. The importance of creating effective

schools has been explored and examined over the years. The Wallace Foundation (2013)

has examined research over the past 10 years of effective schools and determined five

key practices that effective principals do. Those five key practices are:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.

- Creating a climate hospitable to education.

- Cultivating leadership in others.

- Improving instruction.

- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

One of the first educators to truly examine and determine what it takes for a

principal to be effective for leading a school is Lezotte. Lezotte (1991) studied the

effective schools movement and studied several correlates of what make a school

successful. Lezotte's correlates include the following:

- A safe and orderly environment

- A climate of high expectations for success

- Supporting and developing teachers

- Strong instructional leadership

- A clear and focused mission

- An opportunity to learn and keep student time on task

- Frequent monitoring of student progress

- Building home-school relations

These correlates, along with supporting and developing teachers, will help lay a strong

foundation of the systems and practices that must be in place to help create an

environment of effective leadership.

In *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action,* Marzano (2003) reviewed 35 years of research to determine the various factors that comprise effective schools. This research determined factors that can be divided into the three areas of school-level factors, teacher-level factors, and student-level factors. The school-level factors encompass the decisions made by the school and the leaders along with initiatives imposed by the school. The teacher-level factors include the areas that are under the control of the teacher, which include items such as classroom management, curriculum, and instruction. The student-level factors comprise the various factors associated with students, including areas such as environment, background, and intelligence. This paper will examine the school-level factors relevant to this study.

Marzano (2003) determined that there are five components that comprise the school-level factors: 1) guaranteed and viable curriculum, 2) challenging goals and effective feedback, 3) parent and community involvement, 4) safe and orderly environment, and 5) collegiality and professionalism.

The components and correlates of both Marzano and Lezotte, along with other researchers will be the focus in the next part of this chapter and the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework for this study is highlighted by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) Conceptual Framework developed by Hallinger in 1982 and in the figure below. The importance of the concept of instructional leadership will be further explored and discussed along with the identified practices and correlates of an effective school.

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┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
│  Defining the   │   │ Managing the    │   │ Developing the  │
│ School Mission  │   │ Instructional   │   │ School Learning │
│                 │   │ Program         │   │ Climate Program │
└─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘
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Defining the School Mission	Managing the Instructional Program	Developing the School Learning Climate Program
Frames the School's Goals	Coordinates the Curriculum	Protects Instructional Time
Communicates the School's Goals	Supervises & Evaluates Instruction	Provides Incentives for Teachers
	Monitors Student Progress	Provides Incentives for Learning
		Promotes Professional Development
		Maintains High Visibility

Figure 2. PIMRS conceptual framework.
Represents the conceptual framework for this study and is the PIMRS conceptual framework. Adapted from Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). *Assessing the instructional leadership behavior of principals.* Elementary School Journal, 86(2), 217-248.

Instructional Leadership

It is important for the role of the principal to be that of an instructional leader versus that of a building manager being over "bells, buildings, and buses" (Stewart, 2013, p. 54). The term instructional leader does not imply that the leader must know the entire curriculum for every student, but that the leader will serve as a guide to the instruction that is taking place on the campus. The principal sets the tone and expectations for teaching and learning at the instructional leader in today's schools (Church, 2009).

Warren and Kelsen (2013) stated that "principals account for 25% of the school level impact on student achievement" (p. 21). The contrast was also found to be true: that an ineffective principal could lower the student achievement rate by the same two-to-seven-month range. The most effective principals understand their importance but also understand the importance of developing a leadership and instructional team to guide the instruction on campus. Cotton (2005) states that a key determinant of school achievement results is the principal's strong focus on academics.

The importance of developing school leaders into instructional leaders has prompted some districts to create systems that train leaders to further grow their teachers. The Fresno Unified School District has created a system that develops leaders and helps the building principals provide feedback and support to their teachers (Almy, Tooley, & Trust, 2012). The purpose of this program was to improve instruction for students and the results have shown that the students have been successful since its implementation. "A strong instructional leader was the most important factor" when creating a system to improve and turn around schools (Almy & Tooley, 2012, p. 15).

Instructional leaders focus their attention on the instructional quality of the school (Jenkins, 2009) and make the task of teaching and instruction their top priority. Instructional leadership determines that the principal's role in the school is to coordinate, control, supervise, and develop curriculum and instruction in the school (Hallinger, 2003). The leader's focus is on how the instruction is being delivered to students and how the leader can serve in a role to improve this instruction.

Hallinger (2003) observed that instructional leaders possess six qualities that make them successful in their role:

1. Instructional leadership characterizes the role of the school principal as one of coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school.

2. Instructional leadership is generally associated with elementary school principals.

3. Instructional leaders are usually conceived to be strong, directive leaders.

4. Instructional leaders are hands-on principals, work with teachers and are entrenched in curriculum and instruction.

5. Instructional leaders are goal-oriented, focusing on the improvement of student academic outcomes.

6. Instructional leaders are culture builders.

Instructional leaders focus on defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school-learning climate. These three areas of focus are important to the instructional leader to develop the environment of effective instruction that is critical to student success. Each of these three focus areas has key instructional functions that promote the overall goal.

The instructional leader's role in defining the school mission is key to move all stakeholders in the same directions. The leader must frame the school's goals and communicate the goals (Hallinger, 2003) to the staff, parents, and community. When the leader communicates the goals and vision, more support can be gathered and generated to promote this vision. The leader needs the support of all stakeholders for the vision to flourish.

Managing the instructional program is a key component of the instructional leadership style. The instructional program and needs of a school are varied and require the attention of the leader through various forms. Hallinger (2003) stated that the three leadership functions include supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. These functions of managing the instructional program are the required steps and processes needed to maintain a strong instructional focus that leads students to success. A successful instructional leader needs to understand the curriculum, know effective instructional practices and be able to demonstrate various assessment strategies (Jenkins, 2009).

Instructional leaders understand that a positive school-learning climate is critical to improving the culture of a school and success of the students. A positive climate serves to protect instructional time, promote professional development, maintain high visibility, provide incentives for teachers, and provide incentives for learning (Hallinger, 2003).

An instructional leader must understand the various components of instruction and climate on their campus. Their role is linked to the curriculum, and they must possess a strong knowledge of instructional practices to lead the staff to improve the environment and learning outcomes for their students. Defining the school mission, managing the instructional program and developing the school learning climate create key aspects of being an instructional leader.

Defining the School Mission

Framing a clear and focused mission. The ideals and beliefs that are held by school leaders are critical components to the school. Leaders must establish a clear set of

beliefs for their campus and demonstrate their commitment to those ideals during the school year. These ideals help shape the vision, mission and focus of the school. One of the first tasks of a leader is to determine the needed mission, vision, and focus for their organization. This factor can be seen across a variety of settings and styles of business. Articulating a shared vision and sense of purpose for the school is an important role of the administration (Noonan, 2005). Leaders must determine the needs of the individual campus and create the top priorities for their school. In successful schools, the principals and other leaders communicate what the school stands for to all stakeholders in a language that they understand (Cotton, 2005). It is important that leaders articulate the mind-sets and beliefs that guide the school and make the school unique (Kinney & Tomlin, 2013).

The success of the mission is determined by the resolve of the leader to focus on the outcome and gather support for this. Highly successful principals demonstrate this resolve and become relentless and continuously invested in the primary mission (Streshly & Gray, 2008). There must be a primary focus when the leader determines the mission and, as Streshly and Gray (2008) mention, leaders need to create an almost "hedgehog" mindset to zoom in on the desired outcome with conviction to see it through.

School leaders must maintain a clear focus in the needs of their school. Leaders need to properly identify the focus areas that are most likely to impact their school's student achievement in a positive manner (Waters et al., 2004). Far too often schools and districts adopt and try new innovations and ideas. Problems arise when there are too many changes. Changes too often can create an environment where no one project is seen through to completion. The staff and school try one idea for a few years and then

switch without fully realizing the potential of the innovation tried. School leaders must ensure that too many changes do not occur and that a clear vision is adhered to and followed. Specific behaviors outlined by Marzano et al. (2005) to create and maintain focus are 1) concrete goals must be established for curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 2) establish concrete goals for the functioning of the school; 3) establish high goals for all students to meet that are concrete; and 4) keep close attention to the goals.

To achieve success for students, school leaders must have a clear focus on academics (McEwan-Evans, 2009). The entire school must stay focused on academic success and goals for students. Administrators, teachers, and students all have a role to play in individual success. School leaders must monitor instruction and provide consistent feedback to teachers. A "relentless attention to daily, monthly, and yearly academic goals is the secret to success" in schools (McEwan-Evans, 2009). The four criteria, according to McEwan-Evans (2009), that are evident in highly effective schools regarding focus are 1) beginning with an academic vision, 2) articulating a meaningful shared mission statement, 3) setting goals that are measurable and attainable, and 4) ensuring a focus on student learning. These criteria areas streamline the focus and attention to that of academic success.

Communicating the school's goals. Effective communication is an essential part of being an effective leader. Clear guidelines, processes, and procedures should be in place for staff to be able to have conversations with the administration and have their voices heard. Halawah (2005) found "creating a collaborative environment and open communication has been described as the single most important factor for successful school improvement initiatives" (p. 341). A school leader should be accessible to the

staff with open forums that allow for two-way communication. Successful principals listen and receive suggestions from staff (Cotton, 2005). Specific behaviors associated with this responsibility according to Marzano et al., (2005) are 1) developing effective ways for teachers to communicate with each other, 2) school leaders being accessible to staff easily, and 3) maintaining open lines of effective communication with staff.

McEwan-Evans (2003) stated that the first trait necessary for an effective school was the ability to communicate effectively. Principals are communicating every day and minute while on the job (McEwan-Evans, 2003). Leaders are communicating by listening to the needs of their campus, speaking with all stakeholders, writing responses, and reading. Principals communicate via body language, by their actions, and even by their non-actions. Principals should utilize active listening to ensure that communication is frequent, timely and transparent (Kinney & Tomlin, 2013). McEwan-Evans (2003) states that a communicator is "a genuine and open human being with the capacity to listen, empathize, interact, and connect with individual students, parents, and teachers in productive, helping, and healing ways, as well as the ability to teach, present, and motivate people in larger group settings" (p. 19).

McEwan-Evans (2003) determined that there are 19 communicator benchmarks. These benchmarks are the skills that should be utilized by principals to become strong and effective communicators. A leader who is a strong communicator is able to attend to the conversation at hand and stay focused to the individual or group that is sitting in front of them. They listen attentively through eye contact and body language, empathize with the issues of others, and utilize self-disclosure to make connections with others.

Communicators ensure they determine the full story, ask the right questions and have all of the supporting details. It is important for them to say what they mean and mean what they say. Communication is a two-way skill where communicators are able to accept criticism and are able to give correction in a constructive and appropriate manner and know the art of agreeing to disagree. Being able to speak, write, and teach others is key along with being able to communicate creatively and proactively. Communicators connect emotionally and professionally with staff to build trust and respect and connect with staff, students, and parents in productive, helping, and healing ways.

The importance of communication is not just important to staff but to those outside of the school as well. Communicators pay attention to parents, gather the information, and take action if needed. They communicate in a variety of ways with students while also being able to speak effectively with their boss and know how to schmooze for the betterment of their school.

Developing the School Learning Climate

Safe and orderly environment. Lezotte (1991) first utilized the concept of creating a safe and orderly environment with the lens of a safe structural environment that was also free of student behavior issues. These components are needed to help assure students that coming to school will be a safe place for them. This issue is most important in schools where safety outside of the school is a greater concern. In a study conducted in high-poverty areas by Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, and Ylimake (2007), it was noted that one of the first things a new principal in the area did was create a safe environment for the students. This was done by physically securing the building with locked doors, creating a system for entrance, and limiting visitation. The principals at

these schools also created an environment where they were more visible, supportive of teacher decisions, and established discipline for students when needed. These factors helped establish an environment for these schools to be successful. Cotton (2005) stated that maintaining a safe and orderly school is the most fundamental element of effectiveness identified by research.

A safe and secure school is essential to allow a student to focus on the needed task of learning. Excellent schools are successful in protecting their students (Merrow, 2004). While securing a school is not the most glamorous aspect of being a school leader, it is critically important. A truly safe school fosters a climate where all stakeholders (teachers, students, staff, visitors, and administrators) are able to interact in a positive manner and focused on the educational mission of the school while building relationships and individual growth (Bucher & Manning, 2005).

A safe and orderly environment is key to a school's success. When teachers and students do not feel safe, they are not prepared for the job of teaching and learning (Marzano, 2003). Schools should have rules and procedures in place for the daily operations of the school. There should be systems in place for visitors, access to students, and other environmental factors. The internal safety measures of the school should be monitored as well as the routines and expectations that happen during the school day. Each school should have systems for how behavioral concerns and teacher concerns are addressed. Educators must ensure that the policies they adopt and enforce are equitable and appropriate to help eliminate inappropriate actions (Bucher & Manning, 2005). The rules established by the school must be enforced with consistent consequences for rule violations.

Climate of high expectations for success. In some of the most challenging schools and areas around the country, schools are still succeeding. In researching what effective schools around the nation are doing to be successful, a common theme can be found of leaders who set a high expectation for all students and then put plans in place for the success. A strong leader will become unwavering in their belief that all students can be successful. As Lezotte (2010) stated, "teachers at effective schools genuinely believe that every kid has the raw materials to be a successful student." The entire school community must hold this belief and expectation and leaders must ensure that the environment is in place for this success to happen. The systems put in place at schools must be established to improve learning.

In a study about urban leaders (Knapp et al., 2010), it was noted that there was an emphasis that the learning of each child mattered and education should be approached in a way to address each child's needs. The establishment of high expectations is for all students on a campus. Leaders must encourage, promote, and develop the capacity for all students to learn at their highest level in spite of any challenges. Stewart (2013) has found that "school leadership is second only to teaching in its effects on student learning."

Similar studies have also found that the expectation of high standards is key at successful schools. Wilson (2007) found that the schools that are effective build the belief that all students can learn and need curriculum that is both relevant and rigorous. This standard is applied regardless of whether the student has academic challenges. Each school may contain students that need accommodations to be successful. Some of the students may be in a special education program, be an English language learner, or need

accommodations through the 504 program. Leadership must establish an expectation that regardless of a student's needs, they can succeed. High-achieving schools are successful due to the fact that the leadership communicates to everyone in the school their high performance expectations (Cotton, 2005). Strong leadership is needed to guide and lead a school to set high expectations and communicate these expectations to all.

In highly effective schools, educators in those schools believe that all of their students can achieve. They set high expectations for the students, and McEwan-Evans (2009) has identified this trait of high expectations as an essential trait in highly effective schools. Teachers that set and hold high expectations for their students believe their own self-efficacy. They believe that they can make an impact and facilitate academic success for their students. Not only do the teachers believe in self-efficacy, they believe that there is a strong collective efficacy at their school. They hold to the belief that everyone is equipped to make an academic impact.

Schools that set high expectations communicate these expectations in a variety of ways. These schools set high expectations for all students and include their special education students in the same goals as the non-special education students. Schools will also teach students work habits and study skills. They emphasize the need for extra practice and work. When setting high expectations for students, school staff must be mindful to eliminate any low expectations. Careful instruction and word selection is used to convey the belief that all the students can succeed. Other ways to build the belief in high expectations is by incorporating rigor into lesson plans and setting up systems to help students before they fail (McEwan-Evans, 2009). While establishing goals for students and working towards those goals, higher successful schools intervene with

students when they are not on track to meet their expected goals.

Promoting professional development and high quality teachers. Retaining high-quality teachers is often a focus of research and studies. The hiring and development of teachers currently on a campus becomes critically important for school leaders. In the book *What Great Principals Do Differently*, Whitaker (2002) focuses on the people and supports in place in a school. One of the top priorities outlined in the book is that it is people, not programs, who make an impact on the education and environment of the school. School leaders should try to hire the best teachers available and spend their time and funding on people. Since principals cannot always hire an entire staff for their school, they must also focus on the professional development of the teachers currently on the campus.

Schools need high quality teachers to meet the needs of the students, and it is one of the school leader's primary responsibilities to provide the resources and tools the teachers require to teach effectively. Teachers need resources in order to provide quality instruction to students. Professional development and opportunities for teacher learning are key resources teachers need regularly. Leaders must ensure that the teaching professionals have the updated professional learning opportunities to stay current with best practice and research. Leaders should also ensure that teachers have as much time as possible to plan effective instruction for students. Leaders should ensure teachers have the necessary materials and equipment and the necessary staff development opportunities to directly enhance their teaching (Marzano et al., 2005).

The teachers in place will impact their classroom and maintain the other standards put in place in the school. Whitaker (2002) suggests that school leaders and, in this case,

principals base decisions on the best teachers. Great teachers can be found in all schools. And the opposite can also be true. As stated by Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin (2013), "teachers who leave schools with the most successful principals are much more likely to have been among the less effective teachers" (p. 63). The decision to base instructional and community practices on the best teachers helps to ensure that the focus and outcomes align with those who are already successful.

Collins (2001) echoes this sentiment in the book *Good to Great* when the author places an emphasis on the "who then what" in a system. The right people are needed on the staff to obtain the desired results. Just as the information provided by Warren and Kelsen (2013) suggests that leaders account for 25% of student achievement, then 75% of student achievement is accounted for by other factors. One of these factors includes the strategies put in place by the teacher. A smart leader will focus on these influences and develop a system that continues what strong teachers are doing in their classroom.

Principals in high-performing, instructionally effective schools create collaborative working relationships (Cotton, 2005). Staff members should collaborate on the academics needed by students for them to be successful. They should meet in professional learning communities with a focus on teaching and learning. A strong school schedule helps facilitate increased collaboration among the teachers (Minette, 2007). All staff members in highly effective schools are continually learning as professionals so they can improve their school. The collaboration among professionals is important to maintain a positive, productive school climate (Styron & Nyma, 2008). Collaboration facilitates sharing, reflecting and creating a positive learning environment for the students (Kinney & Tomlin, 2013).

There are many benefits to collaboration in a school, as identified by McEwan-Evans (2009). Some of these benefits include commitment to the goals of the school, higher morale, more satisfaction, advances in adapting teaching to students, and shared responsibility among teachers. When collaboration is utilized in schools, instructional, academic, and leadership capacity is increased in teachers, students, and administrators.

Every staff member should work in a professional, collaborative and cooperative manner. Staff members should work in a collegial manner with each other and demonstrate the attributes of being collegial. Collegiality is a way to connect with other staff members on a personal level, share advice, and develop new ideas and models of teaching (Nelson, Caldarella, Adams, & Shatzer, 2013). Administrators must recognize how teacher relationships impact student performance and provide opportunities for teachers to interact to strengthen their personal and professional relationships (Styron & Nyman, 2008).

When teachers believe they are able to make an impact and affect change, they are more willing to contribute new ideas. This also helps them view their job in a professional manner and continue to seek new learning opportunities through professional development or continued academic studies. Specific and targeted professional development will help generate additional skills by the teachers that support the school's goals (Brewer, 2001).

The quality of school leadership and the work environment in a school has a stronger influence on teachers than the student factors of that school (Almy, Tooley, & Trust, 2012). In order to create effective schools, Almy, Tooley, and Trust (2012) suggest that leaders need to recognize, reward, and support good teachers. The

responsibility of creating teacher quality by supporting, evaluating, and developing each teacher rests on the school leader and this responsibility is linked to student outcomes (Stewart, 2013).

Opportunity to learn and student time on task. The main focus of the educational system is the education of students. Leadership must ensure that the primary focus is always set on student success. To improve a student's academic potential, the school must provide opportunities for the student to learn and learn at high levels. The system must include measures that maximize time and provide resources and interventions for all students. Teachers often complain of not having enough time. Research has shown that instructional time is often lost during the day to interruptions (Cotton, 2005). Principals must create a discipline structured approach to protect the instructional time of teachers. Marzano et al. (2005) refer to discipline as a buffering or protection concept versus the traditional definition of discipline. The authors believed that school leaders should limit distractions during the school day and act as a buffer from both internal and external distractions so teachers can focus on the importance of teaching and protect the instructional time from disruptions.

Leadership often involves making the tough and heavy decisions that may not always be preferred by the school community but help to protect the opportunity to learn for students. These decisions can include elements of creating an order in the school day through scheduling, limiting school disruptions, trips and performances, systems for student management and managing visitors on campus. A school must have order to create an environment conducive to learning. School leaders must systematically put structures and practices in place that establish order in the school. Marzano et al. (2005)

identified three behaviors associated with creating order as 1) establishing routines that staff know and follow to maintain smooth operation of the school, 2) providing and maintaining clear structures, rules, and procedures for staff, and 3) providing and reinforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for students. Creating order in a school allows for increased opportunities for students to learn.

One element of creating an opportunity for students to learn is preserving the amount of time students have to be on task and focused. Effective leaders realize that they need a school schedule that will support teachers (Minette, 2007). A school leader must be willing to make a decision based on all of the factors and be willing to support their decision even in the face of opposition. The school leader must monitor the campus and make adjustments as needed to protect the learning time for all students. Principals of effective schools create protective measures to protect instructional time (Cotton, 2005).

Providing opportunities for all students to learn is one of the traits of highly effective schools identified by McEwan-Evans (2009). The researcher states that for schools to be effective, all students should be provided the same opportunities and exposure. McEwan-Evans states that all students need highly effective teachers, the amount of time spent learning should be maximized, and extended learning opportunities should be provided both during the school day and outside of the school day (McEwan-Evans, 2009).

Home-school relationship and establishing partnerships. A challenge that leaders must face each school year is the issue of how to involve parents in the learning of the students. In some environments, parent involvement is frequent and effective. In

some areas, the involvement is almost nonexistent. Cotton (2005) states, "There is a significant and positive relationship between parents' active participation in their children's learning and the children's academic performance." The effective leader must know how to bridge this divide and create a system to encourage the home-school partnership. This can be challenging, since there are many factors that can take parents' attention away from the academic needs of their children. The factors school leaders must consider to increase the involvement levels of the whole school community include the living situation of the student, the employment limitations and/or restrictions of the parents, whether both parents live in the home and are actively involved, the income level and educational level of the parents, the outside activities of the student, and the accessibility of the parents to help the student and school.

These factors can be challenging, but a successful home-school relationship can be built. In the study by Bell (2001), the researcher noted that schools were able to promote inclusiveness, work with the parents to extend the mission of the school, and able to include the entire school community into the mission of the school. These relationships were created by high performing school leaders. The schools must create an atmosphere where families believe the school is a part of the community (Bell, 2001). While it can be a challenge to create, positive relationships are being established at successful schools. The involvement of parents in the school is a factor to school success (Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007). Outstanding principals solicit input from community members and parents routinely to aid in decision making (Cotton, 2005).

School leaders can develop partnerships with a variety of organizations such as communities, social agencies, and universities to help support the development of the

whole child (Stewart, 2013). In the changing school and community environment,

leaders are faced with the task of thinking in a large scale to meet the needs of their

students. In order to keep up with the demands of the changing employment market,

college requirements, and accountability, true leadership must seek out the resources and

partnerships that will provide for their students. A school and district's budget can be

limited based on property taxes and income from the federal government. A strong

leader will recognize these challenges and find alternative resources to improve the

learning environment and opportunities.

School leaders have a responsibility to engage in outreach activities for the

school. A school's success is dependent on multiple aspects and influences, and it is

incumbent upon the leader to seek out opportunities to ensure the school's success. Each

school has a series of stakeholders who are invested in the success and outcomes of the

school. The stakeholders can include local businesses, the parent/teacher organizations,

local civic club, area religious centers, and more. A school leader should reach out to

these stakeholders to garner support and bridge the school-community connection.

Marzano (2003) identified that parent and community involvement is an

important factor to a school's success. The amount and impact of parent and community

involvement is listed in multiple sources of research and can be an effective part of a

positive school community. Schools should ensure that there is proper communication

with parents and the community. Schools should also ensure that there are methods in

place for two-way communication and open dialogue. The parents and community

should be involved in the school and participate in as many activities as possible in the

school. When parents participate in school activities, they understand that they play an

important role in their student's education and this adds to the school's resource base.

Higher grades, higher graduation rates, and fewer absences are all positive factors

associated with increased parent involvement in the school (Oyserman et al., 2007).

While establishing ways for parents and the community to become more involved in the

school, there must also be governance of this involvement. Schools should ensure that

specific structures are established that allow parents and community members to have a

voice in school decisions (Marzano, 2003).

Visibility. School leaders must remain visible every day. They should establish

and maintain a system where they are actively seen in the classrooms so teachers will

know that instruction is important. High-achieving schools' principals are present and

approachable in the everyday life of the school (Cotton, 2005). This visibility helps the

leader talk with teachers regularly and engage with students on a daily basis. Being

visible allows the principal to model their beliefs and promote a positive climate

(Halawah, 2005). Leaders should 1) make systematic and frequent visits to the

classroom, 2) have frequent contact with students and 3) be highly visible to teachers,

students and parents (Marzano et al., 2005).

Managing the Instructional Program

Frequent monitoring of student progress. A school is determined to be

successful based on the results that it creates. Successful results do not happen without

careful monitoring and planning. Frequent and careful monitoring of student success is

one of the major attributes of an effective principal (Cotton, 2005).

Frequent monitoring of student success is needed to ensure that educators are on

track for the desired goals for the students. In the examination of high-performing, high-

poverty schools, Bell (2001) noted that the successful schools regularly used assessment as a tool to reinforce the academic goals and intervened to promote academic success of all students. These high-performing schools were succeeding by monitoring the students' progress frequently. Without monitoring and assessment, school leaders and teachers will not know how to proceed or plan instruction for the remainder of the year. This has been noted as a needed factor for schools that have been successful in raising their student levels from low performing to successful. These turnaround schools regularly meet with teachers to analyze data and discuss students (Ward, 2013), which allows the schools to focus on instruction and student growth. Monitoring is crucial to plan for student success.

Monitoring student progress is important not only to determine a course of action for the students but also to determine a professional development path for the teacher and school. Research by Suber (2011) shows that school leaders can plan more effective and targeted professional development by analyzing student data regularly. Using student data and assessments allows instructional leaders to determine if there are gaps and needs in the instruction. A school leader is responsible for monitoring student needs as well as monitoring the needs of the teachers. Student assessment and monitoring allow the leader to create a plan of action and determine future steps.

Sometimes while monitoring, leaders must "confront the brutal facts" (Streshly & Gray, 2008, p. 119) and have conversations with staff members that can be uncomfortable. The conversations are meant as a way to open dialogue with staff members, change the plan of action for the student, and create a new plan focused on the successful learning of the student. This focus on monitoring is important so a student

does not begin to struggle academically and remain on an incorrect educational path. Strong leadership is needed for these conversations to happen and to determine the results achieved by the students.

Highly effective schools utilize multiple sources of data to determine the results of their students. The results from data help guide educators to determine the sources or issues that result when students are not successful. From these results, educators can examine the needs of the students and determine the future actions of the teachers. Effective schools utilize multiple sources of student data and do not rely on just the end of the year state assessment.

Utilizing data can help drive a school's instruction and highly effective schools understand the impact this data can make. Some of the strongest schools understand the need to establish goals for students, align their curriculum, use and maintain multiple sources of data, and work collaboratively. School leaders can aid with the results by establishing and maintaining regular observations and walk-throughs, embedding professional development, and building a strong climate of trust and collaboration.

In this age of accountability, principals must produce results. These results are often test scores and other measures of success in schools. A highly effective principal must be a producer of student results of success. Strong producers are able to meet the seven benchmarks outlined by McEwan-Evans (2003). They believe that achievement is the bottom line, never mistake activity for achievement, and have an academically focused mission. Producers pay attention to individual students, are data driven, and make research-based decisions. These leaders also hold teachers accountable.

Coordinating the curriculum. Marzano (2003) identified that having a guaranteed and viable curriculum is the most important factor with the greatest impact on student achievement. Effective and successful leaders engage in managing curriculum and instruction (Halawah, 2005). Having a guaranteed and viable curriculum includes the components of opportunity to learn and having time. To be an effective school, the curriculum must include clear guidance on the content to be addressed and taught. Teachers should not be able to change the content of curriculum and should adhere to standards that are in place by the state and school. Having the opportunity to learn ensures that students are presented with information that is relevant and expected of them. They cannot achieve success if they are not presented the correct content.

The second component of a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is needed is the time teachers have to teach the content (Marzano, 2003). In a school day, there are often distractors that take away from the classroom time. These distractors can include announcements, drills, visitors, and other components. In order to deliver instruction in a meaningful way, the amount of time teachers have to teach should be preserved.

Involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The responsibility of involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is directly related to the degree to which the school leader is intricately involved in the daily classroom instructional components. School leaders should be able to support and provide input into what is the best practice of the daily instruction. Teachers value the leader's input when they are in need of specific ideas and resources to improve the instruction in the classroom. Marzano et al. (2005) stated that leaders have a specific responsibility to be directly involved in helping teachers 1) design curricular activities, 2) address assessment issues,

and 3) address instructional issues.

   Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment held by school leaders is a critical component to the school. School leaders should be knowledgeable about best practices in order to help with the tasks of teachers teaching and students learning. When leaders understand the components of curriculum, they are better able to be a resource to the teachers to improve instruction. According to Marzano et al. (2005), effective school leaders should possess extensive knowledge about 1) effective instructional practices, 2) effective curricular practices, 3) effective assessment practices, and 4) how to provide guidance to classroom practices.

   School leaders must be able to recognize research-based instruction and quality teaching. The leaders must be able to determine which teachers are effective and which teachers are not effective. Principals must strategically plan to improve the instruction and teaching skills in their schools by embedding tools for teacher success. With strong instruction leadership, improvements can be made on a campus (McEwan-Evans, 2009). The three components of leadership, instruction, and assertiveness are what comprises strong instructional leadership (McEwan-Evans, 2009). McEwan-Evans defines leadership as the ability to implement, complete the job, and obtain results. McEwan-Evans's definition of instruction includes the knowledge and skills that are related to teaching and learning (2009).

   Alignment. Highly effective schools understand that their content standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be in alignment. The stronger the alignment, the greater chance that student achievement will be higher (McEwan-Evans,

2009). Successful schools take the necessary action steps to ensure that their curriculum, grade levels, and content areas are aligned.

Effective schools utilize benchmarking procedures to track how students are performing across a grade level or content and examine what strategies can be incorporated from the most successful classrooms. Effective schools also ensure that their content standards are easy to understand, they select resources that align to the content standards, they determine the instruction needed by all learners and they design and use summative, formative, and performance assessments to guide the instruction.

Monitoring student progress. To create and maintain an effective school, leaders must develop a system to monitor and evaluate the systems of the school. Principals of high-achieving schools study teachers' instructional approaches and follow up with feedback and planning with teachers (Cotton, 2005). School leaders must develop a way to provide feedback about ongoing practices in order to make adjustments as needed. The system to provide feedback must be intentional and carefully planned. Strong mechanisms of feedback, monitoring, and evaluating allow for necessary updates to maintain an effective school system. Two behaviors leaders demonstrate with this responsibility: 1) continually monitoring the effectiveness of the school's curricular, instructional, and assessment practices,and 2) being continually aware of the impact of the school's practices on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

Challenging goals and effective feedback. Marzano (2003) identified the school-level factors of setting challenging goals and providing effective feedback as an important component of the most successful schools. Schools should establish shared goals that are challenging for all students. When all students are challenged at the

appropriate level for their education, then the school becomes stronger and achieves at a higher standard. An important factor of effective school research is the expectations that are set for students with a low socioeconomic status. These expectations should be set high to help bridge the achievement gap that exists between high socioeconomic students and low socioeconomic students.

The second component of providing effective feedback is monitoring that the goals that have been set are being met. Feedback should be given in a timely fashion so it can have a quick impact on student outcomes. Schools should use multiple sources of information and be specific in the feedback given. If given too broad feedback, there will not be a focus point of where to start to make improvements. Specific feedback is useful in each subject area to ensure the goals are being met in each content area in which the student is learning. There should be clear assessment systems and timelines to ensure this valuable information happens at the appropriate times.

Summary

Leadership does not happen by chance. There are many components of leadership that must be in place before the leader takes that position. There are characteristics and qualities a leader must possess. There are various leadership styles and attributes that go along with each of those styles. Leaders are tasked with a multitude of factors and variables to lead an organization. When that organization is a school, there are additional factors that must be taken into consideration.

Lezotte, Marzano, and McEwan-Evans provide guides that include factors that are needed to create effective schools. These researchers have determined various factors they deem to be important for a highly successful school. Although stated in various

ways, there are common criteria among the three researchers.

Highly effective school leaders define the school mission, manage the instruction of the school and promote a positive school learning environment. These leaders ensure that there is a safe and orderly environment; they establish a goal and vision for the school, create open communication, set high expectations for curriculum with monitoring and feedback, monitor the progress of the students, create partnerships with the staff, parents, and community, protect the instructional time, maintain visibility and establish opportunities for staff and students to learn.

There are many factors and components needed to ensure that a school is successful. The leadership of the school is one of these factors and plays an important role in shaping the culture and climate of the school. Principals serve in a capacity to lead and guide the school to ensure success for all of the students. In examining several research articles and leadership studies, it can be seen that there are common attributes to creating an effective school. Some of these attributes and factors were examined in this paper. With the wealth of research and resources available, the task of leadership can be accomplished.

Successful leaders draw upon the wealth of information and develop a system that will work for their school and environment. Leaders are faced with the challenges that are inherent to their student population, federal mandates, and other environmental influences. It takes leaders who are willing and able to face the changing needs of education and be willing to "think outside of the box" when needed. As shown above, principals come second only to teachers when impacting student achievement. Leadership and leadership skills can be developed and achieved in all environments. The

research above provides a guideline of what has been successful in other schools and should be only used as a guide. These correlates of effective schools show that success and increased student achievement can be achieved in all environments. Each environment simply needs a leader that is willing and able to tackle the task of school leadership.

Leaders must gather the support of their staff and be patient during the process. Leaders must establish the characteristics common to all leaders, establish a positive culture and climate, maintain open communication, and build strong relationships. There will be challenges and obstacles and at times a need to refocus, but if leaders maintain their focus and are open to suggestions and feedback they can achieve real success.

Methods

Introduction

This study examined the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in a suburban school district. First, mean scores per question and subscale of the PIMRS were calculated to determine the most and least utilized strategy by all principal groups. Next, mean scores were analyzed to determine differences in scores based on school demographics and assessment scores. Third, standard deviations were calculated to determine the amount of variance in ratings on each question and subscale. Standard deviations were compared to determine the extent to which the principal ratings vary and the amount of dispersion in ratings based on demographic or assessment scores.

This chapter will focus on the specific methods that were used to conduct the research for this study. Three research questions form the basis of the study. The research questions are identified first. Next, the chapter will explain the setting of the selected school district and the overall demographics of the district. An explanation of the procedures to conduct the study will be explained after a description of the setting. The instrumentation that was used for the study will be analyzed in this chapter along with a description of the instrument. The last part of the chapter will be a description of the analysis procedures along with the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, specific research questions need to be asked about leadership. This study was based on the following research questions.

1. What are the leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools?

2. Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?

3. Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?

Setting and Participants

The setting for this study was a suburban school district located outside of the city of Houston, Texas. The school district selected was one of the larger school districts in the state of Texas and was the largest school district in the county of which it sits. The school district had a diverse student population, as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

District Student Demographics: Student Information

District Profile

	Percent
Student Distribution	**100**
African American	28
Hispanic	27
White	17
American Indian	<1
Asian	25
Pacific Islander	<1
Two or More Races	3
Economically Disadvantaged	34

Note: The data in Table 1 showcases the district's student demographics breakdown as reported in the 2015-2016 TAPR retrieved from the Texas Education Agency

The district had over 70,000 students and over 70 campuses at all grade levels. The student special population demographics of the district are below.

- 37 percent of the student are economically disadvantaged

- 16 percent of the students are English Language Learners

- 6 percent of the students are served by Special Education

Overall the district had passing rates in all subject areas for all grades were 75 percent or over. This is depicted in Figure 3 below.
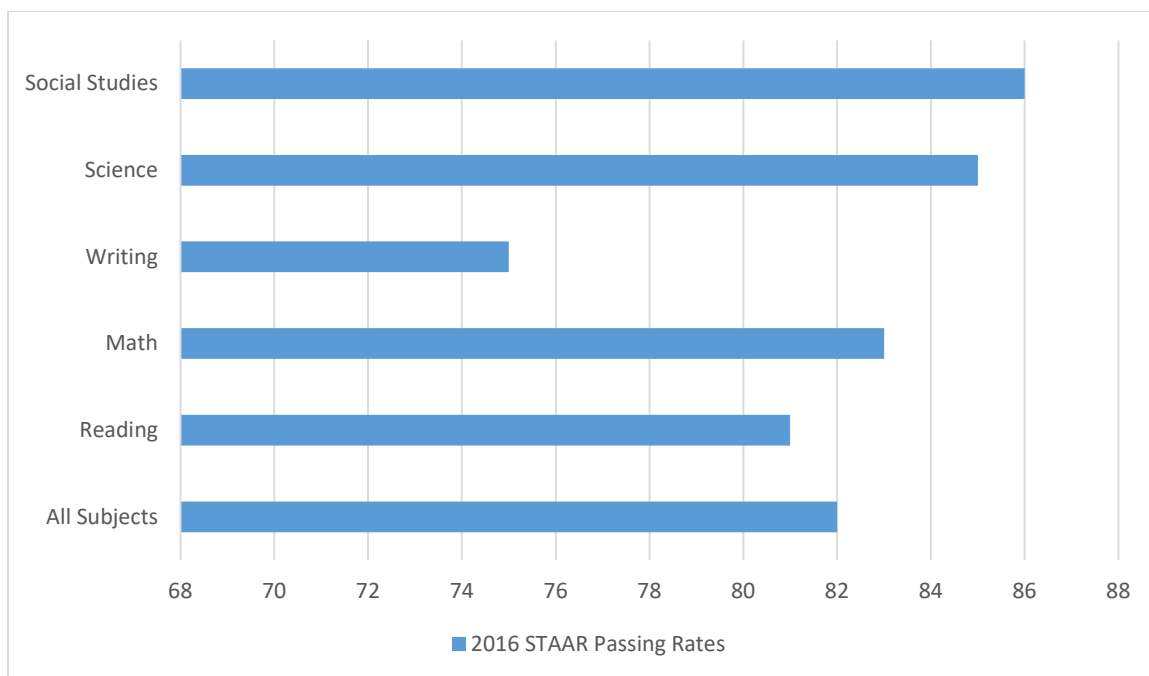
Figure 3. District 2016 STAAR overall passing rates.

Overall STAAR Passing Rates for all grades in all subjects for the 2015-2016 school year. The information was retrieved from the TAPR report from Texas Education Agency.

The school district had 14 middle schools. The defined subject pool for this study included the middle school principals in the district. All of the 14 current middle school principals in the district were invited to participate in the study and complete the survey instrument. A total of eight of the middle school principals choose to participate in the study. The overall district STAAR passing rates for the middle schools in the district are presented in Figure 3.
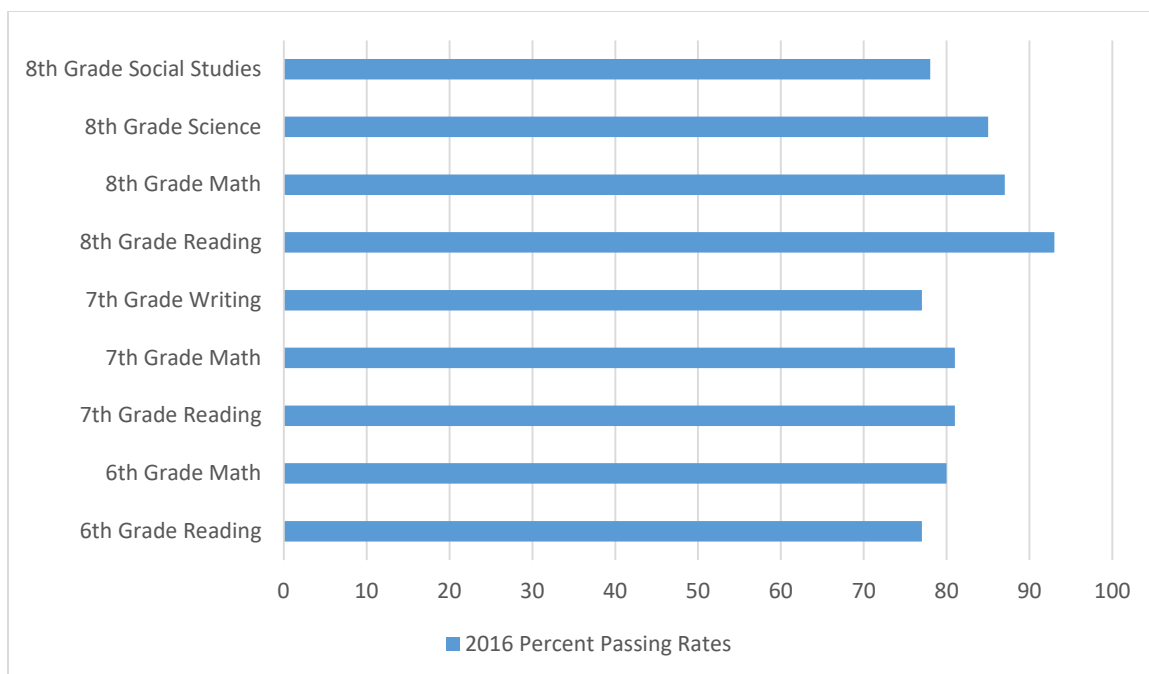
Figure 4. District 2016 STAAR passing rates for middle school grades

Overall STAAR Passing Rates for middle school grades in all subjects for the 2015-2016 school year. The information was retrieved from the TAPR report from Texas Education Agency.

Procedures. To begin the procedures for the study, approval from the University of Houston was needed. Permission to conduct the study was obtained through the Integrated Compliance Oversight Network (ICON) protocol submission system in the Division of Research at the University of Houston. The second component to gain permission for the study was approval from the school district to complete the study. This approval was obtained by the researcher. Permission to use the selected instrument was obtained by the researcher from Dr. Philip Hallinger.

Once approval was obtained, middle school principals in the district were identified. The principals were identified by using the district website and email directory. Principal names and email addresses could be obtained via the district website

and the principals were sent an invitation to participate in the study electronically. Two

weeks after the initial emailed invitation, a second request for participation was sent

electronically to the schools that had not responded. In both email invitations,

participants were asked to follow an internet link to complete the study instrument.

Student assessment scores were obtained by accessing each school's Texas

Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) report for the 2015-2016 school year from the

Texas Education Association website at http://tea.texas.gov/. The overall student scores

were obtained from the profile of the TAPR and were used in the next chapter to compare

responses to the survey with the achievement scores of the students and school

demographics of each school.

Instruments. This study employed the use of the *Principal Instructional*

Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) as the survey tool. The PIMRS was developed by

Philip Hallinger in 1982 (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and has since been updated. The

PIMRS had been used in over 200 empirical studies (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013)

over the past 30 years. The PIMRS is the most researched model for instructional

leadership (The Center, 2004). Hallinger et al. (2013) conducted a review of the

reliability of the scale and found that the PIMRS demonstrated moderately high to very

high reliability. This instrument has been tested for its validity and has been found a

valid instrument (Hallinger, 2010).

The PIMRS instrument begins by asking the participants' demographic

information before they complete the survey. This demographic information includes the

gender of the participant, the number of years that the principal has held that position at

the current school along with the total number of years the individual has been a

principal, and the race/ethnicity of the participant. The name of the school is also asked

to be able to compare the PIMRS results with the student assessment results from the

STAAR test.

     The PIMRS instrument was selected based on the dimensions of instructional

leadership it evaluates. Hallinger frames the PIMRS as an assessment of instructional

leadership that incorporate many of the leadership strategies identified in chapter two.

The PIMRS assesses three different dimensions of instructional leadership. The three

dimensions are defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and

promoting a positive school learning climate. There are three forms of the scale that can

be completed based on the role of the individual. The three forms of the scale include the

principal form, the teacher form and the supervisor form. For the purpose of this study,

only the principal scale was utilized.

     The three dimensions each have various subscales related to the dimension. The

dimension of defining the school mission has two subscales relating the school leader: 1)

frames the school's goals and 2) communicates the school's goals. The dimension of

managing the instructional program has the three subscales: 1) coordinates the

curriculum, 2) supervises & evaluates instruction and 3) monitors student progress. The

last dimension of developing the school learning climate program has five subscales: 1)

protects instructional time, 2) provides incentives for teachers, 3) provides incentives for

learning, 4) promotes professional development and 5) maintains high visibility. The

PIMRS Conceptual Framework is outlined in Figure 5.

Defining the School Mission	Managing the Instructional Program	Developing the School Learning Climate Program
Frames the School's Goals	Coordinates the Curriculum	Protects Instructional Time
Communicates the School's Goals	Supervises & Evaluates Instruction	Provides Incentives for Teachers
	Monitors Student Progress	Provides Incentives for Learning
		Promotes Professional Development
		Maintains High Visibility

Figure 5. PIMRS conceptual framework

Figure 5 Represents the conceptual framework for this study and is the PIMRS conceptual framework. Adapted from Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional leadership behavior of principals. Elementary School Journal, 86(2), 217-248.

The PIMRS instrument utilizes a Likert type system of rating that ranges from (1) to (5). The ranges vary from (1) *almost never* to (5) *almost always*. The ratings from each subscale can be averaged for each participant to create a mean score. There were a total of 50 questions on the instrument. An example of the rating system for one subscale of the PIMRS is in Figure 6.

To what extent do you…?

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

	ALMOST NEVER			ALMOST ALWAYS	
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other systematic methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student academic performance when developing the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers	1	2	3	4	5

I.

____

Figure 6. An example of the principal instructional management rating scale.

Adapted from Hallinger, P. & Murphy, J. (1987). Assessing and developing principal instructional leadership. *Educational Leadership*, September, 54-61.

To assess the performance of each school, the 2015-2016 Texas Academic

Performance Report (TAPR) was obtained to analyze the overall STAAR scores of each

school. Since this study asked the question of do leadership strategies differ based on student achievement, the assessment results in the all grades categories of reading, mathematics, writing, social studies and science were used to compare principal groups. The all grades categories combine the assessment results for the grades of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

Although the results are categorized under all grades, it is important to note in this section that three of the five subject areas only contained one grade level. On the STAAR assessment, only the seventh-grade students complete the writing assessment in the middle school grades. In the assessment areas of science and social studies, only the eighth-grade students complete this test.

Analysis. To analyze the date for this study, specific steps and procedures were followed. First, mean scores per question and subscale of the PIMRS were calculated to determine the most and least utilized strategy by all principal groups. Next, mean scores were analyzed to determine differences in scores based on school demographics and assessment scores. Third, standard deviations were calculated to determine the amount of variance in ratings on each question and subscale. Standard deviations were compared to determine the extent to which the principal ratings vary and the amount of dispersion in ratings based on demographic or assessment scores.

A descriptive analysis was utilized for this study. The first part of the descriptive analysis is an examination of the responses for each question on the PIMRS instrument reported by all principals. A mean score for each question and subscale was calculated along with the standard deviation. This allowed for a determination of the highest and lowest rated strategy that was utilized by the principals. The standard deviation allowed

for analysis of the amount of dispersion of ratings reported by the principals.

The second part of the descriptive analysis was a comparison based on the school socioeconomic demographics. The principals were divided into two groups based on whether the school had more or less than 40 percent of students who qualified for free or reduced lunch. The mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each principal group to determine the most and least utilized strategy reported by the principals. The standard deviations allowed for comparison of the amount of variance in each subscale and on each question between the two principal groups.

The third part of the descriptive analysis was a comparison based on the student achievement of each school. The principals were divided into two groups based on whether the school obtained an overall passing score of 80 percent or higher in each of the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies in the all grades category. The mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for both principal groups to determine the most and least utilized strategy reported by the principals. The standard deviations allowed for comparison of the amount of variance in each subscale and on each question between the two principal groups.

Limitations. The limitations of this study began with the small sample size. The requested number of participants was 14. With a small sample size, it was difficult to make larger scale comparisons. The next limitation was that the results are only from one suburban district. Although the district was quite large, the results are from principals in the suburban area and not from a variety of areas. This study relied upon the self-reporting of principals and it cannot be determined the extent to which the self-reports are accurate. The next limitation was the use of the STAAR assessment to compare the

achievement of the schools. The achievement and effectiveness of the school is hard to determine from one assessment instrument. This study did not measure causal relationship between the leadership strategies and the student achievement, so only a comparison was made.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in a suburban school district outside of the Houston, Texas area. To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following research questions about leadership were asked:

1. What are the leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools?

2. Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?

3. Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?

This chapter presents the results of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and the overall results of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. This chapter first will provide a description of the participants with specific principal and school data. Next, the chapter will describe the results from the PIMRS. The results of the PIMRS are reported by overall scores, then disaggregated based on the school demographics and by student achievement at the school level. The end of the chapter will summarize the results.

Description of participants

The participants of this study were middle school principals in a large suburban school located outside of Houston, Texas. Eight middle school principals in the district participated in the study. Their demographics will be described here.

The first principal (Principal 1) was a female with two to four years of experience at the school as the lead principal. She had a total of five to nine years of lead principal experience. The student population at the school is over 1,500 students and 30 percent of those students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The second principal (Principal 2) was a male who was in his first year as the lead principal. The student population at the school is over 1,200 students and over 40 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The third principal (Principal 3) was a male with two to four years of experience at the school as the lead principal. He had a total of five to nine years of lead principal experience. The student population of the school is almost 1,000 students and approximately 20 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The fourth principal (Principal 4) was a male who was in his first year as the lead principal. The student population at the school is over 1,000 students and approximately 20 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The fifth principal (Principal 5) was a female with two to four years of experience at the school as the lead principal. She had a total of two to four years of lead principal experience. The student population at the school is over 1,200 students and over 25 percent of those students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The sixth principal (Principal 6) was a female who was in her first year as the lead principal. The student population at the school is over 1,100 students and over 60 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The seventh principal (Principal 7) was a female who was in her first year as the lead principal. The student population at the school is approximately 1,000 students and over 45 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

The eighth principal (Principal 8) was a female who was in her first year as the lead principal. The student population at the school is over 1,200 students and approximately 12 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced meals.

Table 2 represents the principal and school profiles of those principals who participated in the study. The table shows their years as that building's principal, their total years as a principal and the school's percent of students on free or reduced lunch. The school information includes the number of students at each school. The percent of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and if the school achieved 80 percent or higher passing rates in each of the all grades categories of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies is also represented in the table.

As Table 2 shows, eight middle school principals participated in the study. Of the eight principals, five of them were first year principals. The potential impact of first year principals is not specifically investigated in this study, but is discussed in Chapter V as a point for further research. Table 2 also shows that three out of eight of the middle schools have 40 percent or more of their students qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. Four of the eight middle schools have student achievement rates where 80 percent or

more of their students passed the state assessment in the all grades categories of reading,

mathematics, writing, science and social studies.

Table 2

School Profiles

Principal	Gender	Years as principal at school	Total years as a principal	Number of students	Percent of students on free/reduced lunch	80% or higher passing rates on STAAR
1	Female	2-4	5-9	1500	30	Yes
2	Male	1	1	1200	40	No
3	Male	2-4	5-9	1000	30	Yes
4	Male	1	1	1150	18	Yes
5	Female	2-4	2-4	1250	26	No
6	Female	1	1	1150	60	No
7	Female	1	1	1000	48	No
8	Female	1	1	1250	12	Yes
Mean		1.3-2.1	2.1-3.4	1188	33	

Overall results of PIMRS

This section will provide results for the first research question of what are the

leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools. The results of the

PIMRS survey are presented in tables specific to each subscale. The frequency of

responses for each rating along with the percentage of ratings for each response is

displayed. An overall mean for each question and each subscale are represented in the

table.

Table 3 displays the overall mean and standard deviation results for all principals

in the ten subscales. Each subscale is comprised of five questions specific to the

subscale. The mean and SD results are calculated based on all the responses in the

subscale. Table 3 displays that the highest rated subscale for all principals was the

subscale of framing the school goals (M=4.75) and the lowest rated subscale was providing incentives for learning (M=3.125). Interestingly, the highest amount of variance is the subscale of providing incentives for learning (SD=1.34) and the lowest amount of variance in answers is from the subscale of framing the school goals (SD=.49).

The second highest rated subscale is promoting professional development (M=4.525) and the third highest rated subscale is supervising and evaluating instruction (M=4.175). This indicates that the principals overall rated these subscales as the ones they use the most often. The subscale with the second highest amount of variance in ratings is the subscale of providing incentives for teachers (SD=1.27) and the subscale with the third highest amount of variance is maintain high visibility (SD=1.22). The subscale with the second lowest amount of variance in scores is promoting professional development (SD=.68). Of interest to note is that the three subscales that are rated the highest also have the lowest amount of variance in scores while the lowest rated subscales have the highest amount of variance.

Table 3

Overall Mean and SD Results from Each Subscale of the PIMRS

Subscale	Mean of responses	SD of responses
1. Frame the school goals	4.75	.49
2. Communicate the school goals	3.65	1.05
3. Supervise and evaluate instruction	4.175	.84
4. Coordinate the curriculum	4	.94
5. Monitor student progress	3.825	1.03
6. Protect instructional time	3.925	1.10
7. Maintain high visibility	3.475	1.22
8. Provide incentives for teachers	3.65	1.27
9. Promote professional development	4.525	.68
10. Provide incentives for learning	3.125	1.34
Sum of principals	8	

Table 4 reports the overall principal ratings for the first subscale of the PIMRS that is frame the school goals. The subscale asks the following five items: To what extent does the principal 1) develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals, 2) frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities, 3) use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goals, 4) use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals and 5) develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers. The principals' mean on the subscale was a 4.75 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. All the ratings on Subscale 1 had a mean higher than 4.5.

The standard deviation results on Table 4 revealed an overall SD result of .49. This indicates a low amount of variance in the ratings of each question by the principals. The question with the highest variance in scores was the question of framing the school goals in terms of staff responsibilities with a SD of .76.

Table 4

Ratings from Subscale 1: Frame the School Goals

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
1				1 12.5%	7 87.5%	4.875	.35
2			1 12.5%	2 25%	5 62.5%	4.5	.76
3				3 37.5%	5 62.5%	4.625	.52
4				1 12.5%	7 87.5%	4.875	.35
5				1 12.5%	7 87.5%	4.875	.35
Sum of responses			1	8	31	4.75	.49

Table 5 reports the overall principal ratings for the second subscale of the PIMRS that is communicate the school goals. The subscale asks the following five items: To what extent does the principal 1) communicate the school's mission effectively, 2) discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings, 3) refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions, 4) ensure that the school's academic goals are visible and 5) refer to the school's goals in forums with students. The principals' mean on the subscale was a 3.65 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. The mean results on this subscale demonstrate a large amount of variance based on questions. The means ranged from 2.875 to 4.375 indicating that the rating from each principal was different based on the question that was being asked.

The standard deviation results on Table 5 show an overall SD result of 1.05. This indicates that overall there was a larger amount of combined variance in the scores. The

question related to refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions resulted in the lowest variance in scores (SD=.52) while the question of refer to the school's goals in forum with students resulted in the largest amount of variance (SD=1.25) which represents that the participants each rate themselves quite differently on that question.

Table 5

Ratings from Subscale 2: Communicate the School Goals

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
6			3 37.5%	4 50%	1 12.5%	3.75	.71
7			2 25%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	4.125	.83
8				5 62.5%	3 37.5%	4.375	.52
9	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%		1 12.5%	2.875	1.13
10	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	3.125	1.25
Sum of responses	2	2	13	14	9	3.65	1.05

Table 6 reports the overall principal ratings for the third subscale of the PIMRS that is supervise and evaluate instruction. The subscale asks the following five items: To what extent does the principal 1) ensure that classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals of the school, 2) review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction, 3) conduct informal observations regularly, 4) point out specific strengths in teacher feedback, and 5) point out specific weaknesses in teacher feedback. The principals' average on the subscale was a 4.175 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. On this subscale, four out of five of the questions had a mean at 4.0 or above.

The standard deviation results on Table 6 revealed an overall SD result of .84. This indicates an average amount of variance in the ratings of each question by the principals. The question with the highest variance in scores was the question of

reviewing student work products when evaluating classroom instruction with a SD of

1.07.

Table 6

Ratings from Subscale 3: Supervise and Evaluate Instruction

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
11			2 25%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	4.375	.92
12		1 12.5%	4 50%	1 12.5%	2 25%	3.5	1.07
13			2 25%	4 50%	2 25%	4	.76
14				3 37.5%	5 62.5%	4.625	.52
15				5 62.5%	3 37.5%	4.375	.52
Sum of responses	1	8	14	17		4.175	.84

Table 7 reports the overall principal ratings for the fourth subscale of the PIMRS

that is coordinate the curriculum. The subscale asks the following five items: To what

extent does the principal 1) make clear who is responsible for coordinating the

curriculum, 2) draw upon results of testing when making curricular decision, 3) monitor

the classroom curriculum to see that it covers curricular objectives, 4) assess the overlap

between the school's curricular objectives and achievement tests and 5) participate

actively in the review of curriculum. The principals' average on the subscale was a 4

with the specific results for each question represented in the table.   The range in mean

scores on this subscale were between 3.125 and 4.75.   The question of participating

actively in the review of curriculum obtained the lowest mean of 3.125.

The standard deviation results on Table 7 revealed an overall SD result of .93. This indicates a lower amount of variance in the ratings of each question by the principals. The question with the highest variance in scores was the question of making clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum (SD=.92) and the lowest amount of variance was the question of drawing upon results of testing when making curricular decisions (SD=.46).

Table 7

Ratings from Subscale 4: Coordinate the Curriculum

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
16			2 25%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	4.375	.92
17				2 25%	6 75%	4.75	.46
18			4 50%	2 25%	2 25%	3.75	.89
19			2 25%	4 50%	2 25%	4	.76
20		2 25%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%		3.125	.83
Sum of responses		2	11	12	15	4	.93

Table 8 reports the overall principal ratings for the fifth subscale of the PIMRS that is monitor student progress. The subscale asks the following five items: To what extent does the principal 1) meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress, 2) discuss academic performance results with faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses, 3) use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals, 4) inform teachers of the school's performance results and 5) inform

students of school's academic progress. The principals' average on the subscale was a

3.825 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. The mean

ranges on this subscale vary from 3 to 4.25.

The standard deviation results in Table 8 revealed an overall SD result of 1.03.

The question with the highest variance in scores was the question pertaining informing

students of school's academic progress (SD=1.41). This variance level in scores

represents that the principals rate themselves quite differently. The variance levels range

from SD=.64 to SD=1.41 which indicates that based on the question, the ratings are

dispersed across the subscale.

Table 8

Ratings from Subscale 5: Monitor Student Progress

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
21		1 12.5%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	3.5	.93
22			1 12.5%	5 62.5%	2 25%	4.125	.64
23			1 12.5%	4 50%	3 37.5%	4.25	.71
24			2 25%	2 25%	4 50%	4.25	.89
25	1 12.5%	2 25%	3 37.5%		2 25%	3	1.41
Sum of responses	1	3	10	14	12	3.825	1.03

Table 9 reports the overall principal ratings for the sixth subscale of the PIMRS

that is protect instructional time. The subscale asks the following five items: To what

extent does the principal 1) limit interruptions of instructional time by announcements, 2)

ensure that students are not called to the office during instruction, 3) ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time, 4) encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts and 5) limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time. The principals' average on the subscale was 3.925 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. This subscale has a wide range in the mean scores for each question. The mean scores vary from M=2.875 to M=5 which indicates that although the mean for the subscale is 3.925, there is a large level of variance depending on each question.

Table 9 displays an overall standard deviation result of 1.10. The dispersion of the ratings varies when analyzed by each question as the range in standard deviation scores range from 0 to 1. All the principals rated themselves a 5 on the question of limiting interruptions of instructional time by announcements.

Table 9

Ratings from Subscale 6: Protect Instructional Time

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
26					8 100%	5	0
27	1 12.5%		6 75%	1 12.5%		2.875	.83
28		3 37.5%	1 12.5%	4 50%		3.125	1
29				2 25%	6 75%	4.75	.46
30			3 37.5%	3 37.5%	2 25%	3.875	.83
Sum of responses	1	3	10	10	16	3.925	1.10

Table 10 reports the overall principal ratings for the seventh subscale of the

PIMRS that is maintain high visibility. The subscale asks the following five items: To

what extent does the principal 1) take time to talk informally with students and teachers

during recess and breaks, 2) visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and

students, 3) attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities, 4) cover classes for

teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives, and 5) tutor students or provide direct

instruction to classes. The principals' average on the subscale was 3.475 with the

specific results for each question represented in the table. The mean ratings on this

subscale range from 2.125 to 4.625 which indicates that the participants vary greatly in

their ratings depending on the question. The lowest mean on the subscale (M=2.125) was

reported for the question of tutoring students or providing direct instruction to classes.

Table 10

Ratings from Subscale 7: Maintain High Visibility

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
31			1 12.5%	1 12.5%	6 75%	4.625	.74
32		1 12.5%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	3.75	1.16
33			1 12.5%	6 75%	1 12.5%	4	.53
34	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	4 50%	2 25%		2.875	1
35	2 25%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%			2.125	.83
Sum of responses	3	5	12	10	10	3.475	1.22

Table 11 reports the overall principal ratings for the eighth subscale of the PIMRS that is provide incentives for teachers. The subscale asks the following five items: To what extent does the principal 1) reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters or memos, 2) compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance, 3) acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files, 4) reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition, and 5) create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school. The principals' average on the subscale was 3.65 with the specific results for each question represented in the table. While the overall mean is 3.65, this subscale contains a low mean of 1.75 on the question of acknowledging teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files.

The standard deviation results on Table 11 resulted in an overall SD result of

1.27. The lowest variance in scores (SD=.64) was reported for the question of rewarding

special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition and the largest

amount of variance (SD=1.13) occurred on the question of creating professional growth

opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school.

Table 11

Ratings from Subscale 8: Provide Incentives for Teachers

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
36			1 12.5%	3 37.5%	4 50%	4.375	.74
37			1 12.5%	3 37.5%	4 50%	4.375	.74
38	4 50%	2 25%	2 25%			1.75	.89
39			2 25%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	3.875	.64
40		1 12.5%	2 25%	2 25%	3 37.5%	3.875	1.13
Sum of responses	4	3	8	13	12	3.65	1.27

Table 12 reports the overall principal ratings for the ninth subscale of the PIMRS

that is promote professional development. The subscale asks the following five items: To

what extent does the principal 1) ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are

consistent with the school's goals, 2)actively support the use in the classroom of skills

acquired during in-service training, 3) obtain the participation of the whole staff in

important in-service activities, 4) lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned

with instruction and 5) set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or

information from in-service activities. The principals' average on the subscale was 4.525

with the specific results for each question represented in the table. This subscale contains

higher mean scores with a range of 4.375 to 4.625 which means that the principals rated

this set of questions highly.

The overall standard deviation results on Table 12 show an average SD result of

.67. The questions on this subscale obtained a range of .52 to .92. The variance levels

for the questions overall was lower than other subscales.

Table 12

Ratings from Subscale 9: Promote Professional Development

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
41			2 25%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	4.375	.92
42				3 37.5%	5 62.5%	4.625	.52
43			1 12.5%	2 25%	5 62.5%	4.5	.76
44			1 12.5%	1 12.5%	6 75%	4.625	.74
45				4 50%	4 50%	4.5	.53
Sum of responses			4	11	25	4.525	.67

Table 13 reports the overall principal ratings for the tenth subscale of the PIMRS

that is provide incentives for learning. The subscale asks the following five items: To

what extent does the principal 1) recognize students who do superior work with formal

rewards, 2) use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or behavior,

3) recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the

students with their work, 4) contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary

student performance and 5) support teachers actively in their recognition and reward of

student contributions. The principals' average on the subscale was 3.125 with the

specific results for each question represented in the table.

Table 13 displays a large variance in scores with an overall standard deviation

rating of 1.34. The standard deviation ratings for this subscale are the largest for this

research question. The range of SD scores varies from .93 to 1.6. The question of

recognizing superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the

students with their work resulted in the largest variance in results for this research

question.

Table 13

Ratings from Subscale 10: Provide Incentives for Learning

	1 Almost Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	Mean	SD
Question							
46	2 25%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	3	1.51
47	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	4 50%		2 25%	3.125	1.36
48	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	2.625	1.6
49	1 12.5%	2 25%	2 25%	3 37.5%		2.875	1.13
50		1 12.5%		5 62.5%	2 25%	4	.93
Sum of responses	7	6	8	13	6	3.125	1.34

Summary. Tables 3 to 13 addressed the first research question "What are the

leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools?" As displayed in

Table 4.0, the strategy of framing the school goals displayed the highest mean (M=4.75) which indicates that this strategy is utilized the most often. The second highest mean for this research question was the strategy of promoting professional development (M=4.525) and the third highest mean obtained was for the strategy supervise and evaluate instruction (M=4.175). These three highest means indicate that these strategies are reported by the middle school principals to be used the most often.

The strategies that resulted in the lowest means were the strategies of providing incentives for learning (M=3.125) and maintaining high visibility (3.475). This indicates that the principals utilize these strategies the least. While providing incentives for learning obtained the lowest mean (M=3.125) it also represented the highest standard deviation score (SD=1.34). This indicates that while the strategy obtained the lowest overall mean, there is a large amount of variance in the reports by the principals. This is also the case for the second lowest strategy of maintaining high visibility with a mean of 3.475 but a standard deviation of 1.22. Another strategy that obtained a low mean (M=3.65) was provide incentives for teachers and this also obtained the second highest amount of variance in scores (SD=1.27). The variance levels are the greatest in the strategies that have the lowest means.

Principal ratings and school demographics

This section will provide research results based on the second research question of this study, which was: Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics? The eight schools represented in the study where divided per whether the school has more or less than 40 percent of students who qualify for free or

reduced lunch. The overall scores and subscale scores are represented in the following tables.

There was a total of three participants who are principals of schools where 40 percent or more their students qualified for free and/or reduced lunch. All three of these principals were first year principals. Two of the principals were female and one was a male principal.

Five of the participants were principals of schools where less than 40 percent of their students qualified for free and/or reduced lunch. Two of these principals were first year principals, three principals had two to four years of principal experience at that school and two of the principals had a total of five to nine years of principal experience. Two of the principals were males and three of the principals were female.

Table 14 displays the overall subscale mean scores and standard deviations for both sets of principals. Table 14 shows that both sets of principals reported the same subscale as having the highest mean score and the same subscale of having the lowest mean score. The standard deviation results for the largest variance correspond with the mean results for the highest mean for both sets of principals. The smallest amount of variance occurred in the subscale with the highest mean score whereas the largest amount of variance occurred in the subscale the lowest mean score. This indicates that although subscale ten has the lowest mean, it has the greatest amount of variance in the scores indicated by the principals.

Table 14

Mean and SD Results from Each Subscale of the PIMRS

Subscale	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
1	4.67	.49	4.8	.5
2	3.8	1.08	3.56	1.04
3	3.8	.86	4.4	.76
4	3.5	.92	4.3	.84
5	3.5	.64	4	1.19
6	4	.76	3.9	1.27
7	3.3	1.05	3.6	1.33
8	3.4	.91	3.8	1.44
9	4.6	.63	4.5	.72
10	3.2	1.21	3.1	1.44
Sum of principals	3	3	5	5

Each specific subscale and question scores are represented in Tables 15 to 24.

Table 15 displays the results obtained for the subscale of framing the school goals by

both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for

free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 4.67 whereas principals where less than 40 percent

of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4.8. The standard

deviations for both sets of principals is nearly identical at .49 and .5 respectively. This

indicates that the level of variance overall in the subscale is the same. Figure 7 displays

the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph.

Table 15

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 1: Frame the School Goals

Items in Subscale 1	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
1	4.67	.58	5	0
2	4.67	.58	4.4	.89
3	4.34	.58	4.8	.45
4	4.67	.58	5	0
5	5	0	4.8	.45
Mean/SD	4.67	.49	4.8	.5
Sum of principals	3		5	

Figure 7. Mean Subscale 1: Frame the school's goals results for both sets of principals.

Table 16 displays the results obtained for the subscale of communicating the

school's goals for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40

percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.8 whereas principals where

less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 3.56.

The standard deviation scores for this subscale are 1.08 and 1.04 respectively which

indicates a similar amount of variance overall in scores.

While overall the standard deviation scores are similar, there are specific

differences in the variance levels of the scores by the two principal groups. The largest

variance amounts (SD=1.53, SD=1.53) are found on questions nine and ten by the

schools with >40 percent. These same two questions have a large variance amount by the

<40 percent group but the amount of variance is not quite as large (SD=1.22, SD=.89).

Figure 8 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar

graph for subscale 2.

Table 16

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 2: Communicates the School's Goals

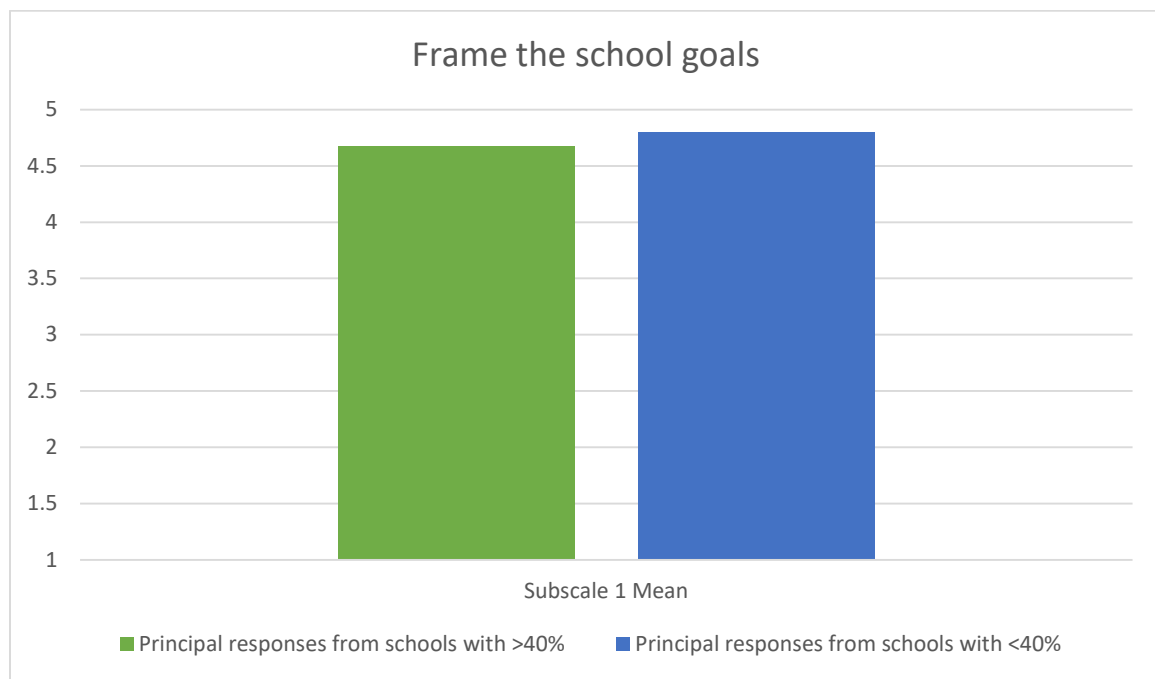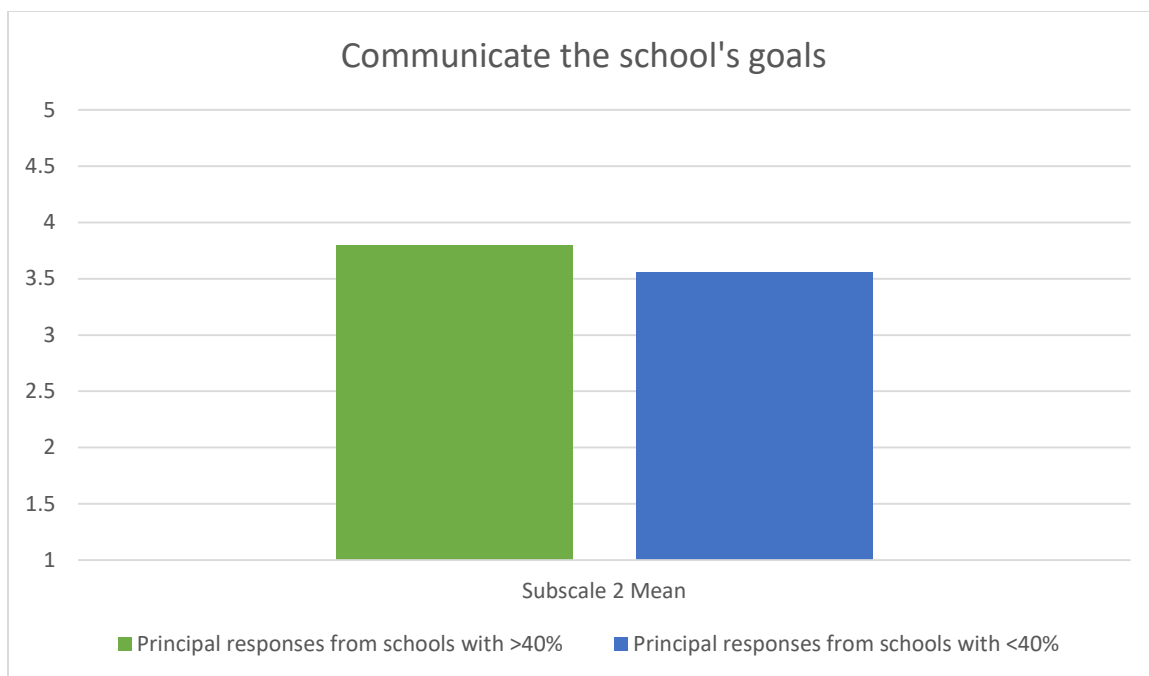| Items in Subscale 2	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
6	4	1	3.6	.55
7	4	1	4.2	.84
8	4.34	.58	4.4	.55
9	3.34	1.53	2.6	.89
10	3.34	1.53	3	1.22
Mean/SD	3.8	1.08	3.56	1.04
Sum of principals	3		5	

Figure 8. Mean Subscale 2: Communicate the school's goals results for both sets of principals.

Table 17 displays the results obtained for the subscale of supervise and evaluate instruction for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.8 whereas principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4.4. The mean scores for the >40 group range depending on question with mean averages from 2.67 to 4.3 whereas the <40 group has a mean range that is more similar with a range of 4 to 4.8.

The standard deviation scores for both groups (SD=.86, SD=.76) are similar in variance. There is a wider range in the standard deviations of the questions as reported by the <40 group with an SD range of .45 to 1.

Figure 9 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 3.

Table 17

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 3: Supervise and Evaluate Instruction

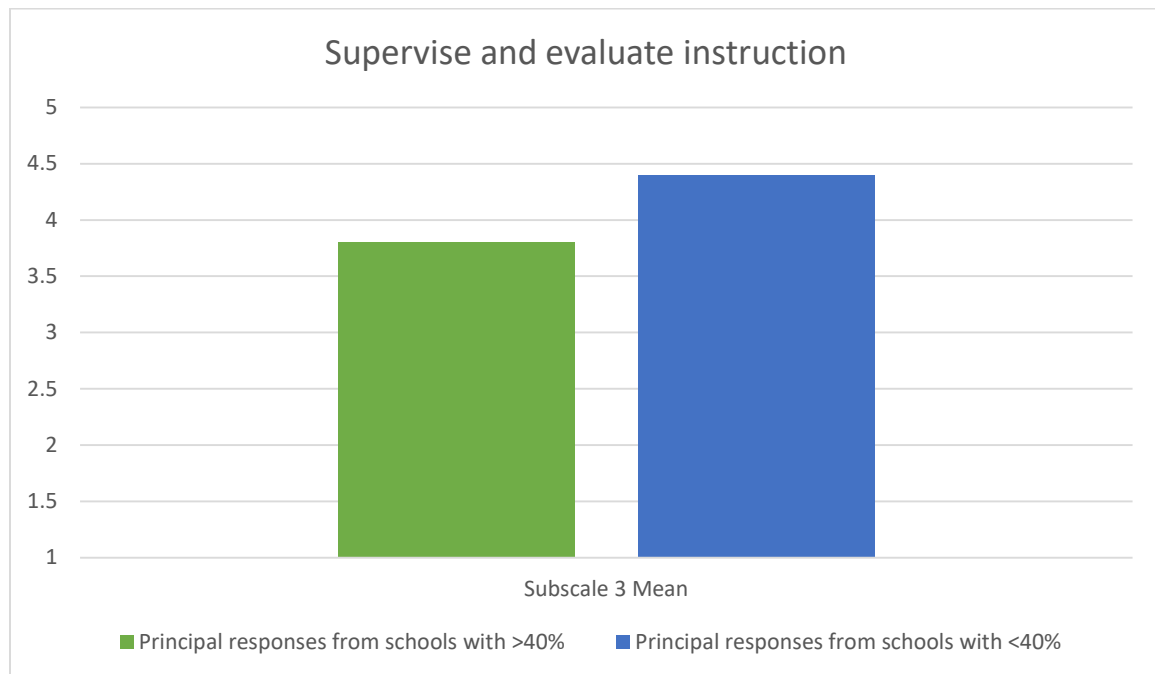| Items in Subscale 3	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
11	4	1	4.6	.89
12	2.67	.58	4	1
13	3.67	.58	4.2	.84
14	4.3	.58	4.8	.45
15	4.3	.58	4.4	.55
Mean/SD	3.8	.86	4.4	.76
Sum of principals	3		5	

Figure 9. Mean Subscale 3: Supervise and evaluate instruction.

Table 18 displays the results obtained for the subscale of coordinate the curriculum for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.5 whereas principals where less than

40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4.3. The >40

group had a greater range in the means for each question with a range of 2.67 to 4.67

whereas the <40 group had a range of 3.4 to 4.8. Both set of principals reported the same

question of assessing the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the

school's achievement tests as the strategy they utilized least often in the subscale.

The overall standard deviations for the subscale were similar for both groups

(SD=.92, SD=.84), however, the >40 group generated the largest amount of dispersion in

scores with a range of 0 to 1.15. This indicates that the >40 report the amount to which

they use each strategy differently. Figure 10 displays the mean results for both sets of

principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 4.

Table 18

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 4: Coordinate the Curriculum

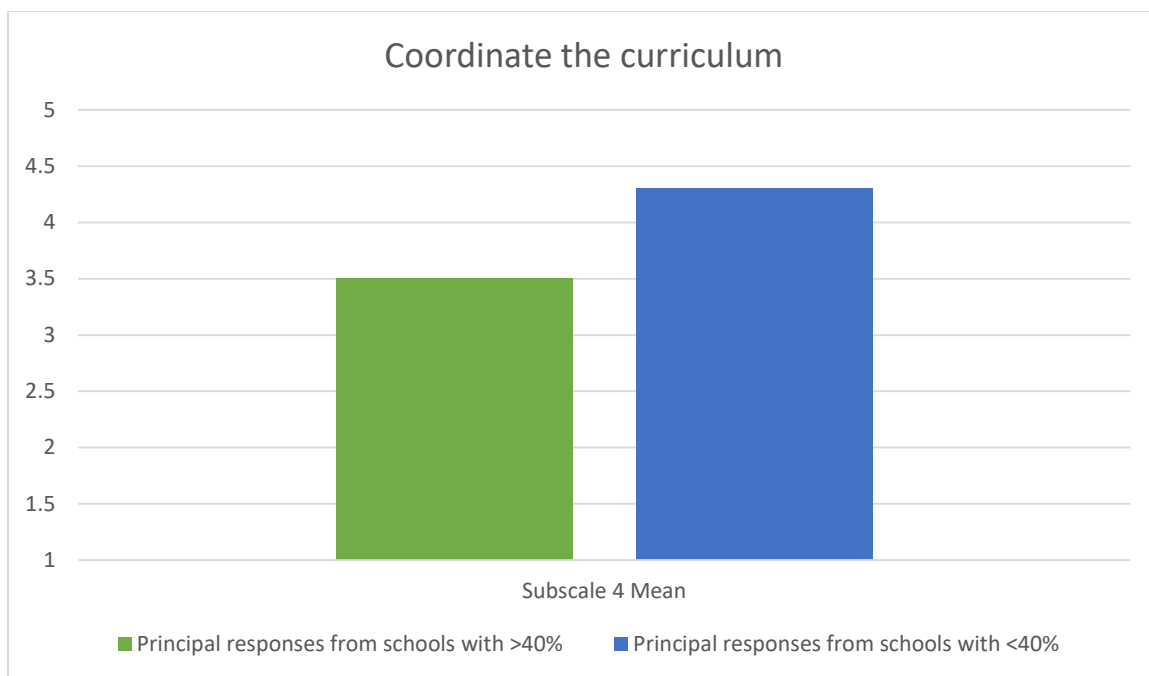| Items in Subscale 4	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
16	3.67	1.15	4.8	.45
17	4.67	.58	4.8	.45
18	3	0	4.2	.84
19	3.67	.58	4.2	.84
20	2.67	.58	3.4	.89
Mean/SD	3.5	.92	4.3	.84
Sum of principals	3	3	5	5

Figure 10. Mean Subscale 4: Coordinate the curriculum.

Table 19 displays the results obtained for the subscale of monitoring student progress for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.5 whereas principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4. Within this subscale, both sets of principals obtained the lowest mean on the same question of informing students of school's academic progress (M=2.67, M=3.2) respectively.

There is a greater amount of variance in the overall standard deviations (SD=.64, SD=1.19) obtained by both sets of principals. The >40 group have a low amount of dispersion of scores while the <40 group have a high amount of dispersion in scores when analyzed by each individual question. The largest variance in scores is found on the question of informing students of school's academic progress (SD=1.79) obtained by the <40 group which indicates a wider range of scores on this question. Figure 11

displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 5.

Table 19

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 5: Monitor Student Progress

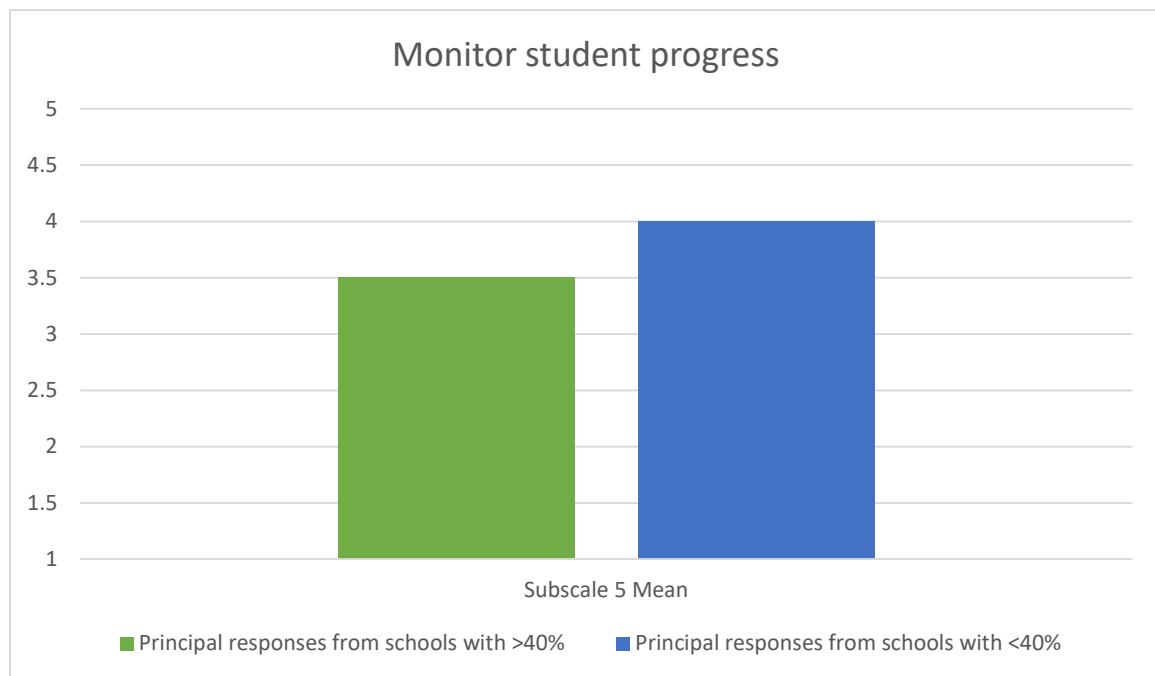| Items in Subscale 5	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
21	3.67	.58	3.4	1.14
22	4	0	4.2	.84
23	3.67	.58	4.6	.55
24	3.67	.58	4.6	.89
25	2.67	.58	3.2	1.79
Mean/SD	3.5	.64	4	1.19
Sum of principals	3	3	5	5

Figure 11. Mean Subscale 5: Monitor student progress.

Table 20 displays the results obtained for the subscale of protecting instructional time for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.5 whereas principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4.

The standard deviation rates obtained for this subscale are .76 and 1.27 from the principal groups. This indicates that for the <40 group, there is a wider range of variance in rating. Both principal groups have at least two questions that obtained a standard deviation result of zero which indicates the principals all rated the question the same. Figure 12 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 6.

Table 20

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 6: Protect Instructional Time

Items in Subscale 6	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
26	5	0	5	0
27	3	0	2.8	1.10
28	4	0	2.6	.89
29	4.3	.58	5	0
30	3.67	.58	4	1
Mean/SD	4	.76	3.9	1.27
Sum of principals	3		5	
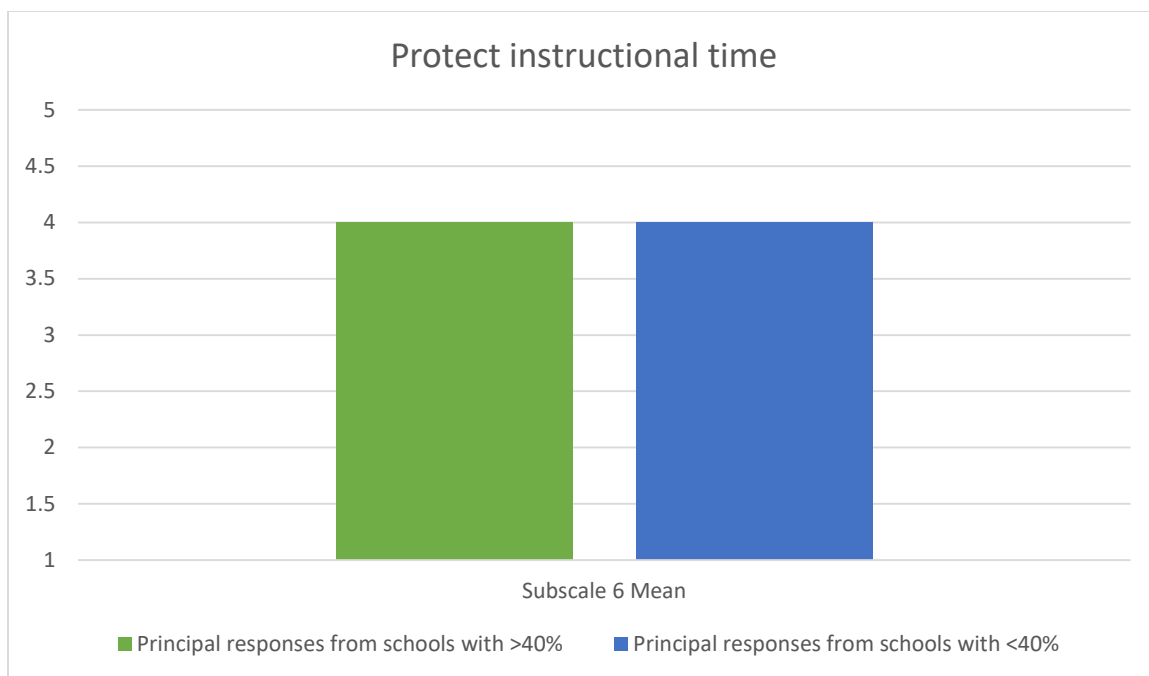
Figure 12. Mean Subscale 6: Protect instructional time

Table 21 displays the results obtained for the subscale of maintaining high visibility for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.3 whereas principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 3.6.

The standard deviations for both sets of principals resulted in higher SD ratings that on other subscales (SD=1.05, SD=1.33). The <40 group had particularly higher dispersion amounts when analyzed by individual questions as displayed on Table 21 whereas the >40 group has a much smaller amount of variance levels and one question with a standard deviation of zero. Figure 13 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 7.

Table 21

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 7: Maintain High Visibility

Items in Subscale 7	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
31	4.67	.58	4.6	.89
32	3	1	4.2	1.10
33	4	0	4	.71
34	2.67	.58	3	1.22
35	2.3	.58	2	1
Mean/SD	3.3	1.05	3.6	1.33
Sum of principals	3		5	

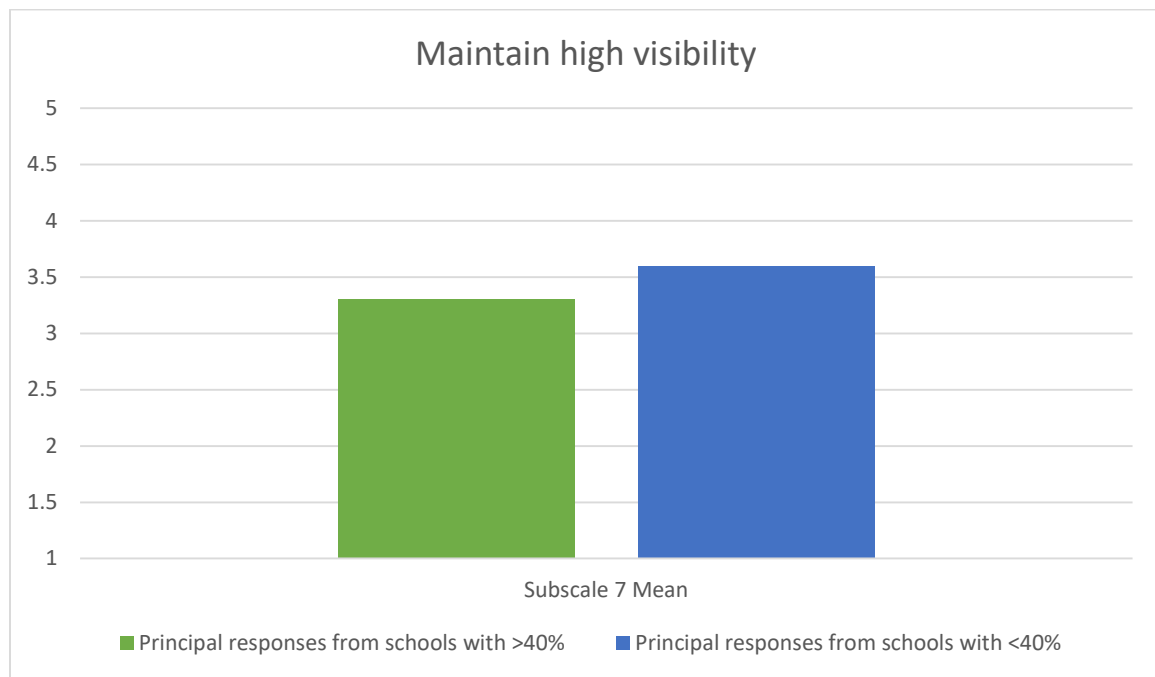*Figure 13.* Mean Subscale 7: Maintain high visibility.

Table 22 displays the results obtained for the subscale of providing incentives for teachers for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent

qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.4; whereas, principals where less

than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced lunch had a mean of 3.8. Both

principal groups rated the question of acknowledging teachers' exceptional performance

by writing memos for their personnel files substantially lower than the other questions.

The standard deviation levels vary for each principal group (SD=.91, SD=1.44)

which indicates a larger variance overall in ratings from the <40 group. There are

however, larger variance levels in ratings reported by the >40 group on scores when

analyzed for SD levels by question. Figure 14 displays the mean results for both sets of

principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 8.

Table 22

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 8: Provide Incentives for Teachers

Items in Subscale 8	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
36	4	0	4.6	.89
37	4	0	4.6	.89
38	2.3	1.15	1.4	.55
39	3.67	.58	4	.71
40	3	1	4.4	.89
Mean/SD	3.4	.91	3.8	1.44
Sum of principals	3		5	
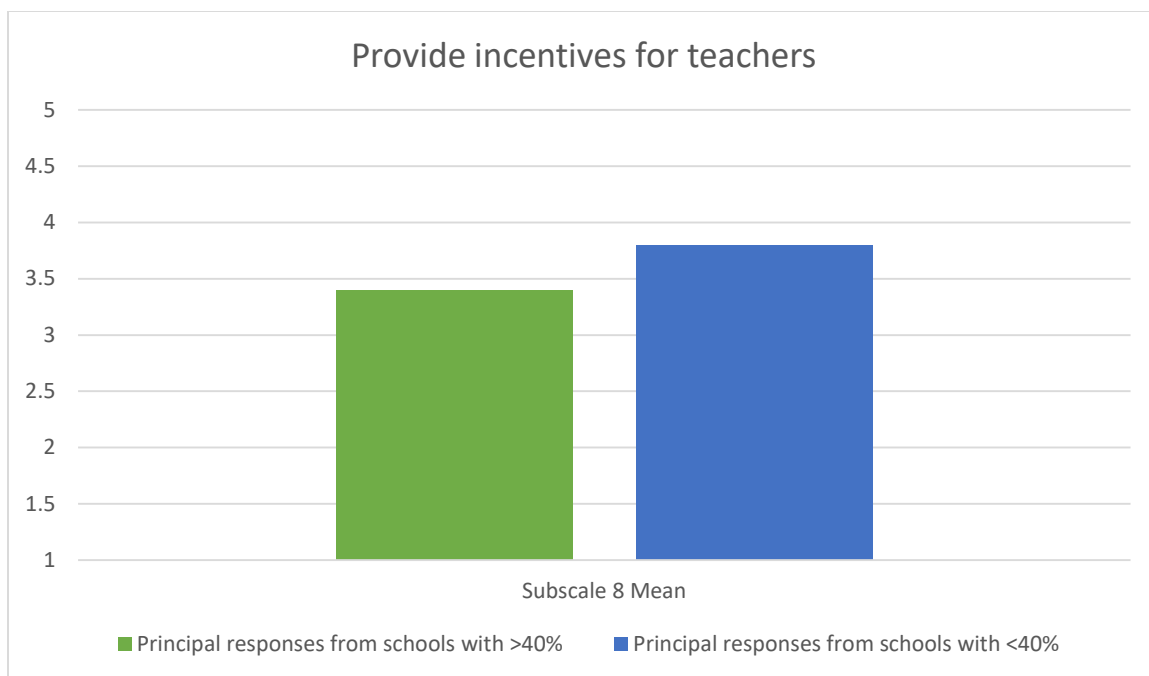
Figure 14. Mean Subscale 8: Provide incentives for teachers.

Table 23 displays the results obtained for the subscale of promoting professional development for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 4.6 whereas principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced learned had a mean of 4.5. The mean results for both groups are very similar along with the individual question means.

The standard deviation results for this subscale are similar as well (SD=.63, SD=.71) for both principal groups. This indicates that the amount of variance in the ratings of the questions is similar overall. More variance was found in the <40 group. Figure 15 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 9.

Table 23

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 9: Promote Professional Development

Items in Subscale 9	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
41	4.3	1.15	4.4	.89
42	4.3	.58	4.8	.45
43	4.67	.58	4.4	.89
44	5	0	4.4	.89
45	4.67	.58	4.4	.55
Subscale mean	4.6	.63	4.5	.71
Sum of principals	3		5	

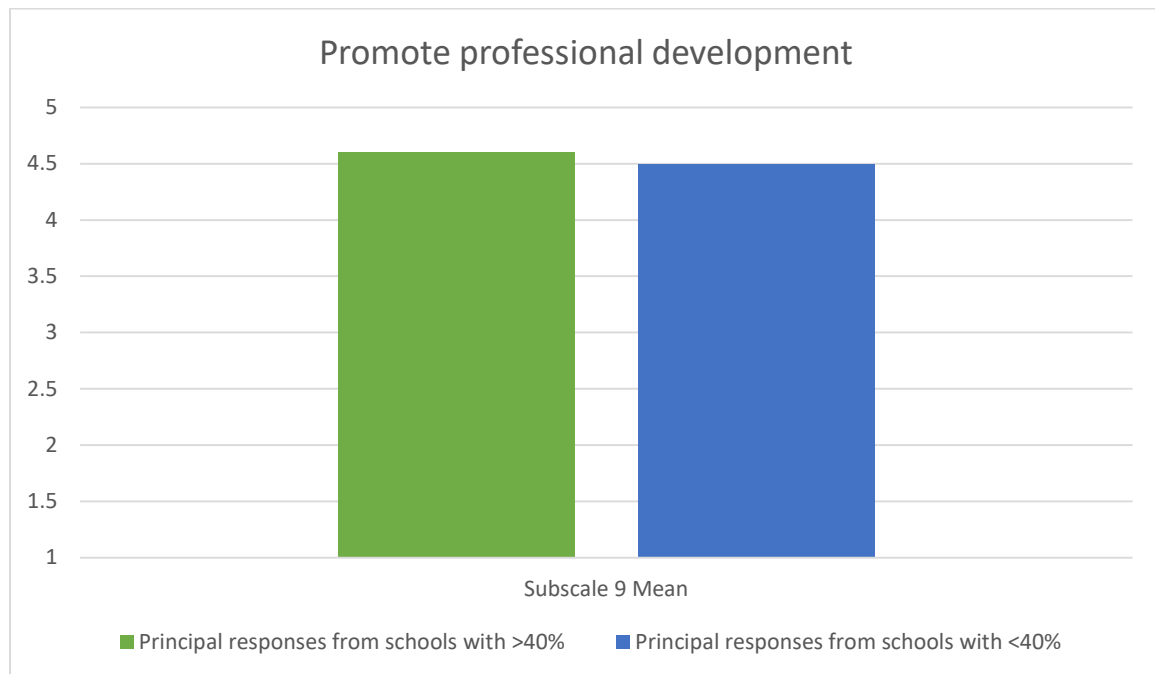*Figure 15.* Mean Subscale 9: Promote professional development

Table 24 displays the results obtained for the subscale of providing incentives for learning for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 40 percent qualifying for free/reduced lunch scored a mean of 3.2; whereas, principals where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced lunch had a mean of 3.1.

The standard deviation results for this subscale generated larger variance levels in the ratings (SD=1.21, SD=1.44). This indicates a wide range of variance in the ratings reported by the principals. Figure 16 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 10.

Table 24

Mean and SD Results from Subscale 10: Provides Incentives for Learning

Items in Subscale 10	Mean of responses from schools with ≥40%	SD of responses from schools with ≥40%	Principal responses from schools with <40%	SD of responses from schools <40%
46	4	0	2.4	1.67
47	3.3	1.53	3	1.41
48	2.67	1.53	2.6	1.82
49	2.67	1.53	3	1
50	3.3	1.15	4.4	.55
Mean/SD	3.2	1.21	3.1	1.44
Sum of principals	3	3	5	5
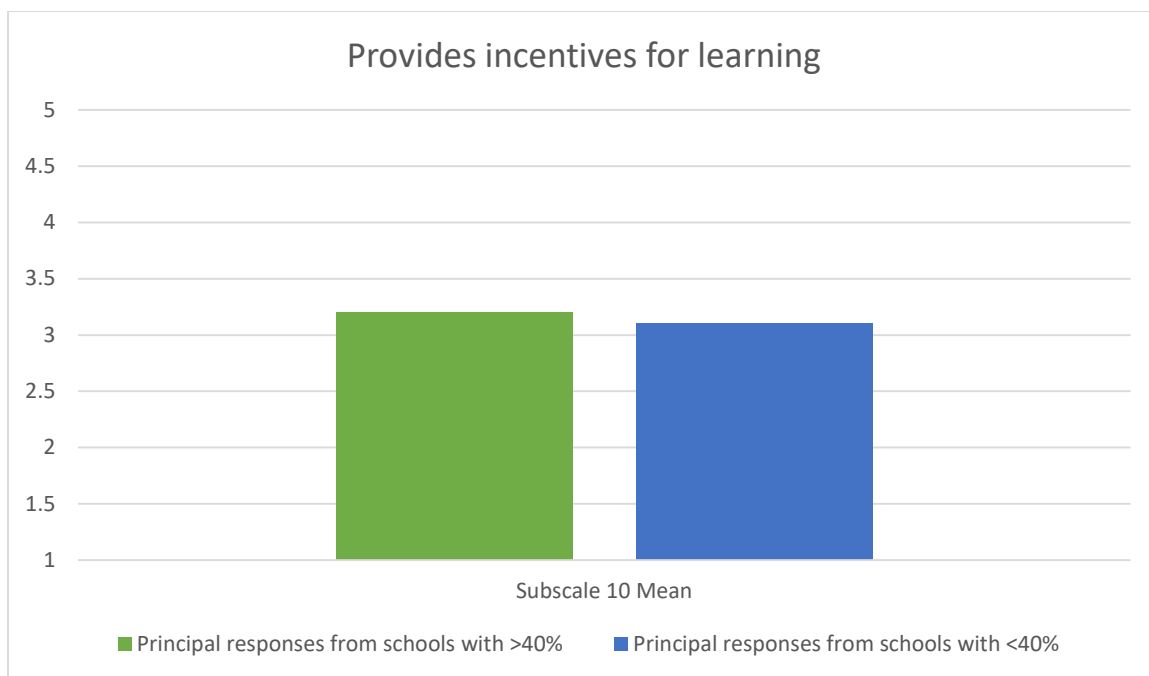
Figure 16. Mean Subscale 10: Promote professional development.

Summary. The second research question for this study asked "Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?" This study reported that the mean results for both sets of principal groups resulted in the same strategy rating the highest and the same strategy rating the lowest for both principal groups. The strategy that contained the highest amount of variance was the same for both groups along with the same strategy that resulted in the lowest amount of variance.

While some strategies obtained similar overall means or similar overall standard deviations, the amount of variance per question varied. Overall, more variance in individual question scores were found in the <40 group. The dispersion of scores for both groups appear to be the largest in subscale ten which is provides incentives for learning.

Principal ratings and student achievement

This section will provide research results based on the third research question of this study, which was: Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school? The eight schools represented in the study where divided based on the overall passing percentage of the students on the STAAR test. The schools were divided into two groups. The first group were schools that achieved an overall passing score of 80 percent or higher in each of the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies in the all grades category. The second group contains the schools that did not achieve and 80 percent or higher is each of the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies in the all grades category.

The first group of principals was comprised of four principals. This group was comprised of two first year principals, one male and one female. The other two principals in the group, one male and one female, were at the current school between two to four years and had a total of five to nine years as a principal.

The second group of principals was comprised of four total principals. This group was comprised of all first year principals, one male and three female, who were chosen to lead the schools with less than 80 percent passing rates on STAAR.

Table 25 displays the overall subscale scores for both sets of principals. Table 25 reports the mean scores and standard deviation scores for both sets of principals. Both set of principals report the same strategy of framing the school goals the highest (M=4.85, M=4.65) and this strategy also has the lowest amount of variance (SD=.37, SD=.59) in the scores for both sets of principals. The strategy that had the lowest mean was

providing incentives for learning for both sets of principals (M=3.2, M=3.05) and this

strategy had the greatest amount of variance (SD=1.51, SD=1.19) in the ratings received

from the principals. The >80 percent principal group had an overall greater amount of

variance in their scores for six of the subscales over the <80 percent principal group.

Table 25

Mean and SD Results from Each Subscale of the PIMRS

Subscale	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools <80%
1	4.85	.37	4.65	.59
2	3.65	1.14	3.65	.99
3	4.6	.60	3.75	.85
4	4.55	.60	3.45	.89
5	4.3	1.03	3.35	.81
6	3.95	1.28	4	.91
7	3.9	1.17	3.05	1.15
8	4.05	1.5	3.25	.85
9	4.55	.69	4.5	.69
10	3.2	1.51	3.05	1.19
Sum of principals	4		4	

The overall means are represented in this table. The specific subscale and

question scores are represented in Tables 26 to 34. Table 26 displays the results obtained

for the subscale of framing the school goals for both sets of principals. Principals of

schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.85

whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in

all subjects had a mean of 4.65. Both principal groups rated the questions in this subscale

high.

The variance for both sets of principals in this subscale was low (SD=.37,

SD=.59). This indicates that there was a small amount of dispersion in the ratings

reported by the principals. Figure 17 displays the mean results for both sets of principal

groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 1.

Table 26

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 1: Frame the School Goals

Items in Subscale 1	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
1	5	0	4.75	.5
2	4.75	.5	4.25	.96
3	4.75	.5	4.5	.58
4	5	0	4.75	.5
5	4.75	.5	5	0
Mean/SD	4.85	.37	4.65	.59
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
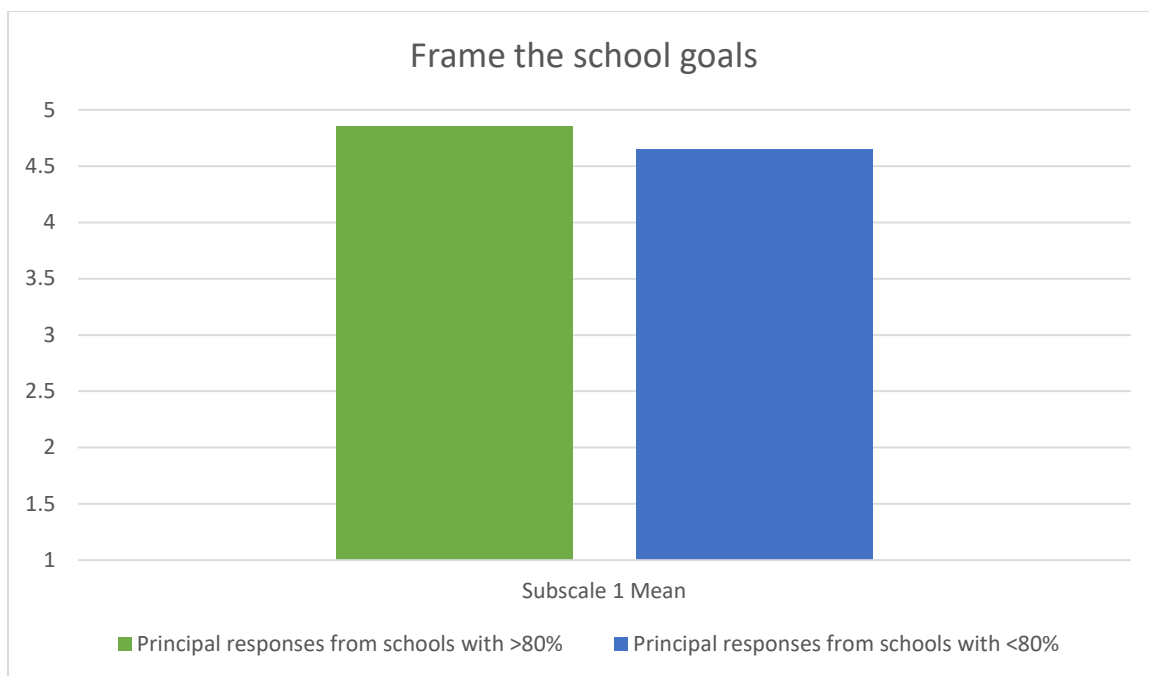
Figure 17. Mean Subscale 1: Frame the school goals.

Table 27 displays the results obtained for the subscale of communicating the school goals for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 3.65 which is the same as principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.65. An analysis of the questions showed a large range of mean scores for the >80 percent principal group from a mean of 2.5 to a mean of 4.5 whereas the <80 percent group have a smaller range of means that varies from 3.25 to 4.25.

The question regarding referring to the school's goals or mission in forums with students contained the greatest amount of variance in scores (SD=1.41) for the >80 percent principal group. The <80 percent principal group had two questions that had a large amount of variance in the ratings by the principals for the questions of ensuring that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school and

referring to the school's goals or mission in forums with students. Figure 18 displays the

mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 2.

Table 27

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 2: Communicate the School Goals

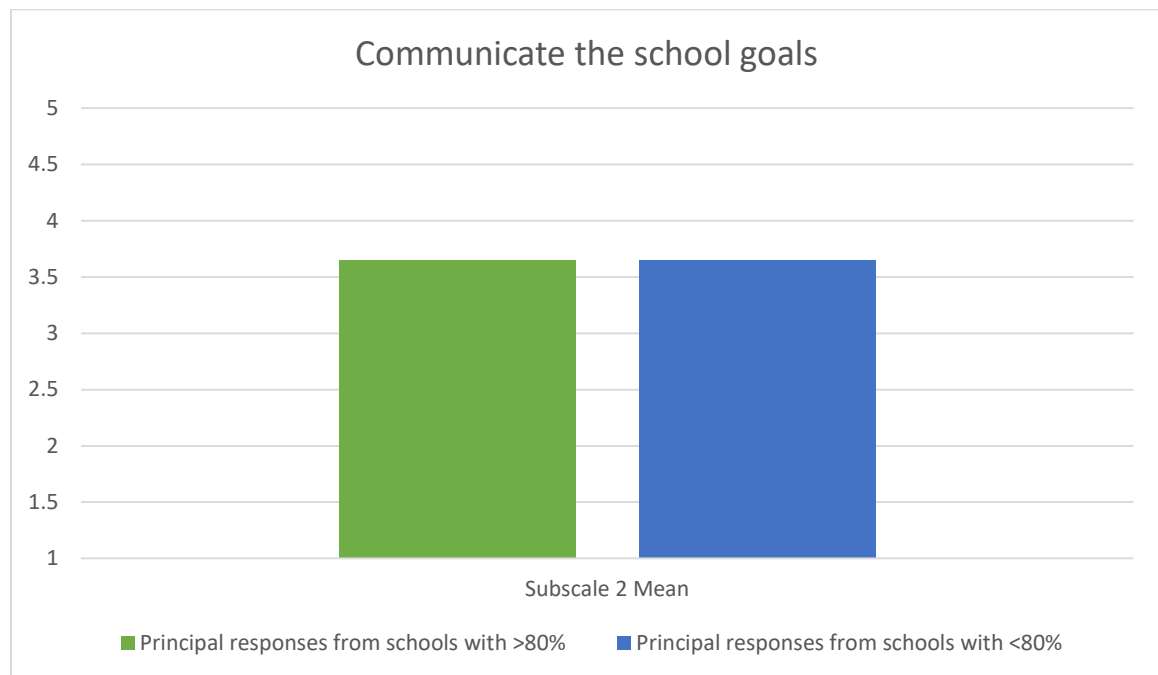| Items in Subscale 2	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
6	3.75	.5	3.75	.96
7	4.5	.58	3.75	.96
8	4.5	.58	4.25	.5
9	2.5	1	3.25	1.26
10	3	1.41	3.25	1.26
Mean/SD	3.65	1.14	3.65	.99
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4

Figure 18. Mean Subscale 2: Communicate the school goals

Table 28 displays the results obtained for the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.6 whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.75. The >80 percent principal group obtained a much higher mean for this subscale and for each question in comparison to the <80 percent principal group. This indicates that the principals overall in the >80 percent group rated the items in the supervise and evaluate instruction subscale as being utilized more frequently.

Table 28 also displays that both principal groups have an overall lower variance level although the >80 percent group have the lower variance level (SD=.60) of the two groups. This indicates that the principals' ratings of each item were similar. Figure 19 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 3.

Table 28

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 3: Supervise and Evaluate Instruction

Items in Subscale 3	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
11	5	0	3.75	.96
12	4.25	.96	2.75	.5
13	4.5	.58	3.5	.58
14	4.75	.5	4.5	.58
15	4.5	.58	4.25	.5
Mean/SD	4.6	.60	3.75	.85
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
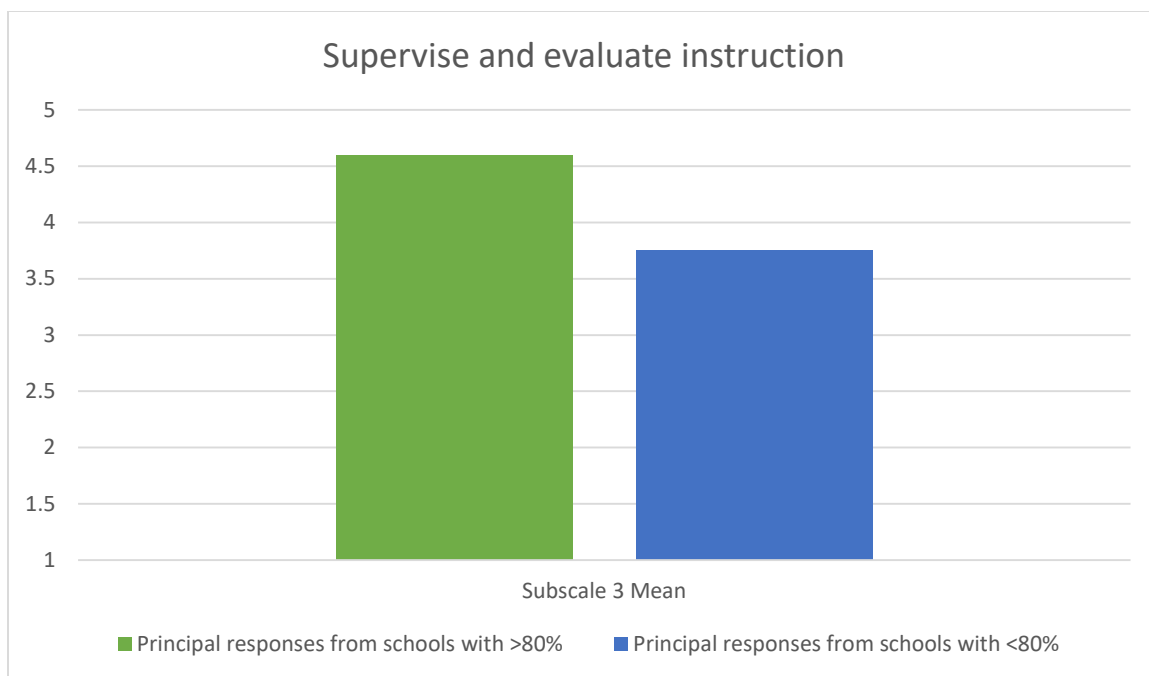
Figure 19. Mean Subscale 3: Supervise and evaluate instruction.

Table 29 displays the results obtained for the subscale of coordinating the curriculum for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.55 whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.45. This indicates that the >80 percent group rate that they utilized the items in this subscale more often than the <80 percent principal group.

The variance levels for both sets of principals in this subscale is similar (SD=.60, SD=.89). This indicates that although there is a difference in the mean ratings of each question, the principals in their respective groups rate the items similar. Figure 20 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 4.

Table 29

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 4: Coordinate the Curriculum

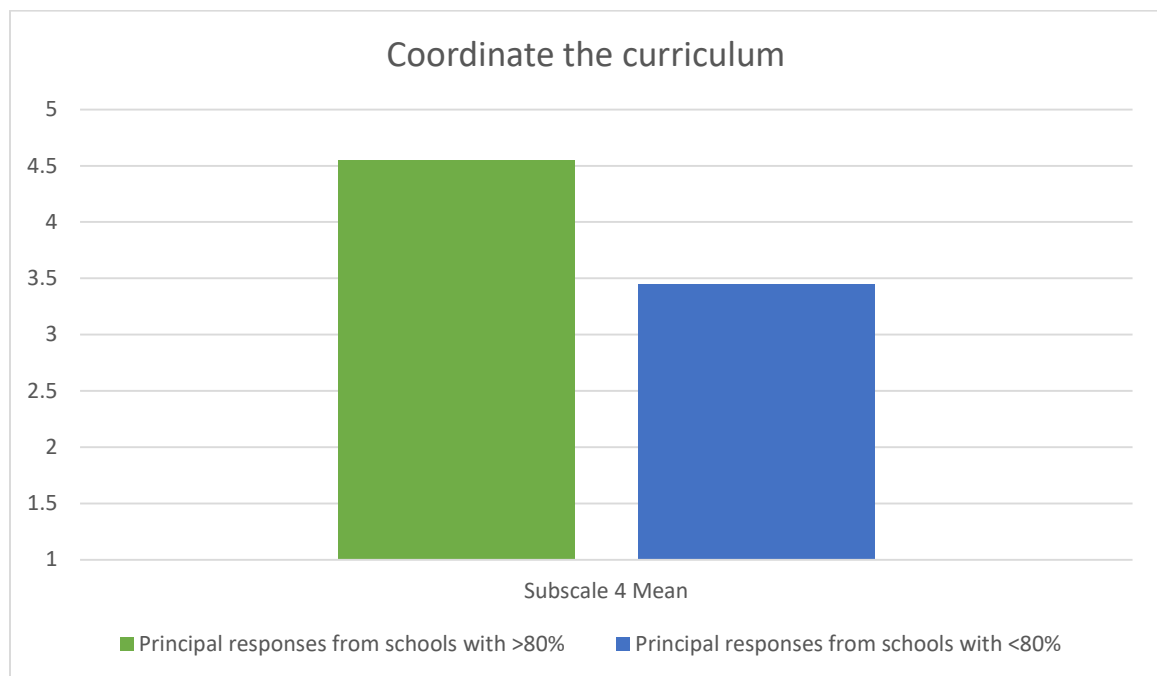| Items in Subscale 4	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
16	5	0	3.75	.96
17	5	0	4.5	.58
18	4.5	.58	3	0
19	4.5	.58	3.5	.58
20	3.75	.5	2.5	.58
Mean/SD	4.55	.60	3.45	.89
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4

Figure 20. Mean Subscale 4: Coordinate the curriculum.

Table 30 displays the results obtained for the subscale of monitoring student progress for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or

higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.3 whereas principals of schools that did not

achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.5. This

indicates that the principals in the >80 percent group rate that they utilize the items in this

subscale more often.

The overall variance levels on this subscale were similar (SD=1.03, SD=.81),

however, the >80 percent principal group obtained a wide range of dispersion depending

on the question from a SD=0 to a SD=1.5. Although the <80 percent group obtained a

lower mean score, their variance levels were smaller overall. Figure 21 displays the

mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 5.

Table 30

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 5: Monitor Student Progress

Items in Subscale 5	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
21	3.5	1.29	3.5	.58
22	4.5	.58	3.75	.5
23	4.75	.5	3.75	.5
24	5	0	3.5	.58
25	3.75	1.5	2.25	.96
Mean/SD	4.3	1.03	3.35	.81
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
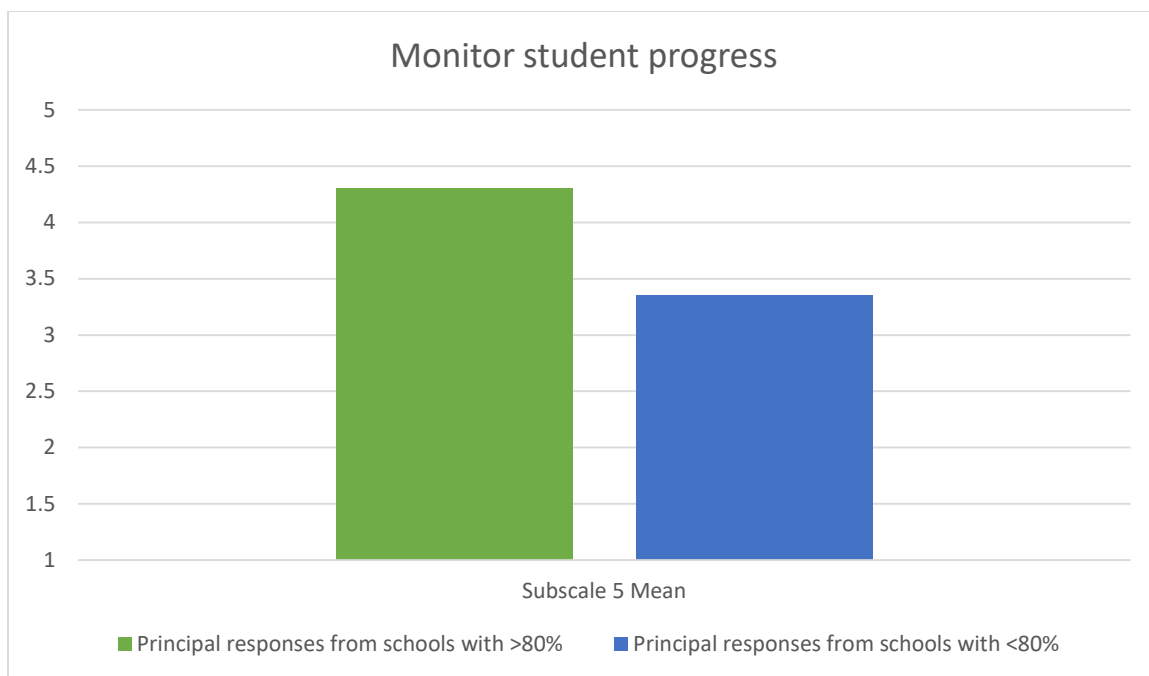
Figure 21. Mean Subscale 5: Monitor student progress.

Table 31 displays the results obtained for the subscale of protecting instructional time for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 3.95 whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 4. Although the overall mean scores were similar, there was a large difference in the means by question.

The variance levels in the ratings are greater (SD=1.28) for the >80 percent group than the <80 percent group (SD=.91). When the subscale was examined by individual question, there is a larger difference in the variance levels in the >80 percent group with a range of zero to 1.26. Figure 22 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 6.

Table 31

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 6: Protect Instructional Time

Items in Subscale 6	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
26	5	0	5	0
27	2.75	1.26	3	0
28	2.75	.96	3.5	1
29	5	0	4.5	.58
30	4.25	.96	3.5	.58
Mean/SD	3.95	1.28	4	.91
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
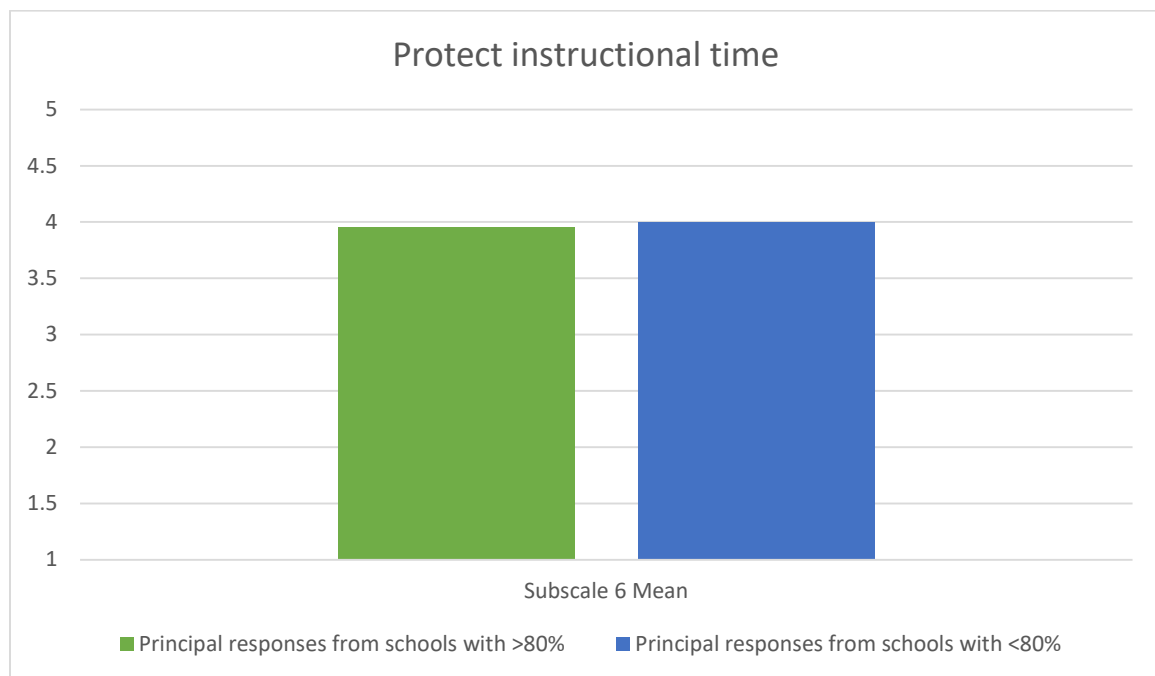
Figure 22. Mean Subscale 6: Protect instructional time.

Table 32 displays the results obtained for the subscale of maintaining high visibility for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or

higher passing rates scored a mean of 3.9 whereas principals of schools that did not

achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.05. As Table

4.30 displays, the questions on this subscale show a wide range in means based on

question by both principal groups. The >80 percent principal group obtained higher

mean scores on average on each question than the <80 percent group.

The overall standard deviation scores for both sets of principals were similar

(SD=1.17, SD=1.15). Figure 23 displays the mean results for both sets of principal

groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 7.

Table 32

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 7: Maintaining High Visibility

Items in Subscale 7	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
31	5	0	4.25	.96
32	4.5	1	3	.82
33	4.25	.5	3.75	.5
34	3.5	.58	2.25	.96
35	2.25	.96	2	.82
Mean/SD	3.9	1.17	3.05	1.15
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
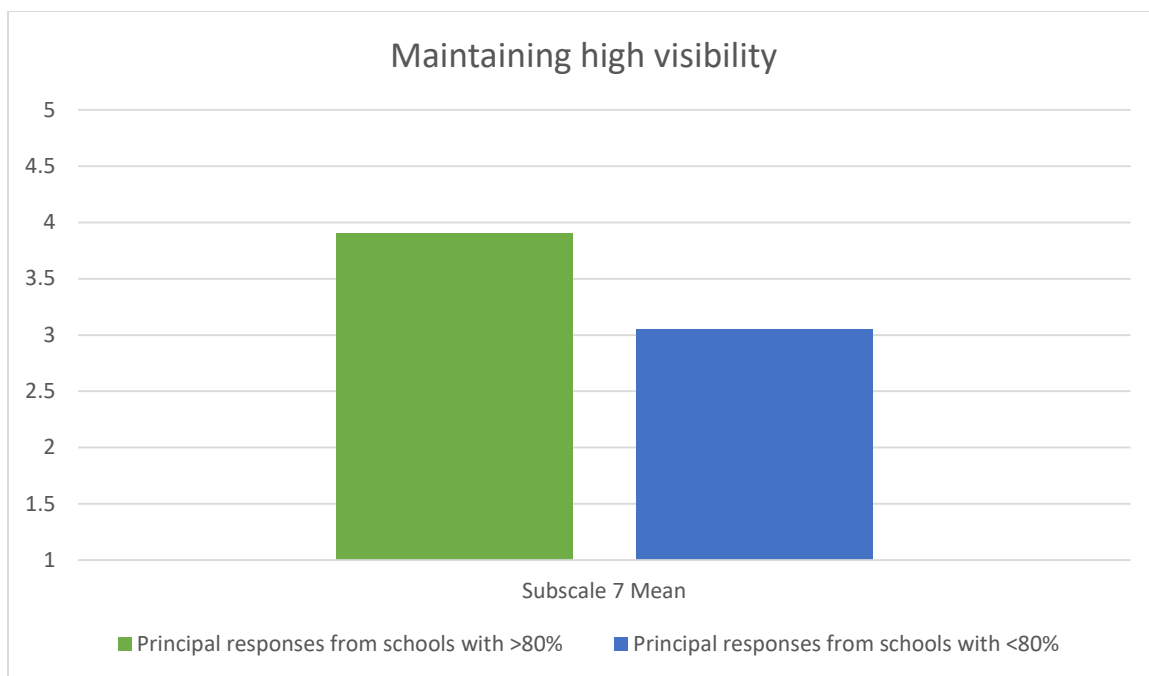
Figure 23. Mean Subscale 7: Maintaining high visibility.

Table 33 displays the results obtained for the subscale of providing incentives for teachers for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.05 whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.25. This subscale generated the lowest rating (M=1.25, M=2.25) and related to the question of acknowledging teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files.

The variance levels in the questions on this subscale were low for both principal groups. The >80 percent group obtained a higher variance level overall which was generated by the low mean scores on one question in comparison to the other questions. Figure 24 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 8.

Table 33

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 8: Provide Incentives for Teachers

Items in Subscale 8	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
36	5	0	3.75	.5
37	5	0	3.75	.5
38	1.25	.5	2.25	.96
39	4.25	.5	3.5	.58
40	4.75	.5	3	.82
Mean/SD	4.05	1.50	3.25	.85
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
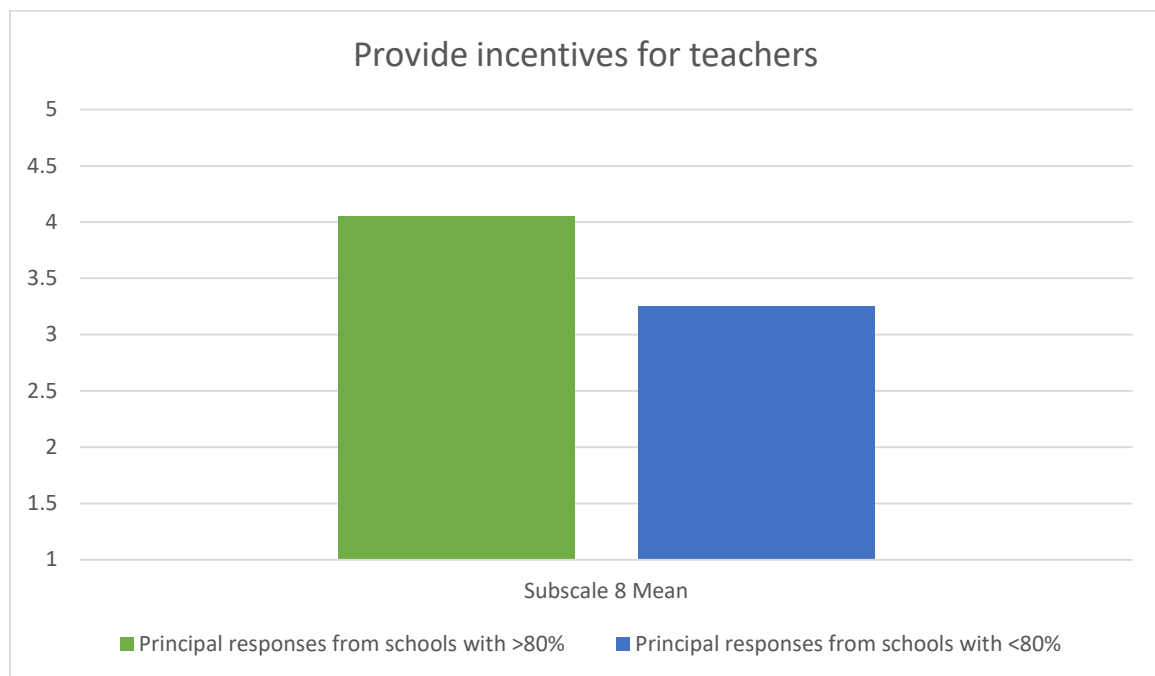
Figure 24. Mean Subscale 8: Provide incentives for teachers.

Table 34 displays the results obtained for the subscale of promoting professional development for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80

percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 4.55 whereas principals of schools that

did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 4.5.

This subscale also generated the same variance levels (SD=.69) for both principal groups.

Figure 25 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar

graph for subscale 9.

Table 34

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 9: Promote Professional Development

Items in Subscale 9	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
41	4.25	.96	4.5	1
42	4.75	.5	4.5	.58
43	4.75	.5	4.25	.96
44	4.5	1	4.75	.5
45	4.5	.58	4.5	.58
Mean/SD	4.55	.69	4.5	.69
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
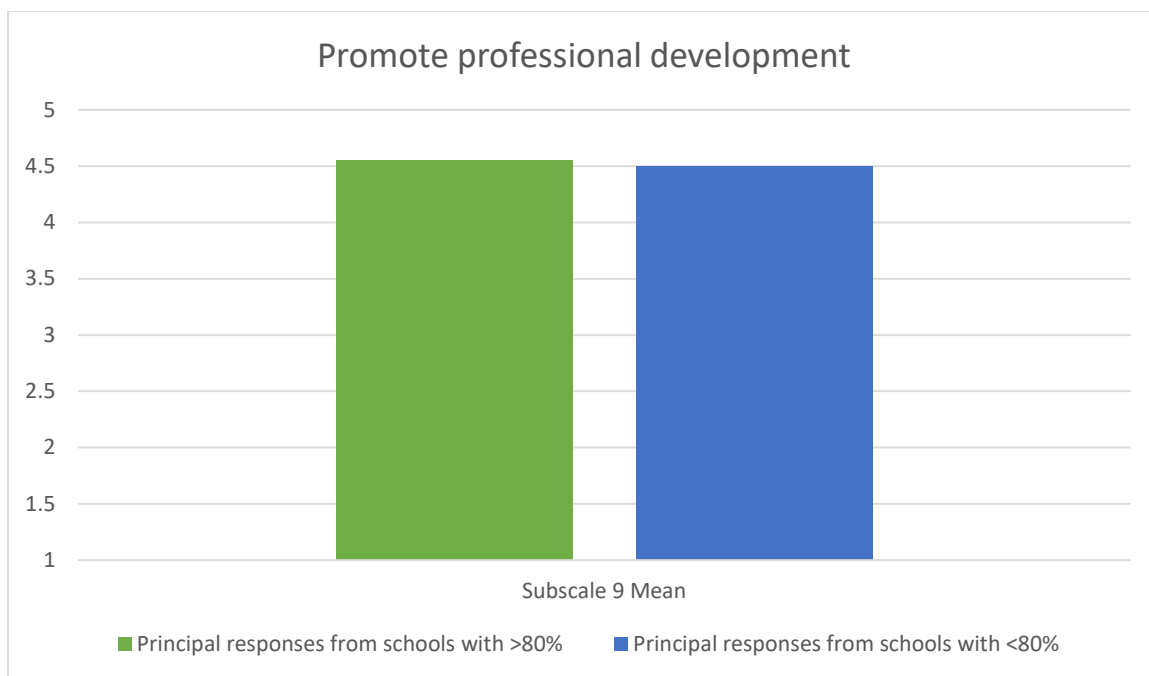
Figure 25. Mean Subscale 9: Promote professional development.

Table 35 displays the results obtained for the subscale of providing incentives for learning for both sets of principals. Principals of schools with greater than 80 percent or higher passing rates scored a mean of 3.2 whereas principals of schools that did not achieve the 80 percent or higher passing rate in all subjects had a mean of 3.05.

This subscale generated high levels of variance in the ratings by the principals. The overall variance levels (SD=1.51, SD=1.19) were obtained for each group. The variance levels on the questions show the highest variance levels for any of the subscales which indicates that the principals rated these questions differently. Figure 26 displays the mean results for both sets of principal groups in a comparison bar graph for subscale 10.

Table 35

Mean and SD Results for Subscale 10: Provide Incentives for Learning

Items in Subscale 10	Mean of responses from schools with ≥80%	SD of responses from schools ≥80%	Mean of responses from schools with <80%	SD of responses from schools with <80%
46	2.25	1.89	3.75	.5
47	3	1.63	3.25	1.26
48	3	1.83	2.25	1.5
49	3.25	.96	2.5	1.29
50	4.5	.58	3.5	1
Mean/SD	3.2	1.51	3.05	1.19
Sum of principals	4	4	4	4
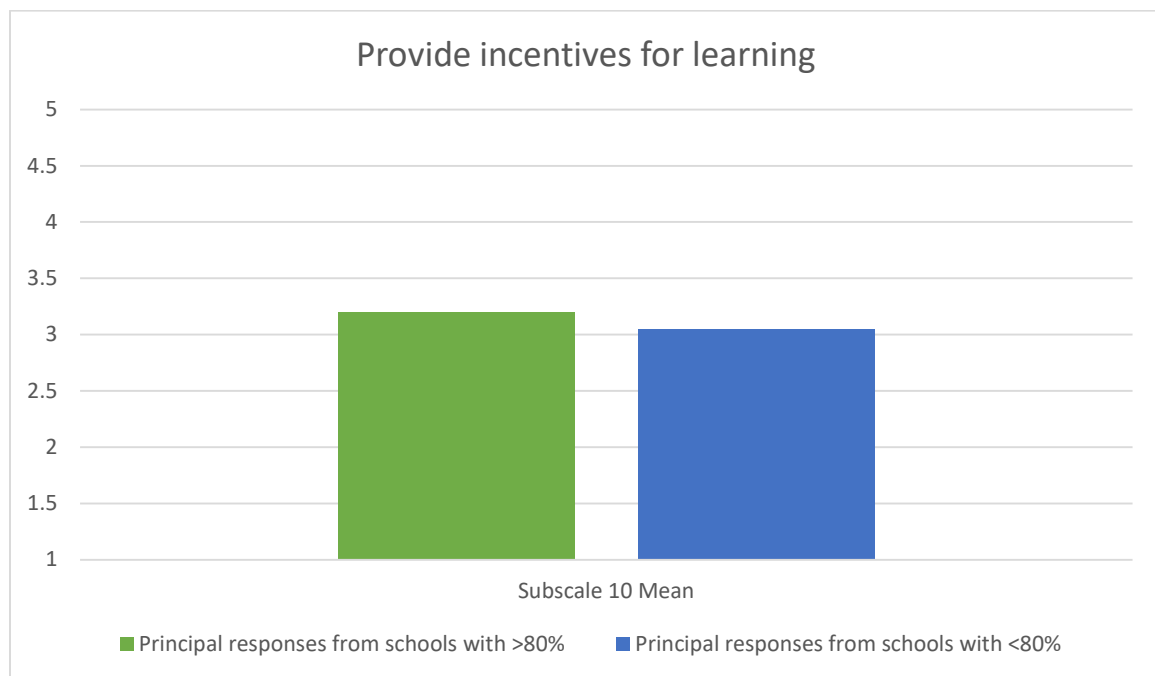
Figure 26. Mean Subscale 10: Provide incentives for learning.

Summary. The third research question asked: "Do the leadership strategies

utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?" The results

showed that the >80 percent group obtained higher overall subscale mean scores for eight of the subscales in relation to the <80 percent principal group. When analyzed for the variance levels of the ratings, the >80 percent principal group had a higher variance in scores for six of the subscales. This indicates that although the mean scores were higher, there was a great deal of dispersion of scores.

Summary

This chapter presented the results obtained from the PIMRS survey that was completed by the eight principals that participated in the study. The information was represented in three categories that addressed the three research questions that guided the study. The principal groups in all of the research questions rated the same strategy of framing the school goals as being utilized the most and providing incentives for learning as the least utilized strategy. The dispersion of the scores varied based on the subscale and question for each principal group. The largest dispersion of scores occurred in the subscale of providing incentives for learning for all principal groups.

The first question of "What are the leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle school?" generated the highest mean in the strategy of framing the school goals (M=4.75) and the lowest strategy of providing incentives for learning (M=3.125). The strategy of providing incentives for learning generated the highest variance in scores (SD=1.34) which indicates that although this strategy has the lowest mean, there is a large dispersion of ratings by the principals. The principals rated the strategy of promoting professional development (M=4.525) and supervising and evaluating instruction (M=4.175) as the next highest utilized strategies. The three highest utilized

strategies also obtained the lowest variance levels. These three strategies answer the question about the leadership strategies utilized by the principals.

The second question of "Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?" For this question, the schools were divided into two groups. The principals were divided per whether the school has more or less than 40 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Analysis of responses for this question displayed the highest mean in the strategy of framing the school goals and the lowest strategy of providing incentives for learning for both principal groups. For the strategy of providing incentives for learning the greatest amount of variance was noted. The principal group with <40 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch obtained higher variance levels in six of the subscales than the other group. This indicates that the principals in the <40 percent group have a larger dispersion of ratings than the >40 percent group.

The >40 principal group rated the strategies of framing the school goals (M=4.67), promoting professional development (M=4.6) and protecting instructional time (M=4) as the highest rated strategies. The <40 percent principal group rated the strategies of framing the school goals (M=4.8), promoting professional development (M=4.5) and supervising and evaluating instruction (M=4.4) as the highest rated strategies.

The third question of "Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?" The schools were divided in two groups for this question. The principals were divided based on whether or not the schools achieved an overall passing score of 80 percent or higher in each of the tested areas of

reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies in the all grades category. Analysis of responses for this question displayed the highest mean in the strategy of framing the school goals and the lowest strategy of providing incentives for learning for both principal groups. Both principal groups also had the largest variance level for the strategy of providing incentives for learning which indicates that while this obtained the lowest mean, there was the largest dispersion of scores on this subscale.

The >80 percent principal group obtained higher mean scores in eight of the ten subscales over the other principal group, however, they also had six out of ten subscales with higher variance levels than the other principal group. This indicates that while the overall mean ratings were higher, the principals rated each question differently on the survey.

The >80 percent principal group rated the strategies of framing the school goals (M=4.85), supervise and evaluate instruction (M=4.6), monitor student progress (M=4.55) and promoting professional development (M=4.55) as the most utilized strategies. The <80 percent principal group rated the strategies of framing the school goals (M=4.65), promoting professional development (M=4.5) and protecting instructional time (M=4) as the highest.

Chapter five provides a discussion of the results along with the limitations of this study and directions for future use.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

 The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in a suburban school district. This chapter begins by examining and providing a discussion of the results based on the three guiding questions of the research. This chapter then discusses the limitations of the study, implications for further research and ends with a conclusion of the study.

Discussion of Results

 Previous chapters of this study provided a literature review of leadership strategies utilized by principals. To examine the strategies used by current middle school principals, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was utilized. Eight principals in the selected suburban school district completed the PIMRS and the results of the survey were examined. The results of the study examined the following research questions.

1. What are the leadership strategies utilized by the principals of the middle schools?

2. Do the leadership strategies used by the principals differ based on the school demographics?

3. Do the leadership strategies utilized by principals differ based on the student achievement in the school?

The results from the PIMRS were analyzed along with the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) results and demographic information for each school.

Principal strategies. The first research question examined the leadership strategies utilized by the middle school principals in the study. The principals report they utilized each strategy from an average overall rating of sometimes to almost always.

The strategies that received the highest average of principal scores of reported use was the subscale of framing the school goals. This subscale obtained a mean score of 4.75 out of 5 on the PIMRS instrument. This subscale also had the lowest variability in ratings (SD=.49) which indicates a small dispersion of ratings from the principals. This indicates that the principals perceive that framing the school goals is an important component. Leaders who have a defined direction make the biggest impact (The Center, 2005, p. 2).

The strategy that received the second highest average was that of promoting professional development. On each question in this subscale, the average ranged from 4.5-4.625. The mean score for this subscale was 4.525 out of a possible 5 mean. This subscale also had the second lowest variability rate (SD=.68) which indicates a low dispersion of scores. This indicates that the principals perceive they use the strategy of promoting professional development frequently. Principals understand that opportunities must be provided for training and coaching to occur with their teachers (McEwan-Evans, 2003, 9.31).

The strategy that received the third highest average was that of supervising and evaluating instruction. This subscale obtained a mean of 4.175. It is interesting to note that that question of reviewing student work products when evaluating classroom instruction obtained the lowest mean in the subscale of 3.5 while the question of pointing out specific strengths in teacher feedback obtained the highest mean of 4.625. This

indicates that the principals may believe they provide feedback to teachers, yet this feedback does not include reviewing student work. This subscale also had the third lowest variability (SD=.84) in the ratings.

The lowest scoring subscales of the PIMRS were the subscales of providing incentives for learning (M= 3.125, SD=1.34), maintaining high visibility (M= 3.475, SD=1.22) and providing incentives for teachers (M= 3.65, SD=1.27). This indicates that the principals rated providing incentives for both students and teachers and being visible as their lowest strategy. Interesting to note is the high variability of these subscales. The three lowest rated subscales obtained the three highest dispersion rates. This indicates that while receiving an overall low mean scores, the principals differ on their rating of each question.

The lowest rated mean on the survey was in the providing incentives for teachers' subscale. The lowest rated question asked the extent to which the principals acknowledged teachers' exceptional performance. This question earned a mean score of 1.75. Principals should take note of the low scoring of incentives for teaching and the importance of recognition. Andrews (2011) found that recognition for teachers is a strong motivator. Additionally, Almy and Tooley (2012) found that "more than any other school factor, satisfaction with school leadership impacts teachers' overall satisfaction with teaching" (p. 3).

Principal strategies and school demographics. The second question asked if the principal strategies differed based on the school demographics of whether the school has more or less than 40 percent of student who qualify for free or reduced lunch. To analyze the results of the PIMRS based on the school, the schools were divided based on

the percentage of the students who qualified for free/reduced lunch. The schools were split into two groups with the first group containing the schools where 40 percent or more of their students qualified for free/reduced lunch (P1 Group). The second group of schools were those who had fewer than 40 percent of their student population qualify for free/reduced lunch (P2 Group).

Both sets of schools' principals reported the same top two strategies as having the highest mean. The subscales of framing the school's goals and promoting professional development ranked number one and number two respectively for both sets of principals. These two subscales also obtained the lowest amount of dispersion of scores which indicates that the ratings had a low amount of variability.

P1 Group principals obtained their third highest mean in the subscale of protecting instructional time (M=4, SD=.76) whereas the third highest mean for the P2 Group was the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction (M=4.4, SD=.76). These subscales also obtained lower rates of dispersion of ratings indicating the principals rated their answers similarly. There is a fundamental importance of protecting instructional time and allowing for more time on task. Lezotte and Snyder (2011) note that "65 percent of the observed gap in measured student achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged students is, first and foremost, a gap in opportunity to learn" (p. 76). P1 Group principals might recognize the importance of time and must ensure that maximum amount of time is spent on instruction.

Both sets of principals had the lowest mean for the subscale of providing incentives for learning with a rating of 3.2 (P1 Group) and 3.1 (P2 Group) respectively. P1 Group principals also ranked maintaining high visibility (M=3.3, SD=1.05) and

providing incentives for teachers (M=3.4, SD=.91) as the other lowest. P2 Group

principals ranked communicating the school's goals (M=3.56, SD=1.04) and maintaining

high visibility (M=3.6, SD=1.33) as their lowest means.

The results for this question demonstrate that both sets of principals report they

utilize the same two strategies most often and the same one strategy least often. The

amount of usage of the other strategies varies between the two groups. The P1 Group

ranked four of the strategies as being utilized more frequently than the P2 Group,

however, the P2 Group ranked the other six strategies with a higher mean score.

Interesting to note is the higher dispersion of ratings from the P2 Group. The P2

Group obtained larger dispersion of ratings in compared to the P1 Group. This indicates

that although the principals in the P2 Group rated six of the strategies as being utilized

more frequently than the P1 Group, their scores of each question of the subscales varied

more.

Principal strategies and student achievement. The third question asked if

leadership strategies differ based on student achievement. The schools were divided into

two groups based on the student achievement levels. The first group were schools that

achieved an overall passing score of 80 percent or higher in each of the tested areas of

reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies in the all grades category (S1

Group). The second group contains the schools that did not achieve and 80 percent or

higher in each of the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, science and social

studies in the all grades category (S2 Group).

Principals in the S1 Group and S2 Group reported the same top strategy as having the highest mean. The subscales of framing the school's goals ranked highest for both sets of principals. Dufour and Marzano (2011) note that the "principal's influence on student achievement passes through teachers" (p. 49). The principal is a strong factor in guiding teachers and ensuring they have the professional development needed for student success.

The S1 Group principals obtained the second highest mean for the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction (M=4.6, SD=.60). The next highest means where obtained in the subscales of coordinating the curriculum (M=4.55, SD=.60) and promoting professional development (M=4.55, SD=.69). These subscales also had the lowest amount of variability in the ratings. Hanna (2013) found in his examination of three effective school districts that one of the routines of the principals of the effective schools was to observe classroom teaching frequently. The S2 Group principals obtained the second highest mean for the subscale of promoting professional development (M=4.5, SD=.69) and the third highest mean in the subscale of protecting instructional time (M=4, SD=.91).

Both sets of principals had the lowest mean for the subscale of providing incentives for learning with a mean of 3.2 (S1 Group) and 3.05 (S2 Group) respectively. Of interest is that this subscale also had the greatest amount of variability. The S1 Group principals rated communicating the school goals (M=3.65, SD=1.14) and maintaining high visibility (M=3.9, SD=1.17) as the next two lowest subscales. S2 Group principals rated maintaining high visibility (M=3.05, SD=1.15) and providing incentives for teachers (M=3.25, SD=.85) as their next two lowest subscales. Both groups rated

maintain high visibility as one of their lowest rated strategies, however, high visibility by the principal has been associated with decreased student misbehavior (Nooruddin & Baig, 2014) and positive effects on instruction (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).

The results for this question demonstrate that both sets of principals report they utilize the same strategy most often and the same one strategy least often. The amount of dispersion of the other strategies varies between the two groups. The S1 Group ranked eight of the strategies as being utilized more frequently than the S2 Group; however, the other two categories were nearly identical in rating. The S1 Group also obtained more variability in their ratings of the subscales than the S2 Group. This indicates that although the S1 Group principals rated the strategies higher, there is a larger dispersion of scores from the S1 Group.

Limitations of Research

There were several limitations of this study. Some of the limitations were identified before the study began while other limitations emerged at the conclusion of the study.

Common strategies. This study determined the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals and the strategies utilized based on school demographics and achievement respectively. This study did not account for the combination of strategies utilized by the principals and did not consider if the strategies vary based on assessment scores outside of the state testing scores.

This study also did not examine the implications of the same strategies being used by principals regardless of school demographics and achievement. As determined by the

research of this study, the same strategy rated highest and lowest by all sets of principals examined. There was also some overlap of strategies in the ratings of the top three highest rated strategies or lowest three rated strategies among all principal groups. This study did not examine the correlation of strategies to student achievement or the degree of impact of each strategy.

Principals rate themselves highly. This survey instrument used was a self-rating scale completed by the principals. While using a self-rating scale, the principals could have rated their use of strategies higher that what is perceived by staff or a supervisor. The survey results might be compared differently if greater input was received from the teachers or assessing the entire administrative team including assistant principals. Several of the subscales also contained high rates of variability. The greatest variability was found in the ratings from principals of schools with more than 80 percent student passing rates on STAAR and from the principals of schools where less than 40 percent of their students qualify for free/reduced lunch. The ratings from the overall results of all the principals also obtained large rates of variability. This study did not account for the larger respondents who were first year principals. The lack of experience from these principals could account for some of the variability.

Limited time as a principal. The respondents to this survey included five first year principals. These principals did not have an impact on the state testing results section of this research. It is difficult to determine how these principals' ratings would compare to the previous year's principals. The longest tenure of any principal in this study was no more than four years at the current campus. Principals may utilize different

strategies as they have more experience or are on their campus for a longer tenure. The time spent as a principal and impact of longevity could not be analyzed with this study.

Small sample size. This study sought out survey completion results from a total of 14 principals. Out of the 14 principals contacted, eight principals responded. The study results cannot analyze the overall strategies utilized in this district since the remaining principals in the district did not choose to participate in the study. Due to the small sample size, this study is an exploratory study using descriptive analysis only.

Accounting for greater impact. The last limitation highlighted is the need to determine the impact of specific strategies on schools. The principals in each group rated the same strategy the highest and the same strategy the lowest. The amount of impact of the various strategies could not be determined by the study design.

Implications for Further Research

This study provides a foundation for examination of leadership strategies that are currently utilized by middle school principals. These results answered questions based on overall strategies, strategies based on school demographics and strategies based by student achievement. Based on the results of this study, further analysis and research can be derived.

Longitudinal analysis. Further research could focus on the longitudinal impact of leadership strategies. When assessing the leadership strategies utilized, principals could be surveyed that have a tenure of five years or longer at their campus. If the current principal has a shorter tenure, the past principal could be surveyed to determine the impact that past principal had on the achievement of the school. This study could be

conducted in a mixed methods model that utilizes the PIMRS survey and also interviews with the principals. The interview would help to determine commonalities in strategy implementation.

Comparison between experiences of principals. This study revealed that more than half of the principals were first year principals. Future research could examine the strategies utilized by new principals in the beginning of the school year as compared to the strategies they utilize at the end of the school year to determine which strategies are different and examine the variability in reports of the first-year principals. The strategies utilized by first year principals could also be compared based on the school demographics of the school.

Future research could analyze if first year principals utilized different strategies than more seasoned principals. This analysis would help determine if the principals with more experience utilize different strategies and how much variability exists between the two groups.

Study impact of importance. The last suggestion for future research is to study the impact of each strategy and the importance of each. The principals in this study each rated the same strategy as the most utilized regardless of principal group. A future study could seek to understand which of the ten strategies surveyed have the greatest impact on achievement and/or school culture. In a mixed methods approach, researchers could interview principals to determine exactly how each strategy is implemented on the campus and if similarities in implementation exist between principal groups.

Conclusion

This study determined the leadership strategies utilized by middle school principals in a suburban district. The study also set out to determine if the strategies utilized by middle school principals differ based on school demographics and/or student achievement. The results showed that the middle school principals who completed the survey rank the strategies of framing the school goals the highest overall. This strategy was consistently the highest rated strategy when examined by school demographics by student achievement.

The strategy that consistently rated the lowest by all of the principals who completed the survey was providing incentives for learning. The remaining subscales measured all showed variance in ranking when comparing the principal ratings.

This study showed that principals rate the extent to which they use each subscale differently, yet there are common subscales and strategies that are consistently ranked highest or lowest. Within each subscale, there was also variance in the amount of responses for each ranking from one to five. The only question where all of the principals marked the same response centered on protecting instructional time by limiting announcements.

This study was significant because it identified the most commonly utilized leadership strategies and identified leadership strategies that are the least utilized. Further research is needed to determine how these strategies are selected based on school demographics, how they impact school culture and the effect on student achievement.

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Appendix A

Permission to use PIMRS survey

Dr. Philip Hallinger
7250 Golf Pointe Way
Sarasota, FL 34243
hallinger@gmail.com

September 18, 2016

Latoya Garrett

Dear Latoya:

As copyright holder and publisher, you have my permission as publisher to use the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (*PIMRS*) in your research study. In using the scale, you may make unlimited copies of any of the three forms of the PIMRS.

Please note the following conditions of use:

1. This authorization extends only to the use of the PIMRS for research purposes, not for general school district use of the instrument for evaluation or staff development purposes.

2. This is a single-use purchase for the author's graduate research, thereby requiring purchase of additional rights for use in any future research.

3. *The user agrees to send a soft copy (pdf) of the completed study and the raw data set in Excel or SPSS to the publisher upon completion of the research.*

4. The user has permission to make minor adaptations to scale as necessary for the research.

5. If the instrument is translated, the user will supply a copy of the translated version.

Please be advised that a separate *permission to publish* letter, usually required by universities, will be sent after the publisher receives a soft copy of the completed study.

Sincerely,

Professor Philip Hallinger

www.philiphallinger.com

Appendix B

Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale Principal Form

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE

Principal Form

Published by:

Dr. Philip Hallinger

199/43 Sukhumvit Soi 8
Bangkok, 10110 Thailand
www.philiphallinger.com
Hallinger@gmail.com

Principal Form 2.1

THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT
RATING SCALE

PART I: Please provide the following information if instructed to do so by the person administering the instrument:

(A)   District Name: _____

(B)   Your School's Name: _____

(C)   Number of school years you have been principal at this school:

    ___ 1   ___ 5-9   ___ more than 15

    ___ 2-4   ___ 10-15

(D)   Years, at the end of this school year, that you have been a principal:

    ___ 1   ___ 5-9   ___ more than 15

    ___ 2-4   ___ 10-15

(E) Gender: ___ Male   ___ Female

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of your leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice as you conducted it during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

  5 represents *Almost Always*

  4 represents *Frequently*

  3 represents *Sometimes*

  2 represents *Seldom*

  1 represents *Almost Never*

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgement in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question.

Thank you.

To what extent do you . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5

II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS

6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5

III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS

13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)   1   2   3   4   5

14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)   1   2   3   4   5

15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)   1   2   3   4   5

IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM

16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)   1   2   3   4   5

17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions   1   2   3   4   5

18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives   1   2   3   4   5

19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests   1   2   3   4   5

20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials   1   2   3   4   5

V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress   1   2   3   4   5

22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses   1   2   3   4   5

23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals   1   2   3   4   5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS

24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)   1   2   3   4   5

25. Inform students of school's academic progress   1   2   3   4   5

VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements   1   2   3   4   5

27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time   1   2   3   4   5

28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time   1   2   3   4   5

29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts   1   2   3   4   5

30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time   1   2   3   4   5

VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY

31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks   1   2   3   4   5

32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students   1   2   3   4   5

33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities   1   2   3   4   5

34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives   1   2   3   4   5

35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes   1   2   3   4   5

VIII. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS

36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos   1   2   3   4   5

37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance   1   2   3   4   5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS

38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files   1   2   3   4   5

39.   Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition   1   2   3   4   5

40.   Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school   1   2   3   4   5

IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals   1   2   3   4   5

42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training   1   2   3   4   5

43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities   1   2   3   4   5

44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction   1   2   3   4   5

45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities   1   2   3   4   5

X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING

46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter   1   2   3   4   5

47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship   1   2   3   4   5

48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work   1   2   3   4   5

49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions   1   2   3   4   5

50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class   1   2   3   4   5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Dr. Philip Hallinger, author of the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS), received his doctorate in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. He has worked as a teacher, administrator, and professor and as the director of several leadership development centers. He has been a consultant to education and healthcare organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, and Australia.

The *PIMRS* was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (California) Unified School District, Richard P. Mesa, Superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity and has been used in over 200 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

The scale is also used by school districts for evaluation and professional development purposes. It surpasses legal standards for use as a personnel evaluation instrument and has been recommended by researchers interested in professional development and district improvement (see, for example, Edwin Bridges, *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*, ERIC, 1984). Articles on the development and use of the *PIMRS* have appeared in *The Elementary School Journal, Administrators Notebook, NASSP Bulletin,* and *Educational Leadership*.

The *PIMRS* is copyrighted and may not be reproduced without the written permission of the author. Additional information on the development of the *PIMRS* and the rights to its use may be obtained from the publisher (see cover page).

Appendix C

Approval University of Houston Division of Research Institutional Review Boards

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

November 1, 2016

Latoya Garrett

lmgarrett@uh.edu

Dear Latoya Garrett:

On 11/1/2016, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Investigator:	Latoya Garrett
IRB ID:	STUDY00000073
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: University of Houston
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• PIMRS-Principal-2.1.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • FBISD Approval Email.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Permission to Use letter - Garrett 09-16 (1).pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Email consent information.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Email consent information.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Follow-up email consent information.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Cover Letter Consent Form HRP-502e.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • L. Garrett Template Protocol HRP 503.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Follow-up email consent information.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Cover Letter Consent Form HRP-502e.pdf,

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

	Category: Other;
Review Category:	Expedited
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from 11/1/2016 to 10/31/2017 inclusive. Before 10/31/2017 or within 30 days of study closure, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a continuing review with required explanations. You can submit a continuing review by navigating to the active study and clicking Create Modification / CR.

If continuing review approval is not granted on or before 10/31/2017, approval of this study expires after that date. To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Office of Research Policies, Compliance and Committees (ORPCC)
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/

Appendix D

University of Houston Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
A CARNEGIE-DESIGNATED TIER ONE
PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Title of research study: Leadership Strategies of Middle School Principals in a Suburban School District

Investigator: Latoya Garrett. This study is part of a Thesis requirement that is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Emerson.

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in a research study because you are currently a middle school principal in the selected district.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide, and can ask questions at any time during the study.

Why is this research being done?

This study will focus on the leadership strategies of principals in the selected district's middle schools. To gain an accurate perspective, the participants need to be an administrator at school.

How long will the research last?

We expect that you will be in this research study for the completion of the online survey.

How many people will be studied?

We expect to enroll about 14 people in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

If you determine you want to participate in this study, you will complete the online survey. The survey can be completed from any computer and the results will be sent to the researcher. Your participation in the study will be finished upon completion of the survey.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You can choose not to take part in the research and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?
There are no foreseeable risks related to the procedures conducted as part of this study. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please inform your study team.

Will I get anything for being in this study?

There will not be compensation for this study.

Will being in this study help me in any way?
We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include being able to determine the most common leadership strategies used by middle school principals.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your school's identifying information to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's school will be paired with a code, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from these materials. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization, as well as collaborating institutions and federal agencies that oversee human subjects research.

We may publish the results of this research. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Who can I talk to?
If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you should talk to the research team at 281-634-5607 or at lmgarrett@uh.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or cphs@central.uh.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Appendix E

First Email for participation

To whom it may concern:

I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Houston. Part of the requirement for completion of the doctoral degree is completion of a doctoral thesis. Your participation is being requested as a part of my study.

My doctoral thesis is a study titled "An examination of leadership strategies of middle school principals in a suburban school district." In this study, you will be asked to complete the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale which assesses the three dimensions of defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school learning climate.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Your responses to the survey will be confidential as the school names will not be reported in the completed study. Below is a link to the survey:

██████████████████████████████████

Please contact me with any further questions and/or concerns at the contact information below.

Thank you for the consideration of this request,

Latoya Garrett

Appendix F

Follow-Up email consent

To whom it may concern:

A few weeks ago, I emailed you about participation in my study. If you have responded and completed the survey, I would like to say thank you!

If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, your participation is being requested again.

My doctoral thesis is a study around "An examination of leadership strategies of middle school principals in a suburban school district."

Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Your responses to the survey will be confidential as the school names will not be reported in the completed study. Below is a link to the survey: ███████████████████████

Please contact me with any further questions and/or concerns at the contact information below.

Thank you again,

Latoya Garrett