Voices of Assistant Principals on the Importance of Student Discipline to Effective Schools

A Dissertation 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

Ronald W. Wyatt

December, 2010

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Abstract

Research in education, criminology, and sociology has long suggested that there is a strong, reciprocal connection between students' behaviors in school and their academic achievement. Student misbehavior in schools has also been described as a serious problem by the public as well as school practitioners. Traditionally, assistant principals are assigned the responsibility of managing student discipline in schools and maintaining the learning environment in classrooms. Despite the important role that assistant principals perform to ensure that teachers can teach in a safe and effective atmosphere, little research has been conducted that examines the complexity of the role of assistant principals. The majority of the existing research examines the managerial roles and responsibility of the assistant principal and does not address the complex interactions and leadership skills that are necessary to sustain the learning environment of schools.

The purpose of this study is to provide and describe the perceptions of assistant principals regarding student discipline as well as their perceptions regarding the manner in which teacher behaviors impact student discipline. The results of this study will expand the knowledge base regarding the complex role and expectations of the assistant principal and provide useful information that can be used to inform graduate level educational leadership courses and the preparation of school leaders.

The study is significant because the current emphasis in education regarding assessment based accountability has made it paramount for administrators to increase the achievement levels of all students. Student misbehavior diminishes the time and learning focus in the classroom, and the students involved often lose valuable instructional time while serving a disciplinary placement that removes them from the classroom. Understanding the perceptions of assistant principals regarding student discipline and the effects that teacher actions can have on it is significant because assistant principals are responsible for addressing and improving student behavior in the classroom. In addition to being the person responsible for managing the campus wide discipline program, the assistant principalship also serves as a succession track for the principalship.

For this study, 371 practicing campus assistant principals from a large, Gulf Coast metropolitan area were interviewed. The survey utilized cognitive interviews and the items measured the assistant principals' perceptions regarding the importance of student discipline as well as their perceptions regarding the reasons why some teachers have very few discipline issues in their classrooms while others seem to have constant misbehaviors regardless of the student populations that they teach.

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Chapter I - Introduction

Strong consensus exists among educational researchers and school practitioners that student behavior has a profound effect on all areas of a school's operation (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler, 2008; Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008; Smylie, 1991). A continuation of this connection, that undesirable student behavior results in a plethora of issues and problems, has been reiterated and reinforced repeatedly in survey results, public opinion polls, and in educational literature based on both research and practitioner experience. A general survey of the literature by experts in education reveals that the effects of student behavior appear in a variety of different topics, but most commonly in the areas of student achievement and safe schools. The review of research in Chapter II shows the importance of student behavior according to educational experts.

Student behavior in the classroom, and the problems that can arise when a student misbehaves, are constant themes in literature about education. Discipline and student behavior have an effect on educational effectiveness in a variety of different ways; the most notable are in school safety and academic achievement (Curwin, Mendler, Mendler, 2008; Downer, Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 2007; Kells, 1991). A very common topic in any discourse on school reform is the belief that improved student behavior is a necessity to have a safe and secure environment for true student success. The literature available shows that there is a link between student success in school and the behaviors of not only the student, but other students in the class as well (Short & Short, 2003; Myers, Milne, Baker, & Ginsburg, 1987). Student misbehavior disrupts the classroom for all students by taking away time that the teacher should be spending on instruction rather than dealing with discipline issues. The student who misbehaves also misses class time while in the office and serving the assigned consequence. There is also

research, such as that of Jones, Lignugaris/Kraft, and Peterson (2007), that supports the idea of a link between the demands placed on a student in a class and the likelihood that an inappropriate behavior will occur. Their research indicates that problem behaviors occur more frequently when difficult material is presented, but that the teacher might be able to negate this with careful use of instructional strategies. The purpose of this study is to examine teacher controlled factors that both positively and negatively affect student behavior as identified by assistant principals and see how these beliefs compare to the existing literature.

The respondents in this survey were asked a variety of questions about student behavior. Since the purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of practicing assistant principals, the respondents were questioned using cognitive interview techniques, and the questions were open-ended. This allowed the respondent to form their own interpretation of the question and answer fully and without limitations. The surveyed assistant principals were asked to explain to what degree that they believed student discipline to be an aspect of a good school and whether or not they saw a relationship between student behavior and achievement. They were also given a chance to identify what teachers can do to both positively and negatively influence student behaviors in their classrooms. The respondents were also asked for their feelings about their schools having a formal character education program. It is intended that the responses to these questions will provide insight into the perceptions and beliefs of assistant principals. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the importance of student discipline to an effective school according to the assistant principal.

Need for the Study

Despite the fact that most schools have placed an increased emphasis on student discipline and have worked hard to address the issue, public perception has indicated a belief that

schools are failing in this effort. A 2008 Gallup poll about education asked parents if they feared

for the physical safety of their children while attending a public school. Twenty-four percent of

the respondents indicated that they "did fear for their children's physical well-being" (Gallup,

Inc., 2008). Many other polls and surveys regarding education that were conducted over the last

two decades have shown that there is a highly perceived importance of student discipline and

campus safety. As part of all of their educational surveys, Gallup, Inc. asks the public to identify

the main issues faced by public schools. Student behavior and campus safety have ranked as a

top concern for at least the last decade (Gallup, Inc.). When the 2009 PDK/Gallup Poll of the

Public's Attitudes Towards the Public Schools (Bushaw & McNee) asked the public to identify

"the biggest problems that the public schools of your community must deal with" (p. 10) 10% of

the respondents identified a lack of discipline making it the second most common answer with

only lack of funding garnering more responses. Politicians have used this perceived need for an

improvement in student behavior in public schools as a major campaign plank. News pundits

have also published numerous stories about the decline of public schools and the increasing

danger faced by students, especially in the wake of school tragedies. Many of these sources cite

the increase in divorces, single-parent families, and the move away from "traditional" values as

the reason for this general decline (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler, 2008; Wallace, Goodkind,

Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Other experts say that schools have become more dangerous and

undisciplined because of our ultra-litigious society and that, to some extent, school

administrators no longer have the ability to truly punish misbehaving students, by corporal

punishment or expulsion, due to a fear of being sued by parents or of damaging their school's

accountability rating (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2009) .

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was reauthorized into the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, the level of expectations for student achievement was dramatically increased. With NCLB, the stakes for schools and districts to meet the standards have become a financial necessity. The framing idea of public schools in Texas, "a general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish… public free schools" (The Texas Constitution), is no longer an adequate goal for public schools. The stricter federal requirements, and the fact that federal funds are tied into compliance, require schools to do more than just offer each student a chance to attend school and a general diffusion of knowledge; now schools must do whatever is necessary to ensure that each student is successful and makes adequate yearly progress (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). This puts the burden on schools to overcome any barriers that might impede student success on their campus, whatever the cost. By the same measure, there is an increase in the pressure that administrators feel to resolve discipline situations harshly and quickly in order to maintain the educational environment for other students; however, this causes a conundrum for the administrators since they are faced with choosing between removing a distracting student and taking away his/her educational opportunities or leaving him/her in class and negatively affecting other students. For education to be successful, there must be an environment where students feel safe and secure (Yell & Rozalski, 2008) This means that, as these pressures continue to rise, it becomes increasingly important for assistant principals, as the chief disciplinarians in most schools, to learn new ways to help teachers be more successful in preventing student misbehaviors (Myers et al., 1987).

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the data collected was the perceptions of the campus assistant principal, and it was examined to gain a better understanding of both the perceptions held by the respondents and the assistant principalship itself. While Chapter II of this paper provides the research base that supports the use of these administrators as the lens for this study, the role of the assistant principal is hard to define. The duties and responsibilities of assistant principals vary from district to district, and often from campus to campus. Most of the assistant principals' duties are assigned by the principal, and often involve administrative work or tasks that are considered "undesirable" by the principal (Mertz, 2000; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993). This means that an assistant principal often finds him/herself managing textbooks, lockers, buses, and, of course, student discipline. For most assistant principals, the primary responsibility of their job is managing student discipline. The amount of time that an assistant principal devotes to managing student discipline varies; but most assistant principals agree that it is an important part of their jobs (Marshall, 1992; Mertz, 2000; Scoggins, 1993). Since assistant principals are in a unique position to observe a variety of teachers and students in different settings, their perceptions are valuable in determining teacher controlled factors that can have an impact on student behavior and the relationship between the behaviors and effective schools.

Statement of the Problem

As the research in Chapter II of this study demonstrates, the assistant principal is an important influence on student achievement. Despite this fact, there is very little existing research available that is focused on the assistant principalship (Scoggins, 1993). This study focuses on the perceptions of assistant principals as to the relationship between student discipline and effective schools. As a part of this, they were asked to identify reasons why some teachers have very few discipline issues in their classrooms while others seem to have constant

misbehaviors, regardless of the students they teach. Their perceived reasons for varied amounts

of behavior issues in different teachers' classrooms is especially important since, in the face of

the current assessment-based accountability system, it is vital to have well-trained, experienced

classroom teachers. Student discipline is an important factor because, as Graham & Prigmore

(2009) state:

> In numerous discussions we have had with new teachers, the leading cause of frustration
>
> is student discipline/classroom management. Almost half of all new teachers leave the
>
> profession within five years, while it takes about three to seven years for teachers to
>
> develop skills that enable them consistently to improve student achievement (p. 32).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the importance of student discipline to an

effective school according to assistant principals. The responses will be examined according to

the demographics of the campus and the personal demographics of the assistant principal in order

to determine if there are any inherent biases due to the administrator or campus. It is anticipated

that this study will expand the limited research available on assistant principals and provide data

that can be useful in both in-service and pre-service training of school administrators. There will

also be implications for the graduate programs that are aimed at principal preparation since the

vast majority of their graduates will become assistant principals before becoming principals. The

large sample size for this study and the variety of schools should make these results more

generalizable. The review of the literature will show that there is a strong connection between

student success and student conduct, and this study will bring in the ideas of practicing

administrators to see how they mesh with the experts opinions.

Research Questions

1.) To what degree do assistant principals believe that student discipline is an important aspect of a good school?

2.) How do assistant principals explain the degree to which student discipline is important to a good school?

3.) Do assistant principals report knowing teachers who rarely have student discipline issues?

4.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in good student discipline?

5.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in poor student discipline?

6.) Do assistant principals report a relationship between a teacher's classroom discipline and a student's academic growth?

7.) Do assistant principals believe that schools should teach character and/or virtues?

Definition of Terms

1.) Assistant Principals: For the purpose of this study, this term is used to include associate principals, deputy principals, and any other staff member who works as a campus mid-manager, but is not the final authority on the campus.

2.) Student behavior is defined as "any behavior that is not included in the on-task category such as academically unrelated verbal (e.g., call outs, talk to other students) or motoric (e.g., out-of-seat, throwing objects) behaviors" (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007, p. 88).

3.) Classroom Management is defined as "the confluence of teacher actions in four

distinct areas: (1) establishing and enforcing rules and procedures, (2) carrying out

disciplinary actions, (3) maintaining effective teacher and student relationships, and (4)

maintaining an appropriate mental set for management. Only when effective practices in

these four areas are employed and working in concert is a classroom effectively

managed" (Marzano, 2003, pg. 18).

Chapter II - Review of the Literature

The review of literature will focus on three main purposes: the assistant principalship, the impact of leadership, and student discipline. The first goal is further subdivided into an exploration of the role of the assistant principal as well as the validity of using their perceptions to understand and examine teacher-controlled actions and outcomes. There is a lack of extensive research and literature regarding the assistant principalship and the position that assistant principals play in schools. The history and development of the assistant principal in schools is important to this study in order to understand fully the role and to be able to compare it to the role of the principal. This will also set the framework for the use of literature about the principalship as a basis for the use of campus administrators as a lens for this study.

This leads directly into the second goal of this review, which discusses the impact of leadership on the organization. This is further subdivided into four subtopics: the overall impact of leadership, the impact of leadership on the organizational culture and climate, the impact of leadership on teacher efficacy, and the impact of leadership on student behavior and achievement.

The third goal focuses on the why and how of the study. The first section deals with why understanding how to control student discipline is important. A review of the research is conducted to establish the link between student behavior and student achievement as well as common causes of student misbehavior. The how sections of this review will look into research in two areas: the relationships between student behavior and instruction and student behavior and

teacher management techniques and trends. Because this study is aimed at understanding the importance of behavior to the school, both of these sections are of interest.

The Assistant Principal

        History and role. As mentioned before, there is surprisingly little in the research about the assistant principal, and what is found is quick to point out this fact as well. Most research on effective schools focuses on the principal or teacher leadership and generally fails to mention the importance and/or effectiveness of the assistant principal in influencing student achievement. However, a few researchers (Buckner & Jones, 1990; Gerke, 2004; Kelly, 1987; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993; Mertz & MacNeely, 1999) have made the assistant principalship their research focus and have worked to expand the available literature about the roles, responsibilities, and development of the assistant principal. While created at the turn of the century, the job of the modern assistant principal really began to flourish after World War II. This was when the demands of the principal's job began to increase exponentially and, because of the expanding bureaucracy, the speed at which the job of the principalship was becoming impossible for just one person was accelerating. The assistant principalship was created to help principals deal with this; however, "the role of the assistant principal, complete with duties and responsibilities, is, as yet, unsuccessfully defined" (Scoggins & Bishop, 1993, p. 1). The role of the assistant principal was quickly relegated to limited, managerial responsibilities such as bus duty or discipline (Buckner & Jones, 1990).

        A truly well defined job description for the assistant principal is quite difficult to find. The United States Department of Labor defines the assistant principal's job as to assist the principal with the overall management and leadership of the campus. A review of other sources including the websites of the Texas Association of Elementary Principals, the Texas Association

of Secondary School Principals, the Texas Education Agency, and a sampling of the human resource pages of school districts in the sample area failed to produce a clear and concise description of the job duties of an assistant principal. The best thorough treatment of this subject was published in 1980 in the National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin in an article entitled "Job Description for the Assistant Principal." This article described a study that had examined numerous job descriptions and compiled the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal into five general areas: administration, teaching personnel, student personnel, curriculum, and external relations with each of these areas having different assigned duties and responsibilities. Administration was defined to include the assignments to: (a) serve as the principal in their absence, (b) follow all school and district policies, (c) assist in preparing the school's budget, (d) prepare the school calendar with all school activities, (e) maintain inventory, and (f) arrange bus duties and schedules. Teaching personnel includes activities such as the observation and evaluation of teachers as well as the preparation of teacher handbooks. "Student personnel" includes handling discipline, supervising guidance programs, and being highly visible on the campus. Curriculum is defined to include curriculum revision and supervision and improvement to testing programs. External relations are defined as working with community agencies, law enforcement and court personnel, and handling communication with the media. Several other studies (Kriekard and Norton, 1980; Kriekard and Norton, 1987; Marshall and Greenfield, 1987; Potter, 1980; Fulton, 1987; Kelly, 1987) built on these competencies and validated the original subdivision into categories. While each of these groups used their own vocabulary for labeling the different categories, the most simple description for the roles of the assistant principal were given by Scoggins and Bishop (1993): drill sergeant, bully, mother superior, and empathizer.

Perhaps because a majority of assistant principals seek higher positions and that the assistant principalship is often seen as a temporary position, this role has expanded to include more duties including teacher supervision and, to an extent, instructional leadership (Scoggins, 1993). Kelly (1987) suggested that the assistant principalship is a gateway to the principalship and that the assistant principal should be involved in as many aspects of running the campus as possible. He further suggests that the principal should take charge to prepare the assistant principal for this role. While many researchers and practitioners push for the assistant principalship to expand its bounds, the fact remains that the primary duties of most assistant principals are discipline and teacher supervision (Buckner & Jones, 1990; Gerke, 2004; Kelly, 1987; Scoggins, 1993). The average assistant principal spends much of his/her day working with students in disciplinary situations as well as working with the teachers and parents of the same students. During this time, they garner a very worldly view of discipline issues when compared to most other educators. The assistant principal is involved in all levels of student behavior, and has an opportunity to witness teacher reactions, or lack thereof, across the campus (Marshall & et al., 1990; Mertz & MacNeely, 1999).

This division of roles was further supported in Armstrong's (2004) study of secondary assistant principals. She found that, while the responsibilities of the secondary assistant principal have become multifaceted, some are still focused on the more traditional roles. She states that "assistant principals spend a large portion of their time dealing with issues of discipline, school management, student activities and services, community relations, teacher evaluations, as well as curriculum and instruction" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 96). She suggests that the duties of assistant principals have shifted due, in large part, to the current testing based accountability system and the responsibilities that have arisen with it. She suggests that, due to new responsibilities, the

workload of the principal has become unmanageable, and that one of the biggest tasks for principals is to delegate tasks and authority. The duties of the assistant principal have grown to include many of the responsibilities once held solely by principals. (Armstrong, 2004).

The consensus of the literature is that the role of the assistant principal is much like the campus principal is in that it is a unique viewpoint in the school setting. They are active and involved in many different aspects of the day-to-day operations of the campus and, as such, are able to offer broad and generalized input about the organization as a whole and on trends/patterns that may be present. As a balance to this, assistant principals are far enough removed from the occurrences on the campus to allow them to be objective and balanced. This is especially true in disciplinary situations where emotions tend to be strong for the parties involved. The slight distance that the assistant principals' position affords allows them to be an accurate and informed observer on campus matters (Mertz, 2000; Michel, 1996; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993).

Validity of administrator's perceptions. The idea of using the perceptions of a campus administrator as a litmus test for school issues is not new in education. Numerous researchers have produced studies that focus on a variety of educational issues through the lens of campus administrators (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006; Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008). While the previously mentioned research articles focus mainly on the importance of the school leader to the function of the campus, there is also prior research on principals' perceptions that is very relevant to this study. The work, by VanderJagt, Shen, and Hsieh (2001), used data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey from 1993-94. This study was designed to examine the problems that public schools face and to look for trends due to the level and location of the campus by examining the

perceptions of the principals. Their reasoning regarding the importance and validity of the use of the principal to diagnose and gauge school issues is as follows: "They not only know the intricate details of discipline and factors contributing to the problems faced by children, but also have a perspective on the whole organization, rather than individual classrooms" (VanderJagt et al., p. 41). Because the goal of their study was to look at the problems from a systemic perspective, the principal was the only appropriate source of information due to their unique and in-depth knowledge. Kells (1991) used the perceptions of campus principals to study the factors in schools that can affect student achievement. He argued that using their perceptions was valid because principals "occupy a unique vantage point from which to perceive the influence of conditions which affect the academic achievement of their students" (Kells, 1991, p. 617).

Desimone (2006) further studied the validity and reliability of this type of survey by conducting a survey-based research study. While this study asked teachers, principals, and district officials questions about the effectiveness of standard-based reform measures, the real purpose of this study was not to analyze the reforms; but the responses returned and the significance of the similarities and differences were found in their answers. She argued,

"Survey data play an important role in education policy questions—Is a particular policy or program working? How is it being implemented? What are its effects?—relies on large-scale survey data. Given the primary role survey data play in the development and evaluation of education policy, it is important to consider their quality" (Desimone, 2006, p. 641).

The fact that surveys of the perceptions of different groups are utilized as fact and for decision making purposes on a national level makes Desimone's study important. After analysis, she found that, in several different aspects, the perceptions between the groups were almost identical;

however, in many of these areas, the responses were directly influenced by the level and experience of the respondents. She found that, while principals were often more positive, there was no significant difference between the responses of teachers and principals when discussing the challenges faced by the school. Many of the discrepancies in responses can also be explained by the level to which each respondent dealt with the item questioned (e.g., principals utilized the state provided paperwork to manage standards so they rated its usefulness high; teachers do not utilize the forms and, as such, they rated their usefulness as very low).

Desimone further explained this difference at both the district and principal levels. Her argument is that each of these groups has a different level of knowledge about a topic, and that leads to the difference in their perceptions. This is the reason that, according to her research, one of the areas in which answers are widely divergent by position is that of whether or not districts develop their own standards. A district official may understand the state/federal statute that shaped a district policy and realize that it is a requirement while a teacher or principal may think that the new policies are strictly a district initiative. The area that tended to show the most disparity was in issues regarding authority. Desimone's conclusion is that, while there may be some differences in the way the issues are experienced, teachers, principals, and district officials tend to have similar responses when answering questions related to the campus and its struggles (Desimone, 2006).

Impact of Leadership

  Effective schools. According to "The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey" (1966), "the pattern of school-to-school differences in achievement at the different grade levels indicated small relation to school factors" (Coleman, 1966, p. 302). The conclusion of Coleman's report was that the majority of student achievement was determined by family background and not by

the factors of the school the child attended. This reinforced the common belief of social

scientists of the 1960s and 70s that family factors were much more important indicators of

student success than school related factors. (Lezotte 2008)

This report, and others like it, was not well received by educators whose careers were

based on the assumption that they could make a difference for their students. The personal

experiences of educators also helped fuel a deeper look into these studies. The main criticism of

these studies was they "treated education as a black box, the contents of which were inscrutable"

(ERIC, 1981). These studies did not look at the happenings at the school; instead they focused

on the student variables (such as socioeconomic status, level of education of the parents, race)

and student achievement. The factors Coleman used to measure student achievement also came

under criticism as the variables he chose, such as verbal ability, were heavily influenced by

outside factors (ERIC, 1981).

In 1979, two separate studies were published that focused on the effect of what happens

in the schools. *Fifteen Thousand Hours* (Rutter, et. al., 1979) was a longitudinal study of

London ten-year-olds from the time they left primary school through three years of schooling.

The researchers coded intake variables such as the students' verbal reasoning, behavior, parents'

occupation, nonverbal intelligence, and reading level. The output variables examined were

behavior, attendance, examination successes, delinquency, and employment after leaving school.

The researchers came to ten conclusions including the following: the schools showed a

significant difference in student behavior, attendance, exam success, and delinquency. The mix

of the abilities of the students attending these schools did influence the outcomes, but the mix did

not account for all of the differences between the schools. These differences were also not

explained by differences in physical facilities. Instead, they found that the differences related to

the school as a social organization. The social norms, or culture, of the school had the most impact on the students who attended them. Students who attended schools with different norms had different outcomes. They found that the culture of the school did have an impact on student success; this was enhanced by high teacher expectations of student achievement and behavior. (Rutter, et. al.) Wilbur Brookover and his coworkers published *School Social Systems and Student Achievement: Schools Can Make a Difference* (1979). Brookover and his colleagues, as quoted by the ERIC Clearinghouse (1981), assert, "each school has a set of student status-role definitions, norms, evaluations, and expectations characterizing the behavior expected of students" (ERIC, 1981, p. 5). The design of their study was much like that of Rutter and colleagues, and their results showed similar results. Brookover was able to establish that a successful school is one where there is a climate that furthers success, and that the climate is a direct result of the work of the principals and teachers to set high standards and convince the students that these standards can and will be met. (Brookover, et. al.)

While the works of Rutter and Brookover mentioned thus far were focused towards the effectiveness of the school at influencing student achievement, Hallinger and Heck (1998) state "one of the fundamental tenets of research and practice in the school improvement community concerns the apparently powerful impact of principals on processes related to school effectiveness and improvement" (p. 158). There are numerous research studies that cite the importance of the campus administrator and the effect that they have on the success of the campus with the ultimate understanding being that the campus administrator is "the most influential person in promoting school reform, change, and innovation" (Lunenburg & Ornstein, p. 374). The work of Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) is an overview of international literature about successful school leadership. They organized their findings about school

leadership into seven 'strong claims' that "are not all strong in quite the same way… but they all find support in varying amounts of quite robust empirical evidence (Leithwood et al., p. 27).

Two of the claims that are of particular interest for this study are that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning [and] school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivations, commitment and working conditions" (Leithwood et al., p. 27). They justify this claim with numerous studies, which they categorize into five different types: the first type being qualitative case studies and the other four types consisted of large-scale quantitative studies. The qualitative studies were usually set in exceptional school settings and were focused on very large leadership effects, including pupil learning, and on a variety of other school conditions.

The quantitative studies are divided into four different types. Each of the studies in these four categories was done on a large scale. The second type is about four dozen studies regarding leaders' overall effects. The results of these studies show that "the combined direct and indirect effects of school leadership on pupil outcomes are small but educationally significant" (Leithwood et al., p. 28). Classroom factors are the only factor that explains a larger percentage of the variability. The third type of research studies is similar to the previous type except its focus is individual leadership practices and traits rather than leadership as a whole. These results are also similar to the first, with the leadership practices having a significant effect on student achievement. The fourth type of studies looks at the effect of leadership on student engagement. The final type looks at leadership succession and shows that unplanned leadership succession is the prime reason that schools fail to progress despite what teachers do. The conclusions from the evidence obtained by these studies are that school leadership has a major impact on the quality of the school and that the leader is vital to a school's success (Leithwood et al.).

The second important claim from this research discusses how school leaders can improve teaching and learning. The idea that developed from their work is that this improvement is accomplished not through content knowledge; in fact, they state that there is "very little evidence that most school leaders build staff capacity in curriculum content knowledge" (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 32). Instead, the leaders make their contributions by having "strong and positive influences on staff members' motivations, commitments, and beliefs concerning the supportiveness of their working conditions" (Leithwood et al., p. 32). The idea is that success in enhancing teachers and students is done not through direct instruction, but by the influence, they disperse in performing their jobs. (Leithwood et al.) Numerous other researchers, including Day, Leithwood, and Sammons (2008) and Gurr, Drysdale, and Mulford (2006), have continued this work and built upon it. They show that school leadership has a major impact on school success, that the lack of effective leadership makes success nearly impossible, and that the leaders achieve this goal primarily through their effect on the culture and climate of the campus.

Impact of leadership on organizational climate and culture. Many studies that focused only on the direct effects that the leadership of a school has on student outcomes usually produce results that show little to no effect. Hallinger and Heck (1996) explain this by demonstrating how the addition of mediating and/or moderating variables in these designs would tend to report much more significant effects. This is because the vast majority of the effects of school leadership on students are mediated by school conditions. The real issue in this type of research is to determine which of these conditions are likely to directly affect students and to what degree the leadership influences them.

By building on work by Leithwood and other researchers, Hallinger and Heck (1998) were able to identify four domains of school conditions that school leadership could influence:

purposes and goals, school structure and social networks, people, and organizational culture.

Purposes and goals, as a domain, is an important part of the indirect influence leaders have by

directly influencing the organizational climate and culture. This is done in numerous ways such

as shared vision, mission statements, goal setting, and a dozen other ways lined out in literature

for practitioners. The administrator directly influences the staff's educational expectations, the

framework of the educational purposes, the substance of the school's mission, and the goals

shared by the campus. The evidence supports that the "principal's role in framing school goals,

establishing a clear mission, and gaining staff consensus were stronger predictors of school

outcomes than other instructional or managerial activities" (Hallinger and Heck, 1998, p. 172).

These goals and purposes do not have to be solely related to academic achievement; in

fact, Hallinger and Heck identify several important areas including good citizenship, work

habits, and learning skills for the students, and securing staff consensus about goals that do not

only relate to academic achievement. Hallinger (1996) asserts that it is by establishing a clear

school mission that the administrator finds his/her main conduit of influence on the efficacy of

the campus. Administrators can shape the expectations of the teachers and students as well as

the learning opportunities available to the students. Again, gaining staff consensus is a key part

of the administrator finding success in utilizing this domain to affect school improvement.

The second domain they identify involves the leaders' influence on the relationship

between organizational structures and social networks. This is defined as the nature of the

relationships between the individuals and groups in the organization as well as between the

organization and its constituents. Hallinger and Heck (1998) argue the importance of this

domain with the claim "leadership is linked to organizational roles and the networks of relations

among roles because it is this network that comprises the organizational system (p. 173). They

continue by attesting that leadership enhances the organization as a whole by affecting the existing social structures in the organization and by distributing leadership across different organizational roles. The focus of this domain is how leadership is exercised (either centralized or decentralized) and how it affects others in the organization.

Several studies have shown that increasing the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes has a positive impact on the campus. In this domain, the administrator works to provide support for individual teachers, increase cooperation between the different groups, and move everyone towards the common goal. This domain of influence also includes parental involvement. Numerous studies have shown that parental involvement is a key to student success. The administrator can indirectly increase student performance by working to increase the involvement of parents on the campus and can influence the educational process as a whole by understanding the community and working to remove any barriers that might exist that would hinder their involvement (Hallinger and Heck, 1998).

The third domain, people, is probably the most obvious one as the administrative activity in almost all leadership frameworks is focused on the people who make up the organization including students, teachers, parents, community members, and district personnel (Leithwood et al., 2008; Day et al., 2008; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Schein, 2004). According to Hallinger and Heck (1998), one of the primary building blocks of leadership is the social interaction between people inside the organization. Leithwood (1994), in a review of several studies on the impact of the principal, singled out "people effects" as being a cornerstone of the transformational leadership model. In this model, many of the desirable outcomes relate to changes in the teachers, which suggest that a major role and impact of the administrator's efforts is to cause changes in the people in the organization. Leithwood found that these changes

are made by providing intellectual stimulation, fostering group goals, modeling desired behavior, and providing individualized support. According to Leithwood, the administrators of more successful schools spent a bulk of time developing their human resources and were better than their lower performing counterparts were at supporting staff, providing recognition, knowing the problems within the school, and spent a bulk of time developing their human resources. The impact of leadership on teacher efficacy will be discussed in more detail later in this review.

The fourth domain of influence able conditions identified by Hallinger and Heck (1998) is organizational culture. Recent studies and theories about school leadership stress the correlation between organizational culture and the meaningfulness people associate with their work as well as to their willingness to change (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Shein, 2004; Leithwood, 1994). These researchers suggest that administrators operate within multiple cultures (both societal/environmental and organizational) and that they affect how others interpret events inside the organization and, through that, their behaviors. In this study, the researchers define organizational culture as being made of two parts: culture and climate. Culture is considered to be the structural and managerial processes that form the deeper values and structures that affect the norms and morays of the organization while climate is more of the day-to-day mood and feeling on the campus. Both of these are directly malleable by the leadership; it is to be expected, however, that cultural changes take much more time and effort to shift. The importance of making these shifts lies in creating a group vision and interpretation to create a more harmonious organization.

Impact on teacher efficacy. In the Leithwood (1994), study mentioned earlier in this chapter, he discusses the effect that leadership has on the people in the organization. One of the conclusions he draws, which is supported by several other researchers, is that leadership has an

impact on teachers' perceptions of the schools' conditions and their commitment. Much of this research is grounded in the work of the psychologist Albert Bandura (1977). Bandura's social cognitive theory, in short, explains motivation based on the appraisal of outcomes and the feedback received. Directly related to this is Bandura's idea of self-efficacy which he defined as "people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

The idea that a person's self-perception of their abilities plays a large part in their actual job performance is a well-understood concept in modern psychology. Bandura applies this to the public school system by stating that, "teachers operate collectively within an interactive social system rather than as isolates. Therefore, educational development through efficacy enhancement must address the social and organizational structure of educational systems. Educational organizations present a number of distinct challenges and stressors" (Bandura, 1997, p. 243).

Bandura recognizes that education, by its very nature, must look at the organization when trying to understand the efficacy of individual teachers or individual students. Numerous studies have shown that teacher efficacy has a significant relation to outcomes like student achievement and motivation (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Guskey, 1988) and organizational factors (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, & Wisenbaker, 1978; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1982; Smylie, 1988; Bliss & Hoy, 1989; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). These studies all support the notion that teachers have different beliefs in their own abilities and competence and that these differences become apparent when they affect the performance of their students. They also

support that a teacher's sense of efficacy is the most powerful attribute towards positive outcomes.

As stated earlier in this paper, Leithwood and associates, as well as several other researchers, (Ashton & Webb, 1986, Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Stein & Wang, 1988; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Fuller et al., 1982; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989) have stated that the most powerful effect that a leader has on a campus is in shaping the culture and climate of a campus. The consensus achieved and supported by these research studies is the notion that the self-efficacy of the classroom teacher has a direct and significant impact on the achievement of his/her students and that this self-efficacy is directly related to the climate of the school which is influenced largely by the leadership. Leithwood (1994) found that, through direct influence on the organizational culture of the school, the administrators were able to indirectly and positively affect individual teachers' attitudes, dedication, and focus and move the organization towards the desired goal.

Impact on student behavior and student discipline. Earlier in this review, it was established that leaders can have their greatest effect on a school by affecting the organizational climate and culture. The following will detail the research into the connection between the climate and culture of the campus and student discipline. Green (1998) studied the existence of nurturing characteristics in schools in Ohio to see if these had any effect on student achievement and behavior. His research led him to establish four general themes of nurturing that can exist organizationally: a) when students perceive that a positive relationship exists between their teachers and themselves, b) when teachers perceived professionalism among administration, faculty and staff to be positive, c) how nurturing the teachers perceived the environment of the school to be, and d) teacher perception of students' feelings of self-worth. According to Green's

study, there was a direct link between each of these themes and student behavior. As the presence of the positive nurturing themes increased, there was a corresponding drop in student suspensions and a rise in both student attendance and test scores.

The idea that these nurturing themes, when included as a part of the organizational framework, can and will have a direct impact on student behavior is supported in several other scholarly works. In their book, The Students are Watching: Schools and the Moral Contract, Theodore and Nancy Sizer (2000) discuss that students learn about relationships and social behavior from observing the adults around them, whether or not there is a focused attempt on character education. Their conclusion is that, because of this, schools should make steps towards building positive images and helping the students develop relationships for the future. This means that it is important for the teacher-student relationship to be strong and healthy. Teachers who form strong relationships with their students are able to exert more influence over their students and change their behaviors to something the teacher finds more desirable (Schlechty & Atwood, 2001; Sizer & Sizer, 2000). These relationships should include an understanding of the student's background. A student's family and/or medical histories, and other issues, can all affect, and often negatively, a student's behavior in the classroom (Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Curwin et al., 2008). An organizational culture that stresses this open communication will have a dramatic affect on student behaviors.

Philip van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen, and Wolhuter (2008) studied the idea that the organizational culture of a campus has a direct effect on student discipline. They cited several different research studies, such as Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan (1989), Janson (2002), and Swanpoel (2003) as demonstrating that discipline is an aspect of an effective organizational culture; however, they are quick to point out that the exact nature of the relationship between the

two is never fully explained. They also identified several school-related factors that influenced

student behaviors including academic achievement, systematic organization of the school

environment and routines, the principal's leadership and management style, and whole-school

positive behavior support. Their study was based on these factors and was designed to produce a

theoretical framework that would clarify the relationship between organizational culture, student

discipline and the effectiveness of the school.

Based on this study, Philip van der Westhuizen et al. (2008) were able to conclude that

there was a link between the organizational culture of the school and the discipline of the

students. They divided the effective aspects of the organizational culture into both tangible and

intangible aspects. Tangible aspects included leadership and management, work ethic and

morale, buildings, activities, and parental involvement. They define the intangible aspects of the

organization as the symbols, cultures, and traditions. However, these two sets of aspects are not

independent of each other; the researchers state that "the mutual and interwoven effect of the

tangible and intangible manifestations of organizational culture brings about a well-structured

organizational culture of alliance, unity, belonging, and pride…nobody wishes to bring the

organization into disrepute" (Van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen, & Wolhuter, 2008, p. 221).

Their research lends support to the previously mentioned conclusion by Leithwood and others

that the greatest influence a leader can have on an individual student is indirect.

Through the manipulation and utilization of the tangible aspects of the organizational

culture, a leader can influence the intangible manifestations and exert influence on student

discipline. The research of Van der Westhuizen and associates allowed them to make the

following three conclusions about the relationship between organizational culture and student

discipline: (a) the relationship does exist, (b) effective student discipline determines the

effectiveness of the organizational culture and climate, and (c) an effective organizational

climate and culture determine the effectiveness of student discipline. This reciprocal nature,

which is common in much of the research regarding the ability of teachers to influence student

behavior, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is especially important to this study.

Student Behavior

        Relationship between behavior and achievement. A 2004 survey of teachers (Public

Agenda) showed that 76% of teachers believed that they would be better able to educate their

students if disruptive behaviors were less prevalent and that one-third of the teachers surveyed

reported that they had considered leaving the profession because of the disruptive behaviors they

face in the course of their jobs. Common sense would indicate that a student who does not

behave in the classroom is going to have trouble mastering the material that is taught. The

literature available supports this notion; students who are frequently in trouble because of

inappropriate behaviors are often the same students who are in severe academic trouble as well.

        The literature shows that it is becoming more and more common for schools to be faced

with the task of educating students whose behavior seriously impedes their learning (Dwyer,

Osher, & Warger, 1998; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Public Agenda; Short & Short, 2003). Fred

Jones (2008) attributes at least part of this gap to the time that it takes for discipline to be

administered as well as the consequence itself. He asserts that most behaviors have a root in an

academic need and these students are beginning behind. They only fall further behind when

either suspended or spending time in the office and most experts agree that "good discipline is a

prerequisite for learning, and research has shown consistently that a good discipline climate is

one of the few variables associated with academic achievement" (Myers et al., p. 19).

There are a large number of theories in the available literature that attempt to explain both the causes of this misbehavior and the exact nature of its relation to academic achievement. The earliest theories by several different researchers associate increased misbehavior with the student's socioeconomic status, more specifically with having a low socio-economic status (Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1968). The general theme of these theories is that, due to their home environment, these students came to school with social and academic gaps that lead to their failing to achieve which, in turn, led to discipline problems. It was also thought that there was an organizational culture of middle-class values ingrained in most public schools that would be alien to these students and work to preclude them from success. Some of these ideas were refuted by later researchers, such as Polk and Halferty (1966), who found almost no difference in the socio-economic background of students with chronic misbehaviors and their peers. Polk and Halferty (1966) and their peers asserted that the important factor in explaining student misbehavior lies in the students' educational and occupational prospects. This was supported by the fact that student misbehaviors among high-achieving students were lower regardless of the class level of the student.

While most of the theories discussed thus far were formed by criminologists several decades ago, more modern educational research has also shown that lower performing students are more likely to display undesirable behaviors more often than their high performing peers (Dwyer et al., 1998; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Myers et al., 1987). What is quite different is the unilateral approach adopted by these theorists in the belief that poor student achievement is a cause of student misbehavior. The viewpoint more often espoused by sociologists and educational researchers is that student misbehaviors are the cause of poor achievement (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Jones, 2008; Lannie &

McCurdy, 2007; Baker, 1985). Research that is more current supports the dual nature of this relationship; poor student performance can lead to frustration and misbehavior just as misbehavior can lead to missed instruction and poorer student performance.

This dual nature is well represented in the work of Curwin, Mendler, and Mendler (2008) in their division of the causes of misbehavior into in-school and out-of-school arenas. The out-of-school causes of student misbehaviors are varied social areas like those identified by the early criminalists in the previous section. These causes include social influences such as the media, a cultural sense of entitlement, and diminished social civility, as well as environmental factors like foster care, a lack of security in family life due to increased divorces and single parenthood, and a concentration of people in lower socio-economic statuses. The in-school causes of discipline problems that they identify, based on their own review of the available educational research, range from the competitive nature of most schools, to a sense of student boredom, feelings of powerlessness, unclear limits, and attacks on students' dignity. While many of these factors are outside of the control of the school, two main areas can be directly affected by the classroom teacher. These areas, which will be discussed in the next sections of this review, are classroom instruction and classroom management techniques.

Relationship between student behavior and instruction. Earlier in this paper, research was presented that reported the effect of campus leadership on student achievement to be second only to that of the classroom teacher. What has not been discussed, and is vital to this study, is the effect that the classroom teacher can have on student achievement. The previous section also established the reciprocal nature between student achievement and student behavior. The research supporting the idea that what is being learned can affect student behavior is a natural extension of the literature regarding how a student's behavior can affect learning. In other

words, the research involves how a teacher's instructional practices can affect student behavior both directly and indirectly.

One of the prevalent themes in this research is that student misbehaviors are often defense mechanisms used as task avoidance and come out when the student becomes frustrated or bored. In fact, many researchers suggest that the causal relationship begins with academic frustration and leads to misbehaviors (Dwyer et al., 1998; Jones, 2008; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Myers et al., 1987; Short & Short, 2003). Their research has shown that student misbehavior can often be linked back to a specific instructional antecedent. In the book *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) describe a teacher's instructional strategies as being one of the three elements that make up an effective pedagogy and lead to student success (the other two elements being management techniques and teacher designed curriculum). Marzano et al. (2001) support the fact that the teacher's effectiveness is highly important to student success and identify several instructional strategies that research has shown to increase student achievement. These strategies are a mixture of purely instructional practices and strategies aimed at increasing instructional success by stimulating motivation and student effort.

There is a growing amount of research devoted to the relationship between student behavioral engagement, instruction, and academic achievement. Engagement is an attractive idea to many in education, with some describing it as "a way to ameliorate low levels of academic achievement, high levels of student boredom and disaffection, and high dropout rates in urban areas" (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 60). Fredericks and her colleagues, in their review of educational research, assert that there are three types of engagement: behavioral,

emotional, and cognitive. These are not, however, clean divisions as there is some overlap between each of the three areas.

Greenwood, Horton, and Utley (2002) discuss that academic achievement is the result of the interplay between a variety of different factors. Many of these, such as the student's socio-economic status, family structure, and previous learning, are outside of the control of the classroom teacher. However, two of the most influential factors are a direct result of the classroom teachers' actions: instruction and engagement. They define engagement as, "a composite of specific classroom behaviors: writing, participating in tasks, reading aloud, reading silently, talking about academics, and asking and answering questions" (Greenwood, Horton, and Utley, p. 329).). They assert that these behaviors are alterable, meaning that they are a result of teaching and instruction as well as the teacher's organizational choices in creating instructional opportunities for learning. This also means that the teacher's actions, or lack thereof, could lead to other, undesirable behaviors instead.

These possible behaviors are divided into three classes: positive, neutral, and negative behaviors. These behaviors were termed academic responding, task management responding, and inappropriate. Positive behaviors were the most desired behaviors mentioned earlier that signaled active involvement in the instructional process. Neutral behaviors were indicators of more passive involvement, while negative behaviors indicated a complete lack of involvement. Greenwood et al. also prove that it is possible to increase the occurrence of the positive behaviors, and as such, decrease the negative behaviors, through instructional interventions. These increases were also linked to an increase in the academic achievement of the students involved. They found that, through the manipulation of instructional techniques during existing instructional times, and the addition of instructional opportunities during task-management

times, classroom teachers could decreases the occurrence of inappropriate behaviors and task-management behaviors in favor of academic response behaviors.

Hughes and Kwok (2007) found that the quality of the relationship between the teacher and his/her students has a direct impact on the students' level of engagement and, indirectly, their achievement in school. Downer, Rimm-Kaufman, and Pianta (2007) studied how the classroom quality and instructional contexts interacted with the child's risk of school problems to predict the behavioral engagement of 955 third grade students in 888 different classrooms. Their findings support that of the previously mentioned researchers. They found that children in classrooms with high-quality teacher-student interactions were more engaged, and that the classroom format could have a direct effect on a student's engagement. Specifically they found that instruction that required the child to analyze and infer resulted in higher levels of engagement when compared to more rote tasks and that engagement was higher when instruction was delivered in a small group, and even more so when delivered individually. In a similar study, Ponitz, Rimm-Kaufman, Grimm, and Curby (2009) looked at the correlation between reading achievement, behavioral engagement, and the overall quality of kindergarten classrooms. Their findings again supported that a positive classroom environment with a high level of teacher-student interaction and carefully planned and executed instructional strategies led to higher levels of student engagement and academic success.

Relationship between student behavior and teacher management. As stated earlier in this paper, student behavior in the school setting has long been a concern of all stakeholders in education. Vernon F. Jones (1996) gives a description of the trends in classroom management over the last few decades. Before the 1960's, classroom management techniques were primarily reactive and focused on punishment and disciplining student offenders. The earliest trainings

available to teachers focused on helping a teacher understand what they could do in response to student misbehaviors with some form of intimidation being the primary form of management. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, psychologists began to shift their focus towards growth and awareness, and this led to a shift from reactive to proactive discipline management. Beginning in the 1970s, the training teachers received in handling student behaviors began to focus on understanding the student's problems, helping the students to better understand themselves, and attempting to teach the students how to work cooperatively with adults to improve their behaviors. According to Jones, the best examples of this shift can be seen in the works of William Glasser and Thomas Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training. This shift towards a psychological / counseling based approach can still be seen in the present in works such as Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving approach (2001).

An increase in social unease in the mid-1970s, due in part to the perceived out of control behaviors of students, led to the counseling-based approach metamorphosing into a behavior modification approach. While the counseling approach had focused on understanding where the student came from and working together to come up with a solution, these newer approaches focused on setting clear rules and boundaries, punishing disruptive students, and positively reinforcing desired behaviors. This was really the beginning of the emphasis on classroom management. The focus of training was no longer on what teachers could do in response to a student's behavior, but on what the teacher does that either prevents or contributes to the behavior. (Jones, 1996)

Schlechty and Atwood (2001) discuss the reciprocal nature of the teacher-student relation in some depth in their article. They contend that, contrary to what many believe, there is much more to this relationship than simply the teacher leading and the students following. They state

that, "while dominance and subordination may indeed be inherent in the role of the teacher and student respectively; it seems an oversimplification to consider that the student role is entirely passive" (Schlechty & Atwood, 2001, p. 285). They suggest that teachers are influenced by their students just as the teachers influence their students. Most students even attempt to modify the behaviors of their teachers into more desirable outcomes for themselves just as the teachers do.

According to Jones (1996), the research into student discipline has become divergent and has an inherent bias depending on the current role, training, and past roles of the researcher. This tunnel vision in the researcher means that many administrators and teachers receive a much narrower slice of the available research than they might believe. The result of this has been the development of three general approaches to classroom management in the literature and in practice. The first is based on the belief that the teacher is only responsible for teaching, which results in limited teacher involvement in student discipline and heavy administrative support. This approach can often overwhelm school resources. The second is focused on a simplified role for the teachers where a control-oriented, systemized approach is utilized to minimize the amount of time that a teacher has to spend on behavior problems. The problem with these systems is that they do not allow for students who need a different approach to be successful. The third is much more teacher-focused and involves the teacher being made aware of the available research as well as having a thorough and complete understanding of their students. The issue that arises most often with this approach is that it assumes that there is a high level of technical skills on the part of the teacher.

Chapter III - Methodology

This study and its results are a small portion of the first stage of a large, multi-phase study being conducted by a large research university in the Gulf Coast Region of Southeast Texas. This project (the assistant principal as successful leader project) was designed to study practicing assistant principals in a variety of areas related to their day-to-day positions as campus administrators with the goal of improving their practice by developing a full and complete understanding of the issues and challenges they face daily. The results of this study will be combined with the others and will directly influence the principal preparation and certification portion of the university's Master's of Education in Administration and Supervision program and help in the design of continuing education programs for in-service school administrators. The project consists of three phases:

> Phase 1 – quantitative survey research of assistant principals' attitudes and perceptions.
>
> Phase 2 – longitudinal study of how those attitudes and perceptions change over time.
>
> Phase 3 –development, implementation, and evaluation of a new assistant principal development program based on the research from the first two phases.

This paper is a part of the first phase of this project, which focused on the quantitative survey that looks at multiple aspects of the job assistant principals including the following: parental involvement, student discipline, teacher supervision, obstacles and frustrations, leadership, and the usefulness of research in practice. The section detailed in this study focuses on the perceptions of assistant principals about the importance of student discipline to an

effective school, about the most important aspects of student discipline, and what they believe makes some teachers more effective at maintaining discipline in their classrooms than others. While phase one of the successful leadership project was predominately-quantitative survey research, the discipline section of the survey consisted of one yes/no question and six open-ended questions that lend themselves to the type of interpretive analysis associated with qualitative research (Yin, 2003). As such, the methods approach that was employed in the analysis phase of the study utilized a mixed-methods approach including descriptive, causal-comparative, and correlational techniques to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions

1.) To what degree do assistant principals believe that student discipline is an important aspect of a good school?

2.) How do assistant principals explain the degree to which student discipline is important to a good school?

3.) Do assistant principals report knowing teachers who rarely have student discipline issues?

4.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in good student discipline?

5.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in poor student discipline?

6.) Do assistant principals report a relationship between a teacher's classroom discipline and a student's academic growth?

7.) Do assistant principals believe that schools should teach character and/or virtues?

Participants

The respondents that were a part of this study are 371 active campus assistant principals. The survey results primarily represent the viewpoint of assistant principals at public schools. The demographics of both the assistant principals and the campuses where they worked are quite varied. The respondents include both males and females from a variety of ethnicities including White, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and American-Indian. The ages of the assistant principals range from under thirty to over sixty-three years of age. The highest level of educational attainment for the vast majority of respondents is a Master's degree and, while the number of years of service in education varies amongst them, the majority of the respondents have worked between six and fifteen years. Their years of service as assistant principals range from less than five years to over sixteen years. A breakdown of the demographics of the schools and the assistant principals can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Demographics of Assistant Principals in the Survey

Characteristics of Assistant Principals:					

Male	Female
110	261

White	African American	Hispanic	Other
190	93	70	18

Age Range

<30	31-37	38-45	46-55	56-62	>63
21	112	103	92	36	5

Highest Degree Earned

Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
14	344	13

Years in Education

0-10	11-15	16-20	20+	Unreported
105	89	61	89	27

Years as Assistant Principal

0-5	6-10	11-15	16+	Unreported
236	90	26	11	8

The Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2009) ranks all public schools in the state based on student achievement, attendance, dropout rates, and other factors as a part of the state accountability system. The state considers the overall achievement level of all students in the school as well as the achievement of certain populations based on student demographics, economics, and participation in certain programs. Based on the performance of the campus, or the district, it is possible to receive one of four different rankings (presented in order from lowest to highest possible ranking): Academically Unacceptable, Acceptable, Recognized, and

Exemplary. The respondents were asked to self-report their school's accountability ranking as a part of the survey; more than half of the respondents worked at Acceptable schools, and nearly a fourth worked in schools who had earned a Recognized ranking. Ten percent of the respondents received the highest ranking, while less than five percent received the lowest.

The assistant principals surveyed for this study worked in all levels of schools. For this study, the schools have been divided into three categories: elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools. The schools are defined as follows: elementary schools are those who traditionally serve grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grades. Junior high schools are those who serve any mix of fifth through ninth grades, and high schools serve either ninth or tenth through twelfth grades. Because different districts treat fifth and ninth grade differently, each of these grades could call into two of the categories. For most of the respondents, high schools included grade 9 and elementary schools included grade 5, but some included either or both in their junior high schools. Because of this, the schools were categorized based on the majority of the students served in the school with guidance by the name of the school. These schools varied in size from less than 200 students to more than 3,000 and were located in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Table 3.2 contains a breakdown of the demographic information of the campuses in the survey.

Table 3.2

Demographics of Campuses in the Survey

Characteristics of Campuses:

	All	Elementary	Junior High	High Schools
Number of schools	371	168	90	101
Mean number of teachers	83.42	58.44	69	143.97
Mean number of students	1258.27	773	1115.57	773

Location

Rural	Suburban	Urban
12	156	191

Accountability Rating

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
16	189	102	35

Economically Disadvantaged Students

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%	Not Reported
49	32	47	71	134	38

Instrument

The portion of the survey that was used for this study consists of seven questions about student discipline and is part of the much larger survey (115 items) about the assistant principalship. Of these items, 22 deal with the assistant principal's background and the demographics of his/her campus, 62 are Likert-scaled items, and 31 are open-ended questions. Six of the questions related to discipline are open-ended and allowed the respondents freedom in their responses and to respond with as much detail as they liked without having to fit into some predetermined answer choices. (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004) The following are the discipline-related questions in the survey:

1. To what degree is student discipline an important aspect of a good school?

2. Explain.

3. Do you know of teachers who rarely have student discipline problems?

4. If yes, what is it those teachers do that results in good discipline?

5. Describe what it is that teachers do that results in poor student discipline.

6. Do you see a relationship between a teachers' classroom discipline and students' academic achievement?

7. Do you think that schools should teach "virtues" or "character"? Why or why not? Do you have any formal programs in your school that focus on character education?

Procedures

For the purpose of this study, archival data was utilized as the surveys and interviews were completed before this study was undertaken. The data collection procedures are a reflection of what was done by the master's degree seeking students involved in the data collection process under the supervision of professors at the university conducting the study. The information about the exact procedures taken in the data collection process was gathered by interviewing the professors in charge of the process.

While this study focuses on the responses to seven survey questions, the actual survey instrument contained over one hundred items. The primary researchers felt that their target participants, serving assistant principals, had very busy jobs and if they distributed this survey by mail or email there would be few responses and the respondents that did complete the survey would not likely devote the time needed to provide quality answers to all of the items especially those towards the end of the survey as their interest and time lagged. It was decided that face-to-face interviews would result in more informative and revealing answers to the open-ended questions and that it was important for both the interviewer and interviewee to have a stake in the

survey to ensure that they gave a consistent commitment of time and energy to the whole survey. It was because of this that the researchers chose to use cognitive interviewing in the administration of their survey (Willis, 2005).

In their research, Desimone and Le Floch (2004) used cognitive interviewing as a method to increase the reliability and validity of survey items. This initial limited use has since been expanded into more aspects of survey research and design. There are two primary approaches utilized in cognitive interviews. The first in the think-aloud approach where the interviewer asks pre-scripted questions and then records the subject's response in detail. The second approach, verbal probing, is much more involved than the previous approach. Within this approach, the interviewer asks follow-up questions to clarify and expand on the subjects' responses. By analyzing teachers' and principals' interpretations of survey items they were able to gain a better understanding of the thought process behind the respondent's answers and "unpack complex phenomena, and provide critical information for bridging the gap between policy/scholarly framing of the issues, and respondents' framing of the issues" (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004, p. 18). While utilizing this method is time-consuming, the benefit is that the data collected has the traditional characteristics of a quantitative survey and the insights typical of a qualitative case study (Desimone & Le Floch; Willis, 2005).

With this in mind, master's degree students at the university conducting the survey were required to administer the survey as a part of a core course required for the Master's of Education in Educational Leadership and the principal's certificate certification program. Class time was spent familiarizing the students with the survey instrument and the goals of the study as well as training the students in both traditional study and cognitive interview techniques. The students' grade in the class was tied to the successful completion of the surveys in order to

ensure their commitment, and they were allowed to choose which assistant principals they would

interview. It was planned that this personal/professional connection would help to ensure the

commitment of the assistant principal to completing the survey and allow for a more relaxed and

open interview that would bring forth more honest answers.

Validity and Reliability

      Sample and selection. Because of how the respondents in the survey were chosen

(convenience sampling by master's students) there was concern that the sample obtained was not

representative of the overall population. However, the central location of the university and the

fact that the master's students do not reside on campus and commute from all over the greater

metropolitan area help to ensure that the sample was representative of the area. The educational

service region surrounding the university, where the respondents are employed, also increased

the validity of the sample. The region contains nearly one-fourth of the students in the state

(1,026,862 of 4,651,516) and is demographically representative of the state as a whole. Table

3.3 shows a comparison of the region as compared to the state (Texas Education Agency [TEA],

2008).

Table 3.3

Comparison of Demographics of Region and State

Demographics Comparison:							
	African American	Hispanic	White	Native American	Asian	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficient
Region	21.5%	44.3%	28%	.2%	6%	54.1%	19.6%
State	14.3%	47.2%	34.8%	.3%	3.4%	55.3%	16.7%

Another unintended result of this selection technique was that there were 84 instances where the same assistant principal participated more than once in the survey. This is attributed to several factors including the ability of the graduate student to choose whom they wanted to interview, the grouping of the master's students in districts and campuses, and the mentoring aspect of the assistant principal's participation in the program. While these duplicated had to be removed for the purpose of the study, they had the unplanned benefit of allowing for the reliability of the instrument to be examined which was of extra importance due to the number of interviewers employed in the study. It also allowed the researcher to establish the validity of the assistant principal's responses over multiple survey administrations. There were, as expected, some minor variations in the wording and comprehensiveness of the principal's responses, but there was not a single case found where an assistant principal's opinions changed from one interview to the next. For the study, the first survey response was retained and used.

Intercoder reliability. The survey was purposefully designed with open-ended questions to allow the respondents the most freedom possible in their answers and to allow for the most complete and relevant data to be collected. As a result, the first step required in this study was the examination of the responses for any naturally occurring themes and, once they were identified, to categorize and codify them. This allowed for the open and varied responses of the assistant principals to be grouped into generalized themes for examination. Before undertaking this task, it was understood that the researchers might have formed biases that could influence their interpretation of responses. At the time of this study, the primary researcher had been an elementary principal and assistant principal for five years and had taught at the elementary level before that.

To begin this process the primary researcher began by reviewing the existing literature about student discipline to ensure that he had a firm grounding in theory as well as practice. Then the responses to each survey item were examined individually. A list of general themes was created for each research question. These initial themes were examined for commonalities and were combined into a smaller number of more generalized categories. These categories were then examined according to the inter-coder reliability method described later in this chapter. While the themes themselves were drawn directly from the responses, the diction of the titles of the categories was based on the existing research.

While the large number of master's degree students involved in the data collected process worked to protect the sanctity of the data, it was decided that an inter-coder reliability study was necessary. Inter-coder reliability is the extent to which two or more coders agree. This addresses the consistency of the implementation of a rating system (Bourdon, 2001). To achieve this two other coders were engaged to randomly double check the primary researchers work. Because of the primary researcher's elementary education focus, the secondary raters were chosen to balance this. Both were doctoral students at the same research university and involved as researchers in the successful leadership project. One of the researchers had been a junior high school assistant principal for three years and had worked as a district level instructional coach and a junior high school teacher before that. The other rater was currently a high school principal and had served for the last ten years as both a principal and assistant principal at middle and high schools. Before that, he was a teacher at the high school level. Since the measurement here involved categories, each of the coders was asked to check of where they felt each response belonged or if it needed a new category. The percentage of agreement between the raters and the primary researcher was over 95% for each category. The resulting discussion along with the

survey responses and the literature review were used to operationally define each of the categories.

Generalizability

The generalizability of this study is greatly enhanced by the large sample size, the heterogeneity of their characteristics, the geographic spread of the area, and the homogeneity of the area when compared to the State of Texas. The respondents in this study include public schools of every size, level, and demographic. The results of the study can be reasonably generalized to any of these schools. The lack of private school and schools in rural settings in the study could hurt the ability of these finding to be generalized to them.

Limitations

This main limitation of this study is that the study does not allow for a true random sampling of participants. Students in the master's level principal preparation and certification program at the research university were required to administer and return these surveys as part of one of their courses. Because of this approach, the distribution of the surveys was often limited, by convenience, to the districts in which the students worked. This also led to eighty-three instances of duplicate interviews. While the duplicates were eliminated from use in the study, they did prove useful as they allowed for validation of the survey instrument. The answers from the duplicated responses were found to be quite similar which helped prove the reliability of the instrument.

Chapter IV - Results

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the importance of student discipline to an effective school according to serving assistant principals. As stated in Chapter III of this study, the survey used in this study was administered through cognitive interviews and purposefully designed with open-ended questions to allow the respondents the most freedom possible in their answers and for the most complete and relevant data to be collected. Thus, the first step required in the examination of the data was to extract the naturally occurring, research-based themes from the responses and to categorize the responses. This was accomplished by reviewing each response individually and identifying the main theme of the response. Once a list of themes had been created, these themes were examined for commonalities and some of the themes were combined. Once these naturally occurring themes had been found they were examined for a basis in the existing literature. The diction of the themes is based in the literature. The result of this process is that varied, open-ended responses of the assistant principals could be categorized into generalized themes for examination.

Research Question One

To what degree do assistant principals report that student discipline is an important aspect of a good school?

The responses from assistant principals about the degree of importance of student discipline to a good school are represented in Table 4. Over two-thirds of the respondents identified student discipline as a very important facet of a successful school, and an additional

third identified it as the most critical aspect of a good school. None of the respondents rated

student discipline as being of low or no importance.

Table 4.1

Importance of Student Discipline

Response	Frequency	Percent
Essential/Most Important	113	31
Very Important	254	69

n=367

Essential / Most Important

The responses from assistant principals that identified student discipline as being

essential to an effective school included the following:

"Without good discipline, there is no learning. Student's acquisition of academic knowledge is

predicated on his/her ability to discipline himself/herself. To have a functioning school, students

must be disciplined."

"Without it teachers can't teach."

"It is the number one aspect that determines a good school."

"If the discipline is not there we cannot ensure that learning is taking place."

"Extremely important. You can't run a school without discipline"

"It is fundamental before learning can even occur."

"You can have the best lessons in the world but if no one is listening it will not be effective."

The key element that distinguished these responses from those that fell into the "very important" category was the idea that discipline is a prerequisite for learning and that student behaviors had to be well managed in the classroom for any kind of effective instruction and learning to occur. These respondents credit student discipline with being the foundation upon which education is built. The reasons cited for this include that good student discipline allows teachers to spend more time on instruction, that it provides structure for the campus, and that it is required for an effective environment for learning to occur. A few assistant principals - asserted that student discipline is required for a school to be considered good.

Very Important

The responses that categorized student discipline as being very important included:

"To a large degree, but not the totality of its success."

"It is one factor-student discipline is a whole staff issue."

"Good discipline is the reflection of a school's positive learning environment."

"Very important."

"I think it is important to a high degree. But I think instruction is more important. If you have good instruction, then discipline is not an issue."

"If the students are challenged instructionally in the classroom, and the students feel that the teachers care for them, the classroom disruptions lessen."

"If student discipline is a major problem, there's a problem elsewhere: culture/climate, teachers, morale, something."

The unique aspect regarding these responses is the idea that, while student discipline is very important, there are other factors that are also important to making a school effective. Whereas many of the responses in the first category stated that student discipline was required for a school to be successful because it laid the foundation for other factors, such as time on task, climate/environment, and instruction, the respondents in this category stated that discipline was important to a successful school; however, many stated that other factors were equally important and that some, such as climate, instruction, and teacher quality, could actually cause student discipline to be an issue.

Research Question Two

How do assistant principals explain the degree to which student discipline is important to an effective school?

The responses from the assistant principals explaining their evaluation of the importance of student discipline to a school were as numerous as the respondents. There were five emergent themes identified from these responses: (1) student discipline is required for learning to occur; (2) student discipline is required for safe and secure schools; (3) student discipline affects teacher morale and efficacy; (4) student discipline is a direct result of teacher actions/quality; and (5) student discipline affects the climate of the campus. The responses that did not fit into the five

themes were categorized under "Other". Because of the open-ended nature of the survey item,

some respondents provided answers that fell into several categories.

Table 4.2

Explanation of the Importance of Student Discipline

Response	Frequency	Percent
Required for Learning to Occur	224	61
Required for Safe and Secure Schools	29	7.9
Directly Affects Teacher Morale and Efficacy	14	3.8
Is a Result of Teacher Actions/Effectiveness	31	8.4
Impacts the Climate of the School	119	32.4
Other	26	7.1

n=365
*Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses from some respondents

Required for Learning to Occur

There were numerous responses that categorized discipline as "required for learning". A

few of the responses were:

"If the inmates run the asylum you don't get much done."

"You can have great lessons, but without good discipline, you will not have education."

"In the classroom, nothing can happen without proper discipline."

"If student displays appropriate behavior, the more time the teacher can commit to instruction."

"They are directly tied to each other. Students cannot learn if there are constant disruptions."

"If students aren't self-disciplined, then they won't be able to learn as well as they should."

The common theme in these responses is that student discipline is important to a successful school because it is required for true learning to occur. According to the respondents, this occurs because managing student discipline sets the structure and frees the time needed for good instruction to occur and be successful. These responses assert that student discipline is important because disruptions take instructional time away from other students and that quality instruction cannot be effective if the students are not actively paying attention.

Table 4.3 displays the pattern of responses that occurred when this category was examined by Texas Education Agency (TEA) rating of the campus at which the responding assistant principal was employed. Assistant principals at schools with the "Recognized" rating identified student behavior as required for learning to occur much less frequently than their peers, and assistant principals at schools with an "Unacceptable" rating identified

Table 4.3

Required for Learning and TEA Rating

	Required for Learning	
	Identified	
TEA Rating	Number	Percent
Exemplary	20	62.5
Recognized	49	52.1
Acceptable	118	63.1
Unacceptable	14	87.5

N=365

Required for Safe and Secure Schools

The responses categorized as "required for safe and secure schools" included:

"Without discipline you have little structure. Kids have to have a safe and secure environment in order for any learning to take place."

"Student discipline plays a huge role in the overall safety of the school. If students are undisciplined and able to 'do whatever they want', safety becomes an issue and learning does not occur with consistency. Additionally, teachers become unmotivated and all students suffer."

"When you think about Maslow's hierarchy of needs, security is the first. Discipline in the school helps meet that need. If you're acting up you are not learning."

"If the students don't feel safe in the learning environment everyone suffers."

"For my school, if there is no discipline the school can become a survival of the fittest. Schools should provide a comfortable and safe environment for all students to learn."

The idea expressed by these respondents is that student discipline is required to have a safe and orderly campus, and that a safe and orderly school is a part of basic human needs. The assistant principals believe that, until this need is met, students will not be able to achieve to their potential. The focus of these responses is also on students' feelings and their perceptions of the school environment.

Directly Effects Teacher Morale and Efficacy

The responses categorized as "directly effects teachers' morale and efficacy" included:

"One student can disrupt the learning of others, frustrates the teacher, can affect the climate as a whole."

"Teachers become unmotivated and all students suffer."

"This allows for teachers to do their job. Students are in a learning environment that would result in productivity and lifelong learning."

"It makes it hard for a teacher to do their job."

Where the previous responses focused on the perceptions and feelings of the students, these answers focus on the perceptions of the teacher. The idea expressed by these respondents is that student misbehavior has a definite and detrimental effect on the teacher's attitude towards their job as well as their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities.

Direct Result of Teacher Actions

The fourth category of responses asserts that discipline "is a direct result of teacher actions." These responses included:

"Teachers need to handle the majority of their discipline problems and have administrators deal with the severe occurrences."

"Well, it is not good when teachers send kids to the office for a level 1 or level 2 offense. Teachers need to handle minor matters on their own. I try to explain to teachers who do that that they are making me more important in the discipline process than they are. The principal should not be more important than the teacher. The teacher should be the main one. But, you know, discipline can't be learned out of a book. I don't know how you learn it really."

"Students should have clear expectations for behavior, as well as consequences. When teachers engage students in active learning, discipline issues decrease. Quality teachers can make the difference."

"Effective teachers have strong classroom management."

"If there is a lack of discipline then there is a lack of teaching."

"It starts in the classroom and is aided by the office."

"Discipline problems usually signal another issue."

These responses from assistant principals mainly dealt with the idea that student discipline issues are often the result of teacher actions or teachers failing to take action when necessary. These answers also seemed to show some frustration on the part of the assistant principal with teachers who do not manage student discipline themselves.

Impacts Campus Climate

The responses that were categorized as stating that discipline was important because it "has an impact on the campus climate." These responses include items such as the following:

"If discipline is under control then the school climate has a balance and the students do not have to feel that they have to learn in a hostile area."

"Discipline keeps the school on an even keel. The lack of a presence of discipline can create a chaotic environment."

"Discipline creates a culture of scholarly behavior."

"It brings about a positive change in the school."

"This is important because it affects the campus as a whole, the classroom instruction, and individual student success."

"Discipline can either make or break the overall school climate. Discipline should not become a negative issue as much as it is known for a time to prevent situations from happening and help those involved."

These respondents primarily looked at the effects of student discipline on the campus as a whole rather than on the classroom level. They express that the climate of the campus is directly

influenced by student behaviors and that this influence has a tremendous impact on the campus and student achievement.

Table 4.4 displays the pattern that was revealed when these responses were examined by the years of experience as an assistant principal of the respondent. Assistant principals in their first five years identified this category more often than their peers with more experience.

Table 4.4

Impacts the Climate of the Campus and Years as an Assistant Principal

	Impacts the Climate of the Campus	
	Identified	
Years of Experience Range	Number	Percent
Less than 5 Years	86	36.6
5 to 10 Years	21	23.9
11 or More Years	8	22.2

N=366

Other

The final category of responses consisted of responses that did not fit into other categories. The few answers in this category were mainly nonsensical answers that did not truly address the question that was asked as a part of the survey. A few examples are the following:

"To dismiss it is not so good."

"There are times that I go weeks without any discipline referrals."

"This is a no-brainer."

"If discipline is not effective problems increase."

"Different communities and demographic groups require different levels of discipline."

In responding to this question, assistant principals provided a variety of answers as to why student discipline is important to an effective school. All of the responses did support the existence and importance of this relationship.

Research Question Three

Do assistant principals report knowing teachers who rarely have student discipline issues?

Research question three consisted of one survey item that asked the assistant principals if they knew of a teacher who rarely had problems with student behaviors. This survey item only allowed for yes or no answers. Table 6 shows the responses to this item.

Table 4.5

Know Teachers Who Rarely Had Student Discipline Issues

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	358	97.8
No	8	2.2

n=366

Research Question Four

What do assistant principals report that teachers do that result in good student discipline?

The survey item connected to this research question asked the assistant principal what the teachers who rarely had issues with student discipline did that resulted in good behavior. The responses to this question varied from just a few words to a paragraph on this topic. Many of the

respondents listed several different teacher actions and behaviors that they believed resulted in

good student discipline. The responses for this survey were grouped into the following six

categories: (1) forming positive relationships, (2) having set procedures and routines, (3) having

and communicating high expectations, (4) high student engagement through good instructional

practices, (5) parental involvement, (6) unsure/other. Table 7 shows the frequency of the

responses.

Table 4.6

Teacher Actions that Result in Good Behavior

Response	Frequency	Percent
Forming Positive Relationships	194	52.9
Having Set Procedures and Routines	167	45.5
Having and Communicating High Expectations	80	21.8
High Student Engagement through Good Instructional Practices	135	36.8
Parental Involvement	28	7.6
Unsure/Other	24	7.6

n=365
*Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses from some respondents

Forming Positive Relationships

The responses that identified "forming positive relationships" as an action of teachers

who rarely have discipline issues had a common theme of forming a positive and mutual

relationship with their students. These did not indicate a friendship, but a relationship instead

based on trust and respect. The idea that a strong interpersonal relationship is important to

student discipline is the most mentioned in the survey responses. This is not surprising since, as

mentioned in Chapter II of this paper, much of the current literature on student discipline is

focused on the importance of the relationship between the student and teacher and the large

effect it has on student success. (Downer, Rimm-Kaufmann, & Pianata, 2007; Hughes and

Kwok, 2007; Ponitz, Rimm-Kaufman, Grimm, & Curby, 2009) The responses in this category

included the following:

"They have established a relationship of trust with the students."

"Connect to the students by showing that they care about the students well being and future

success."

"Teacher's relationship with students is strong and he or she meets all of their needs."

"Relationships are built amongst the teachers and the students, and the students KNOW that

their teachers care about them!"

"Relationships, relationships, relationship! It's that simple. I have seen the worst kids on task

and behaving in certain teachers classes. Those teachers have a genuine concern for kids and

the kids know it. You can't fake it."

"Teachers have built relationships with their students and there is a mutual respect."

Originally there was another emergent theme (understanding students' backgrounds and

needs); however, upon further examination it was determined that these responses were actually

a sub-theme of forming positive relationships. Some of these responses included:

"Don't escalate situations with students."

"They know how to pick and choose their battles."

"Dialogue with students, find out what behind behavior."

The common theme in all of these responses is the idea that good teachers effectively manage student behaviors by forming positive relationships. According to these respondents, this is done by getting to know their students and treating them with respect. The effective teacher has the correct attitude and communicates with their students.

Have Set Procedures and Routines

The responses that were categorized as "having set procedures and routines" included the following:

"Most of these teachers have developed solutions of their own for dealing with misbehavior and feel adequate enough to enforce it themselves."

"Classroom management and have a consistent routine of class. Clear rules and effective manager."

"They have established policies and procedures."

"These teachers are structured in their management styles. They have already planned for disruptions and are consistent with delivering the consequences to all kids. Praise is used more than consequences. They are very great at catching them being good."

"Students understand what the teacher expects and then they should know how to behave. They teach and explain the rules to the entire group and then they hold students accountable for their actions."

The assistant principals who gave these responses focused on the idea that for teachers to be successful in preventing student misbehaviors they must have plans in place beyond posted rules and consequences. Examples of this can be seen in the books of Drs. Fred Jones (2008) and Harry Wong (2001) which are aimed at helping teachers new to the profession establish control of their classrooms and student discipline from the beginning of the year through planning, procedures, and routine.

A sub-theme was also identified in these responses. The surveyed assistant principals commented often on the importance of teachers taking ownership of their classroom discipline and handling issues themselves. Some of these responses are listed below:

"They just handle it."

"I know who does have problems, I'm sure every teacher uses discipline but some teachers I don't see their students because maybe they handle it before it gets out of hand, not too bad, some students crave attention."

"They are proactive. When they do have issues, they handle everything themselves. Students have immediate consequences."

"These teachers are very consistent and fair in their classrooms. Instead of being part of escalating issues they often are proactive enough to keep them from occurring."

"They take time and talk to their students and try to handle it in the room. It has to be major for them to send them out of their room. They like the child to know they are in charge not the office."

"They have strong classroom management. They go through a myriad of in classroom consequences before they even think of sending a student to the office."

As mentioned in Chapter II, the three general approaches to student discipline outlined by V.F. Jones (1996) vary in where the responsibility lies for the majority of student discipline. These responses are most likely due to a mismatch between the preferred styles of discipline of the administrator and the teacher. If an assistant principal expects the teachers to have a much higher involvement in managing student discipline than the teacher does this can lead to a disconnect.

Having and Communicating High Expectations

The responses gathered from the assistant principals included the following:

"They generally demonstrate and maintain high behavioral expectations."

"They establish their expectations from the start."

"Good Communication and Expectations."

"They have clear expectations and standards."

"They have consistent high expectations. Those expectations are well conveyed to the students."

The responses that identified "having and communicating high expectations" centered on the teacher having high behavioral expectations for their students and communicating those clearly by creating a culture where anything less was unacceptable. Brookover and his coworkers (1979) showed that one component of an effective school was a culture of high expectations that were clearly communicated and understood.

Table 4.7 displays the pattern that emerged when these responses were examined by the age of the respondent. Assistant principals between 38 and 45 years of age identified communicating high expectations as an action that teachers do to lower student misbehaviors much more often than their older and younger peers. Assistant principals over the age of 56 were much less likely to identify this action than their peers.

Table 4.7

High Expectations and Age of the Assistant Principal

| | High Expectations | |
| | Identified | |
Age Range	Number	Percent
Under 30	2	9.5
31 to 37	20	18.2
38 to 45	30	29.1
46 to 55	25	27.8
Over 56	3	7.3

N=365

High Engagement/Good Instruction

The responses in this category included:

"Yes, they are prepared and interesting, motivating and challenging."

"99% make their classroom conducive to learning by making their lessons interesting and meaningful."

"Rigorous lessons, Student-Centered activities, teachers has an agenda."

"Best teaching practices."

"Students are very involved and engaged in tasks. Teachers make work interesting by offering hands on activities."

"Teachers with few discipline problems are engaging their students through meaningful, higher-level instruction. It is engaging for the student when the material is authentic to them."

"Effective teachers keep students engaged in the learning process throughout the class period. These teachers relate every lesson to something that the students understand and have an interest in."

As discussed in depth earlier in this paper, student misbehaviors can often be defense mechanisms used as task avoidance that occur when a student becomes frustrated and/or bored and student misbehaviors can be often be linked to an instructional antecedent (Dwyer, et. al., 1998; Jones, 2008; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Myers, et. al., 1987; Short & Short, 2003).

Parental Involvement

Some of the responses are below:

"Built relationships with students and parents."

"Teachers have high/clear expectations which they communicate to a student & parent regularly."

"Set rules early, monitor all the time, call parents."

"Expectations are high, procedures well established and are used on a consistent basis. Rules are followed, successful interaction between student and teacher; instruction of curriculum is valued and that has a purpose; parent and teacher communication."

This category, "parental involvement," is the only theme that was included solely because of its importance in research rather than its natural emergence from the responses. Research has long shown that there is a direct correlation between student achievement and how involved parents are in education. As stated earlier, this connection was once believed to be so strong that the effects of schooling were considered negligible.

Table 4.8 displays the distribution of this category by the ethnicity of the respondent. African American assistant principals were more likely to identify parental involvement than assistant principals of other ethnicities were. This is of particular interest because of the low number of responses in this category. The importance of this will be discussed further in Chapter V.

Table 4.8

Parental Involvement and Ethnicity

	Parental Involvement	
	Identified	
Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White	12	6.3
Black	13	14.1
Hispanic	2	2.9

Unsure/Other

The remaining answers, that were categorized as "Unsure/Other" included the following responses:

"Again we really do not have issues with discipline"

"Passion for job shines through"

"Not sure."

"Have a passion for what they teach."

It is interesting to note that several of the respondents actually did state that they were unsure what it was that teachers did that resulted in a reduced number of student disciplinary incidents. The other responses in this category include answers that do not fit well into other categories.

Table 4.9 shows the distribution of this category by the performance level of the campus. Assistant principals at high performing schools stated that they were unsure what teachers did

that resulted in good discipline at a higher rate than assistant principals at low performing

schools did.

Table 4.9

Unsure/Other and Performance Level

	Unsure/Other	
	Identified	
Performance Level	Number	Percent
High Performing	7	3.4
Low Performing	11	8.7

The data collected for this research provides interesting insight into the perceptions of the

surveyed assistant principals. Except for the few responses that were placed into the "other"

category, the themes that emerged from this question have a strong base in the existing literature.

Research Question Five

What do assistant principals report that teachers do that result in poor student discipline?

The responses to this survey item in many ways mirrored the responses to the previous

question. These were grouped into the following six categories: (1) poor or negative

relationships, (2) no/poor procedures, routines, and structure, (3) unclear/low/changing

expectations, (4) student boredom/not using good instructional practices, (5) no parental contact,

and (6) unsure/other. Table 4.10 shows the breakdown of responses.

Table 4.10

Teacher Actions that Result in Poor Behavior

Response	Frequency	Percent
Poor or Negative Relationships	194	54.5
No/Poor Procedures, Routines, and Structure	197	55.3
Unclear/Low/Changing Expectations	62	17.4
Boredom/Not using good instructional Practices	84	23.6
No Parental Contact	10	2.8
Unsure/Other	30	8.4

n=365
*Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple responses from some respondents

Poor or Negative Relationships

The responses categorized as "poor or negative relationships" include the following responses:

"They let the students know they don't care."

"Usually there is a feeling of isolation involved in one or both parts of the relationship with either teacher or student. A connection was never made with that child."

"They often come unprepared. They get frustrated with their own lack of performance and then yell at the kids. Or they are sarcastic with the kids."

"They are angry with students. They don't respect students and therefore they don't have good procedures."

"They yell, 'shut up'. They have poor communication skills. Poor organization skills and poor interpersonal skills. They are just here for a paycheck."

"Teachers who are too mean, disrespect and degrade students, and are easy to manipulate have the worst student discipline."

These responses centered on the theme that student misbehaviors were a result of the teacher failing to connect meaningfully with his or her students. These teachers do not treat their students with respect and often respond with sarcasm or anger. They sometimes are too friendly with their students and do not form the correct kind of relationship. The overall idea is that these teachers are not effective because they lack a stable positive relationship with their students.

Table 4.11 displays the distribution of those who identified poor relationship building as something that teachers do that increases the occurrence of undesirable student behaviors by the age of the respondent. Younger assistant principals, particularly those in the 31-37 year range, identified forming poor relationships as a reason that some teachers had more issues with student discipline at a far greater rate than older teachers, particularly those over the age of 56.

Table 4.11

Poor Relationships and Age of the Respondent

| | Poor Relationship | |
| | Identified | |
Age Range	Number	Percent
Under 30	12	60.0
31 to 37	68	62.4
38 to 45	51	50.5
46 to 55	47	55.3
Over 55	14	35.9

Table 4.12 displays the distribution of this category by the ethnicity of the respondents.
White assistant principals identified poor relationship building much more often than their peers
in other ethnic groups do.

Table 4.12

Poor Student/Teacher Relationships and Ethnicity

| | Poor Relationship | |
| | Identified | |
Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White	115	62.5
Black	41	47.1
Hispanic	30	44.1
Other	8	47.1

No/Poor Procedures, Routines, and Structure

The responses that were categorized as "no/poor procedures, routines, and structure"

included:

"Teachers with poor discipline rarely have rules posted. They do not have procedures for

things. We have some teachers who have problems with those things this year and some of those

things need to be fixed next year. People need to agree on a plan for next year. It will work

better if they are part of the decision."

"No discipline management no plan of action."

"Lack a good plan that works with their classroom."

"They don't have any organization skills or classroom management."

"Set rules and do not enforce them. They try to be "cool" with the students thinking that will get

the students to work for them. Just the opposite happens."

The recurring theme in this category was the idea of too much down time for the students

in between lessons and too much confusion over what they should be doing. These teachers

have neither concrete plans for how to handle student behavior nor the organizational planning to

handle more minor issues.

Table 4.13 displays the distribution of this category by the years of experience in

education of the respondent. It was found that assistant principals with 11 to 15 years of

experience in education were more likely to identify a lack of procedures as a cause of poor

student behavior, and assistant principals with 16 to 20 years of experience were much less likely

to do the same.

Table 4.13

No or Poor Procedures and Years of Experience in Education

	No or Poor Procedure	
	Identified	
Years of Experience	Number	Percent
Under 10	57	55.3
11 to 15	58	66.7
16 to 20	25	43.1
Over 20	45	54.9

Unfair/Low/Changing Expectations

The responses that were categorized as "unfair/low/changing expectations" included:

"They have unrealistic expectations."

"Students don't know what is expected."

"No student expectations are verbalized very classroom routine, students don't know what to do

or expect."

"Are not stern enough in my book, I get discipline problems from the same teachers each week, maybe they just have unclear rules or the students know that the teacher is not confident enough to tell them no and that's it."

"They are inconsistent & have high tolerance for student misbehavior. They don't set limits/rules & expectations are low because 'they're children'."

"These teachers set goals, but don't follow through. Sometimes they reinforce through consequences and other times they don't."

According to the respondents, these teachers either fail to set expectations, set expectations that are too low, or have them change from day to day or activity to activity. These responses reiterated that setting high expectations is not enough to achieve goals; the expectations must be attainable and reinforced.

Low Engagement / Poor Instruction

The next category of responses described the students as being "bored and unengaged" usually due to a lack of the usage of good instructional practices. The responses included in this category include:

"They don't teach well."

"Worksheets."

"Seating students in rows and doing meaningless tasks such as worksheets."

"Very boring work. Doesn't allow for student-to-student interaction and free expression. A room where everyone is quiet and doing busy work."

"Lessons not meaningful to learners. Give worksheets."

"Don't differentiate instruction, don't engage students in learning."

The theme of these responses is that students who are not engaged are much more likely to engage in undesirable behavior. Poor instructional practices, such as high use of low-interest activities such as worksheets, lowers student engagement.

Table 4.14 shows the distribution of the identified category student boredom/lack of engagement by the performance level of the campus where the respondent was employed. It was found that assistant principals at low performing schools identified student boredom as a factor negatively affecting discipline at a higher rate than assistant principals at high performing schools do.

Table 4.14

Student Boredom and Performance Level

	Student Boredom	
	Identified	
Performance Level	Number	Percent
High	54	27.4
Low	23	18.9

Parent Involvement

As with the responses in the section on what teachers do to reduce student misbehaviors, the category about parent contact/involvement was included due to its prominence in the research rather than the responses. Some samples included in the category are as follows:

"These teachers do not involve parents. These teachers do not address deficiencies adequately."

"Lack of organization, lack of exciting lesson plans, are scared of the parents, don't show the students that they care for them."

"They do not discipline. They yell at the child and immediately send them to the office. No parent communication between the two, just send them to the office."

"These teachers do the opposite. Do not take ownership for the classes, and may not use the parents as resources."

"In their seats, are not stern, do not have relationships between parents."

The few times that parental involvement is mentioned in the responses to this survey item it is either about the teacher not contacting the parent or failing to form a strong relationship with them. This category is notable due to the low number of responses that mention parental involvement despite its prominence in the literature. More will be discussed about this in the final section of this study.

Unsure/Other

The remaining responses were categorized as "Unsure/Other." These included the following:

"Don't believe kids can behave or work because of race or social status."

"We are lucky that we don't have huge issues to deal with."

"Not sure."

"Not a whole lot."

These answers included a few respondents who reported that they did not know teachers did to produce negative behaviors. There were also some responses that did not fit into other categories, which accused unsuccessful teachers of racism, as well as responses that asserted that the respondent's campus did not have discipline issues.

Table 4.15 displays the distribution of this category by the age of the respondent. It shows that older assistant principals had responses placed in the unsure/other category much more often than younger assistant principals did. .

Table 4.15

Unsure/Other and Age of the Respondent

	Unsure/Other	
	Identified	
Age Range	Number	Percent
Under 30	1	5.0
31 to 37	6	5.5
34 to 45	7	6.9
46 to 55	8	9.4
Over 56	8	20.5

Table 4.16 displays the distribution of this category by the years of experience as an assistant principal of the respondent. Assistant principals with less than five years of experience as an assistant principal had fewer answers fall into the unsure category than those with 6 to 10 years of experience.

Table 4.16

Unsure/Other and Years of Experience as an Assistant Principal

	Unsure/Other	
	Identified	
Years as an Assistant Principal	Number	Percent
Under 5	12	5.2
6 to 10	12	14.3
11 to 15	5	15.2

Table 4.17 details the distribution of answers in the unsure/other category by the years of experience in education of the respondent. Assistant principals with more experience in education are more likely to give an answer that will fall in the unsure/other category than younger assistant principals.

Table 4.17

Unsure/Other and Years of Experience in Education

	Unsure/Other	
	Identified	
Years in Education	Number	Percent
Under 10	8	7.8
11 to 15	3	3.4
16 to 20	5	8.6
Over 20	12	14.6

It is interesting to note that the same themes that emerged from research questions 3 and 4 form opposing pairs. The assistant principals' responses to these items showed that the behaviors by which teachers are able to affect student behavior are not isolated items that affect behavior either positively or negatively. Instead, these behaviors are a continuum of actions that have the ability to affect student behavior both positively and negatively.

Research Question Six

Do assistant principals see a relationship between a teachers' classroom discipline and a student's academic growth?

While the survey item connected to this research question allowed for open-ended responses and the respondents' answers varied from a single word to several sentences, all of the responses to this item can be categorized into two categories: "yes" and "no/maybe."

Table 4.18

Relationship between Classroom Discipline and Academic Growth

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	350	97.8
No/Maybe	8	2.2

n=358

Yes

The responses that identified that a relationship between classroom discipline and student academic growth exist fell into two sub-themes. One group answers stated a simple yes; the other responses supported the connection but also reminded that there were other behaviors involved and that classroom discipline alone could not account for student success. The responses that were identified as "yes" include the following:

"Yes, more time on task more, teaching occurs. [The students] Learn more in an organized and structured environment."

"Yes, more quality instruction occurs less distractions to students."

"Very much. When a teacher has both high expectations for students and good classroom mgt, students thrive."

"Yes, if you can't control the behavior, you won't have time to teach."

"Yes. To a certain extent. If kids are pulled out of class all the time for discipline issues, they are missing lessons they need to achieve."

"Yes, for the most part. I know that is what I am supposed to say in response to this question. But how is everything else going? It is possible to have a teacher who is good at discipline and nothing else. They don't teach well and they kids don't make a lot of progress. We had a teacher one time who never had discipline problems, but academically the kids came out of his class . . .at the same level or lower than when they went it. He had been a poor teacher all year. What was he doing ALL year!?"

"Yes. The teachers that have great classroom management most of the time report good grades for the same students that will go to another class and have a failing grade and the classroom management is not as good."

"Yes. In my experience, it seems that teachers' classrooms that have 'tight discipline' are

allowed more time for instructional time to take place, therefore increasing the odds for

students' success. Of course there are exceptions to this situation."

"Yes, the two go hand in hand. It is not always discipline allowing for high student achievement.

Some teachers' instruction/engagement makes for easier time with discipline."

No/Maybe

The answers that were categorized as "no/maybe" include the following:

"I can't say that I can definitively say "yes" or "no" to this question."

"No."

"No, the two are not always related."

"Not necessarily."

"Need to think about that."

"NOT A LINEAR CONNECTION"

While there were very few responses in this category (8 out of 358), it is still notable that

any of the respondents answered this way. There is a very strong basis in the existing research of

a connection between classroom discipline and student achievement. The fact that any of the

assistant principals would doubt this is significant and will be discussed further in the final

chapter.

Research Question Seven

Do assistant principals believe that schools should teach character education and virtues?

The survey item analyzed in this question asked the assistant principal three separate

questions; the questions are as follows: (1) Do you think schools should teach "virtues" or

"character?", (2) Why or why not?, and (3) Do you have any formal programs in your school that

focus on character education? The responses collected did not uniformly answer all three of

these questions. Of the 365 who responded to this question, all of them responded to the

question as to whether or not "virtue" and "character" should be taught in school and 70% of the

respondents answered the second part and explained the reasons for their answers. The final

question was so sporadically answered that the data was not deemed useful for this study. The

responses to this question were categorized into the following four categories: (1) yes with no

other explanation, (2) yes, because it is the job of schools anyway, (3) yes, because

parents/society does not do it, and (4) maybe/no. Table 4.19 displays the frequencies of each of

these responses.

Table 4.19

Should Schools Teach Character and Virtue

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	111	31.2
Yes, Because it is Our Job	120	33.7
Yes, Because Parents/Society Doesn't	82	23
Maybe/No	43	12.1

Yes, Because it is Our Job

The responses in the "yes, because it is our job" category include the following:

"Yes, because it is a part of the model of an effective school."

"Yes. Schools are tools of state socialization. Schools do more than teach academics. Schools develop the whole child."

"Yes – because humans must care about each other in order to thrive off of each other. We can thrive intellectually if we work well together."

"Yes, it helps create a positive environment in the classrooms and in the school."

"Yes because it is a formation on entire child."

"Yes – it was the first reason for school."

The theme that made these responses stand out from the other positive responses is the idea that schools are responsible for teaching more than just the standard curriculum. The responses here ranged from the idea that schools should teach character and virtue because they have a responsibility to do so to the notion that schools should teach these because it helps them in achieving their mission.

Yes, Because Parents/Society Do Not

The responses in this category included the following:

"Yes, character. Because parents neglect to do it."

"Yes, that is something we must do in this day and age."

"Yes because unfortunately in today's society many of our students are not being taught certain things at home and it is important that students have a sense of who they are and what they should value in life."

" Yes- with the family unit breaking down, it can only help."

Yes, because the kids are not getting it at home.

"Yes, so much of a society has changed. Many students do not understand character."

"Yes, in this day and age, it's sad to say, kids are not getting the home training they need from their parents. We should pick up this slack at school. It's a shame but a reality."

These responses are unique in that they do support the teaching of character and virtue in schools; however, their reasons are negative and focus on the perceived degradation of society and the family unit. Some of them even seem to regret the fact that schools must teach these.

No/maybe

The responses that did not support the teaching of character and virtues included the following:

"Teaching virtues and character may cause conflict between what parents are teaching their children at home."

"No, home, and houses of faith are more legitimate place for this."

"No. Schools have enough to teach just with the curriculum. The community and parents need to step up on this part."

"No, because different cultures value different things and teaching morals could cause friction.

"No, I think that is a family decision. Schools are designed to focus on academic achievement."

"No, the parents should, but a lot of parents don't so the teacher have to."

"No opinion either way."

"Students do that on their own, parents help, friends and mates have a lot of influence, hopefully good influence. "

These responses presented a variety of reasons why schools should not teacher either character or virtue. These respondents, like some of those in the second category, mainly believed that the responsibility for teaching these traits lies outside of the school system and in the family or church.

The next section of this study deals with the conclusions and discussion of this data.

Chapter V: Conclusions

Introduction

The final chapter of this study will provide a summary of the various parts of the study and an understanding and interpretation of the results detailed in Chapter IV and their relationship to the existing literature. This section begins with an overview of the purpose and methodology of the study and is followed by a discussion of the results in order of their importance. The next sections will discuss the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. The last portion of this chapter will contain summary remarks over the work as a whole.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of assistant principals about the importance of student discipline to an effective school. As an extension of this, how the beliefs of practicing assistant principals about student discipline compare to the research base was also examined. The study also examined these beliefs to determine if statistical significance existed with the demographics of the campus and the assistant principal. This purpose is important because the majority of the studies that had been performed in relationship to leadership in education are focused on the campus principal. Most of the studies that did focus on the assistant principal deal primarily with job responsibilities and satisfaction (Scoggins, 1993). A secondary, yet important, expectation of this study is that it will expand and deepen the research into the assistant principalship.

The goal of expanding the knowledge base on assistant principals is important. Research has established that a strong connection exists between campus leadership and student achievement. In studying this connection, Kenneth Leithwood stated that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (Leithwood, et. al., p. 27). The leaders in a school often improve student learning indirectly through their shaping of the campus's culture and climate. By creating a culture of high expectations and establishing a clear mission, the school leader can have a strong influence on student success (Hallinger and Heck, 1998). The leader's influence on the climate also has an effect on the reported self-efficacy of the classroom teachers, and numerous studies have shown a strong relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Fuskey, 1988). As shown previously in this study, leadership has an important and profound effect on an organization. Because the assistant principalship is often the gateway to the principalship, it becomes apparent why this study is important.

This study utilized archival data collected by two professors at a large research university. This survey, consisting of 115 items, was administered to 385 unique assistant principals around a large metropolitan area. The respondents to this survey included assistant principals of varied demographics and schools with all manner of characteristics. The information gathered, as a part of this survey is especially valuable because the instrument utilized was administered using cognitive interview protocols. The value of cognitive interviews is that it added the depth and insights of qualitative case studies to the characteristics of quantitative surveys (Willis, 2005).

The data analysis for this study focused on seven survey items. Six of these items consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to answer in length each

questions. The responses to these questions were analyzed by the researcher and categorized into research-based categories. The primary researcher in this study realized that his own anecdotal biases could influence the way data was codified, so a system of inter-coder reliability was put in to place. The two other coders were utilized to double check the consistency of the implementation of the rating system (Bourdon, 2001).

Discussion of Results

This study presented seven research questions intended to study the beliefs of assistant principals about the connection between student discipline and effective schools. Each of the first six research questions was aligned with an item from the survey instrument. The survey items each asked the assistant principals to comment on an item concerning student discipline and the relationship with an effective school. The intent of these questions was to gather data to form a better understanding of the beliefs of practicing assistant principals, and the first six research questions were examined for frequencies of responses. The pattern of responses by the demographic factors of the respondent and the campus were examined for any noteworthy patterns. The purpose of this examination was to determine if the results found were indicative of the beliefs of all of the assistant principals, or if there was a relationship between outside factors. The following are the research questions examined in this study.

Research Questions

    1.) To what degree do assistant principals believe that student discipline is an important aspect of a good school?

    2.) How do assistant principals explain the degree to which student discipline is important to a good school?

3.) Do assistant principals report knowing teachers who rarely have student discipline issues?

4.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in good student discipline?

5.) What do assistant principals report that teachers do that results in poor student discipline?

6.) Do assistant principals report a relationship between a teacher's classroom discipline and a student's academic growth?

7.) Do assistant principals believe that schools should teach character and/or virtues?

Teacher Actions that Influence Student Behavior

Survey question three asked the assistant principals if they knew of any teachers who rarely had discipline problems. Of the 366 who responded to this item, 358 (97.8%) responded that they knew teachers who rarely had issues with student discipline. Of the eight remaining respondents, two of them stated that they did not have discipline issues at their campus, one responded that she knows who does have problems, and one who said that all teachers have to deal with student discipline, the only difference is the degree of the misbehavior. The last four did not explain their answers.

Survey questions four and five were mirror images of each other, with question 4 asking assistant principals to identify what teachers do that results in good discipline and question 5 asking what teachers do that results in poor student discipline. The responses identified share a common base in the literature, and for this reason these questions will be examined together. Both of these questions were open-ended and allowed for the respondents to give multiple

reasons for good and poor student behaviors. Because of this, the following totals will not equal 100%.

In response to survey question four, assistant principals identified the following categories: forming positive relationships (194, 52.9%), having set procedures and routines (167, 45.5%), having and communicating high expectations (80, 21.8%), high student engagement/good instruction (135, 36.8%), and parental involvement (28, 7.6%). 24 responses (7.6%) did not fit into the other categories. The majority of the assistant principals in this survey identified several categories that contributed to students' behavior for a total of 628 identified categories.

The responses to survey question five resulted in the following five categories being identified: 194 (54.5%) identified poor or negative relationships, 197 (55.3%) identified no or poor procedures and routines, 62 (17.4%) identified unclear, low, or changing expectations, 84 (23.6%) identified student boredom because of poor instruction, and 10 (2.8%) identified a lack of parental contact as a cause of poor student behaviors. There were 30 (8.4%) responses that did not fit into the identified categories. The assistant principals identified 577 total categories.

The results from these questions identified five categories of behavior that can have both a positive effect on student behavior in the classroom. These categories are as follows: (1) teacher-student relationships, (2) procedures, routine, and structure, (3) teacher expectations of students, (4) student engagement/instruction, and (5) parental contact/involvement. Table 5.1 shows the comparison of positive and negative identification of these categories.

Table 5.1

Positive and Negative Identification of Categories That Influence Behavior

	Effect on Student Behavior			
	Positive		Negative	
Identified Categories	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Teacher- Student Relationships	194	52.9	194	54.5
Procedures, Routines, and Structure	167	45.5	197	55.3
Teacher Expectations of Students	80	21.8	62	17.4
Student Engagement/Instruction	135	36.8	84	23.6
Parental Contact/Involvement	28	7.6	10	2.8
Other	24	7.6	30	8.4

A comparison of the frequencies of responses shows that assistant principals identified teacher-student relationships equally as a category of behaviors that could have a positive and negative impact on student behavior. While the procedures, routines, and structure was the second most identified category of behaviors that can have a positive effect on student discipline, it was the most identified category on the negative end of the spectrum. Student engagement was identified more often as a positive influence than a negative, as was teacher's expectations of students. Chart 5.1 shows the difference in this identification rate graphically.

Chart 5.1

Positive and Negative Identification of Categories that Influence Student Behavior
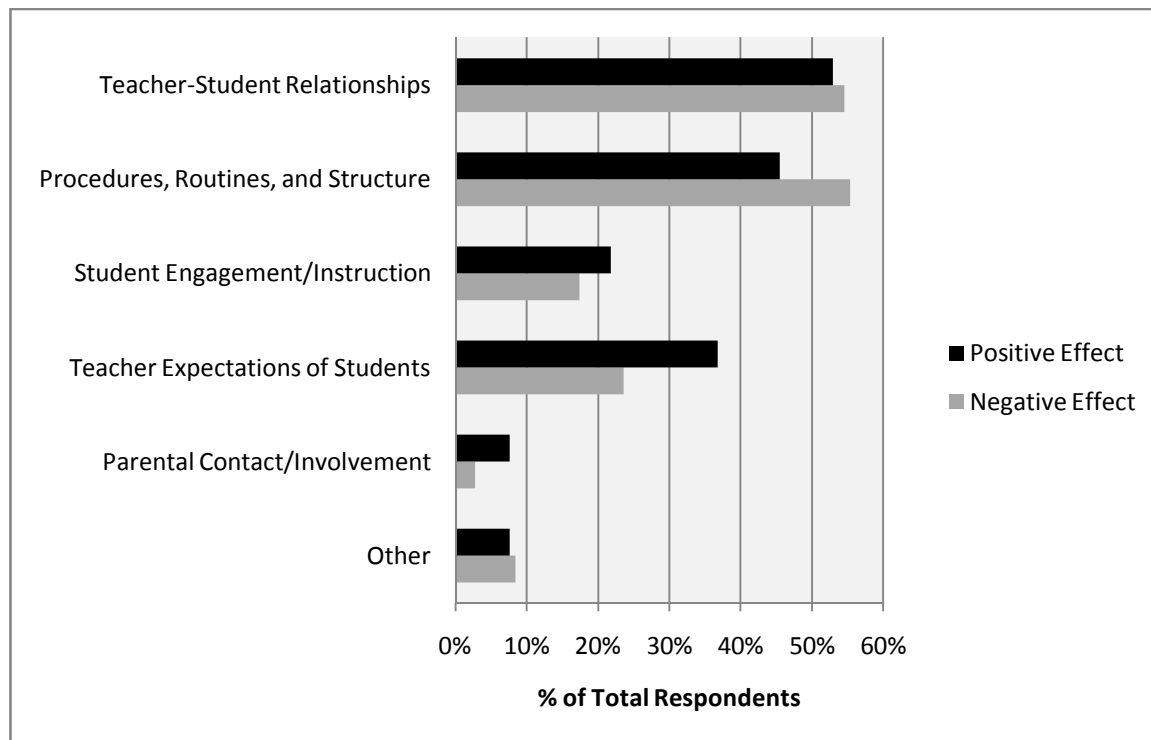
Looking at the data presented in Chart 5.1, it can be seen that the two categories that assistant principals identified as having the greatest influence on student behavior are teacher-student relationships and procedures, routines, and structure. This chart shows a continuum of teacher-controlled categories that can affect student behavior both positively and negatively. It also shows the weight of each category according to the perceptions of assistant principals. According to these perceptions, a lack of procedures, routines, and structures on the part of the classroom teacher has a much higher impact on student behavior than student boredom or poor instructions. This thought aligns with both theory and the responses of the assistant principals; certain categories must be in place before the others are able to have an effect on student

behaviors. According to the surveyed assistant principals, if procedures, routines and classroom structure are not in place, the quality of instruction and teacher expectations do not matter. Once these base items are in place; however, the other categories are able to have an effect. This is shown by the categories student engagement, parental involvement, and teacher expectations that have a much higher positive impact than negative impact.

Teacher-student relationships. The number of responses that identified teacher-student relationships as a positive factor was the same as the ones who identified it as a negative category. This was also the most identified category when the positive and negative areas are combined. When this category was examined by the demographics of the respondents a noteworthy difference in the response rate between the ethnicities. White assistant principals identified poor relationship building as a cause of student misbehavior at a much higher rate than their peers of other ethnicities did.

It was also found that assistant principals under the age of 37 identified this category as something that increases the occurrence of student misbehavior. Younger assistant principals are much more likely to identify teacher-student relationships as having an influence on student discipline (positive or negative) than their older counterparts. This is likely influenced by the earlier mentioned trend of upwardly mobile assistant principals to be promoted out of the position early, making the younger and older groups of assistant principals very different. It is also possible that this connection could be due to the different trends of classroom management over the last few decades. Many of the beliefs educators hold about education find their roots in their own education. Older assistant principals are more likely to have been educated in as well as worked in a time when the disciplinary trend was focused more on a reactive style of student

discipline rather than a more psychologically based approach like the one that grew to more prominence in the 1970s (Jones, 1996).

Procedures, routines, and structure. Assistant principals identified a lack of procedures as a factor of poor student discipline more often than they mentioned good procedures as a factor for good student discipline. A well-structured classroom will only get a teacher so far in working with their students; if other factors are not present, the students will still be unsuccessful. However, as many respondents said, it does not matter how strong a teachers instruction is if the students are not listening. A noteworthy difference in response rates was found between poor procedures and routines and the years of experience in education of the respondent. Assistant principals with 11 to 15 years of experience were much more likely to identify poor procedures and routines as a cause of student misbehavior than assistant principals with 15 to 20 years of experience. This could be related to the before mentioned loss of the upwards mobile assistant principals into the principalship in the first 15 years of their careers.

Teacher expectations of students. Assistant principals identified teacher expectations of student more often as an action of good teachers at reducing student discipline than as a negative action increasing disciplinary issues. The pattern of responses between high expectations being a positive factor and the age of the respondent was noteworthy. Assistant principals between the ages of 38 and 45 were much more likely to identify high expectations as important as assistant principals over the age of 56.

Student engagement/instruction. Assistant principals in this survey identified student engagement as a positive factor much more often than as a negative factor. As one of the respondents quoted in chapter IV said, "You can have great lessons, but without good discipline, you will not have education." Once the organizational piece is in place it is easier for the

assistant principals to focus on the instructional issues. Assistant principals at schools with a high performance rating were more likely to cite high student engagement as a positive factor while assistant principal at low performing schools were more likely to identify low student engagement as a negative factor. It is logical to assume that assistant principals working on campuses that are not performing well are more likely to witness poor instruction and low student engagement than assistant principals working at higher performing schools are.

Parental involvement/contact. While parent involvement was more often identified as a positive factor than a negative one, the true significance of this factor lies in how rarely it appears. If not for the strong research base supporting the influence of parental involvement on student education, it would not have been included as a factor in this study. There was one area that was noteworthy. In examining the relationship between ethnicity and parental involvement as a positive action, it was found that African American assistant principals identified this action much more often than assistant principals of other ethnicities did. However, it is not possible to discern from these analyses whether African American assistant principals have a higher faith in the ability of parents to influence student behavior than their peers. It is also likely that the low number of responses on the part of assistant principals of other ethnicities as well as all of the respondents in general could be attributed to a belief of assistant principals that calling parents is an expected part of every teacher's job and does not need mentioning or their belief that teachers do not communicate much with parents positively or negatively and so it didn't warrant inclusion as a factor. Further study into the beliefs of assistant principals about parental involvement would be beneficial to help in deciphering these results (Hughes & Kwok, 2007).

Other. It was not expected that an analysis of the responses in this category would provide much in the way of useful data; however, there were some surprising results.

Noteworthy response patterns were found in four demographic areas. Assistant principals at high performing schools were much less likely to have a response placed in the unsure/other category than assistant principals at low performing schools. It would be easy to assume that that this occurs because the assistant principals at high performing schools see more successful students and teacher; therefore, they are able to identify these actions more easily. It is also possible that the relationship works the other direction, and that these schools are more successful because of the knowledge of their assistant principals. There was also an interesting pattern between three related demographic areas: age of the respondent, years of experience as an assistant principal, and years of experience in education. All three of these support that assistant principals with more experience as assistant principals were more likely to have their response placed in the unsure/other category than their peers with less experience were. It seems likely that this could be attributed to the idea that many of the best assistant principals are promoted out of the position earlier in their careers and that the assistant principals with the most experience are likely to be plateued in their positions (Kelly, 1985).

Importance to Student Discipline to Effective Schools

The first survey question asked assistant principals to identify the degree to which student discipline is an important aspect of a good school, and the second asked them to explain this rating. Of the 367 unique assistant principals who answered this question, 113 (31%) stated that student discipline was essential to an effective school and 254 (69%) identified it as very important to a school being effective. No respondents rated student discipline as being of low or no importance. It is notable, but not surprising, that no assistant principals identified student discipline as being of slight or no importance to effective schools. This can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that discipline is one of the major responsibilities of assistant principals, and it

is unlikely that they would   An interesting difference between the two sets of responses is that some of the assistant principals in the first category believe that student discipline is the foundation for other factors while some assistant principals in the second category state that student discipline affects and is affected by other factors. When the responses to this question were examined by the previously identified demographics, no interesting patterns were discovered.

The emergent reasons cited by assistant principals as to why student discipline is important to an effective school are that student discipline: is required for learning to occur (224, 61%), is required for safe and secure schools (29, 7.9%), directly effects teacher morale and efficacy (14, 3.8%), is a result of teacher action/effectiveness (31, 8.4%), and impacts the climate of the school (119, 32.4%). The responses that did not fit into these themes were categorized under other (26, 7.1%). It is important to note that these percentages do not equal 100% due to the open-ended nature of the survey item that allowed for some responses to fall into multiple categories.

An interesting pattern of responses was found between the assistant principals' identification of discipline as being important to an effective school because it is required for learning to occur and the accountability rating of the respondent's campus from the Texas Education Agency. Assistant principals at schools who received a "Recognized" rating were far less likely to identify student discipline as being required for learning to occur while assistant principals at schools rated "Academically Unacceptable" were far more likely to identify student discipline as being required for learning to occur.

This pattern of responses likely occurred because assistant principals who work at higher performing schools are more likely to see high academic achievement occurring in the

classrooms on their campuses despite any student disciplinary issues they might have. It has been established in the existing research that lower performing students are more likely to display undesirable behaviors than higher performing students (Dwyer, et. al., 1998; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007; Myers, et. al., 1987). This means these assistant principals are also likely to see fewer disciplinary issues. This explains why their perceptions, which are based on their anecdotal experiences, about the importance of student discipline show that they do not see discipline as a hindrance to education occurring as often as their peers at lower performing schools do. The assistant principals at these lower performing schools are more likely to have higher numbers of student misbehaviors coupled with poor academic performance. This is most likely the reason that these respondents see a causal relationship and can explain why the assistant principals at low performing schools are more likely to notice and mention this category.

Another identified category that showed an interesting pattern of responses was identifying that student discipline is important because of its impact on the climate and perceptions of the campus and the years of assistant principal experience of the respondent. Assistant principals in their first five years were much more likely to cite this effect as important than their peers with more experience were. There is not a simple and direct explanation for this connection in the existing literature. However, researchers have identified the assistant principal role as a gateway to the principalship (Kelly, 1987). Many who enter the assistant principalship do so in the hope of advancing their careers and moving into the position of principal or another administrative position (Marshall, et. al., 1990). New assistant principals who are looking to advance their careers are likely to have a higher concern for the perception of their campus than assistant principals who are plateaued in their current positions either by choice or by inability to

gain a position. Since many of these upwardly mobile assistant principals will seek a higher

position within their first five years, this could explain the difference in the response rates.

Relationship Between Students' Discipline and Academic Achievement

Survey question 6 asked the assistant principals if they saw a relationship between a

teachers' classroom discipline and student academic achievement. Of the 358 assistant

principals who responded to this question, 350 stated that there was a link between the two. Of

the 8 who responded negatively, only 3 stated firmly that no relationship exited, the other 5 gave

answers that supported the possibility that a connection could exist but they were unsure. The

most surprising part of the responses to this question was that anyone would doubt the

connection between the two.

Survey question 7 asked the assistant principals whether or not schools should teach

character or virtue. 356 assistant principals responded to this question, with 111 (31.2%)

answering simply yes, 120 (33.7%) saying that schools should teach these because it is a part of

the job of educators, 82 (21%) said that schools should teach these because parents and society

do not, and 43 (12.1%) responded that schools should not teach character and virtue or they were

unsure about the issue.

<div align="center">

Future Research

</div>

There are several areas of future research that would be useful in furthering the research

begun in this study. First, it is important to recognize that the findings in this study are limited

by the sample. While the number of participants was both large and diverse, a more

comprehensive study would include a geographic area larger than the single metropolitan area

that this study drew from. Completing a similar study in a different area would also aide in

determining the generalizability of the study.

A study that identified and compared the beliefs and perceptions of teachers, assistant principals, and principals regarding the importance of student discipline to an effective school could also add a new dimension to the results from this study. Since both ethnicity and the age/years of experience of the assistant principal were identified as having an interesting pattern of responses, a study with a larger sample focused solely on student discipline and examining these demographic factors might be able to extend the findings in this area.

Conclusions

Student discipline is important to schools. The reasons why it is important; however, depend on the person interviewed. Parents believe student discipline is important so that their children will be safe; teachers believe it is important so that they can do their jobs. This study was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of assistant principals about the importance of student discipline to an effective school. This exploration included determining how important they believed it to be, why it was important, and how it can be affected by the classroom teachers. An interesting result of this study was the identification of six teacher-controlled categories that assistant principals believe both positively and negatively affect student behavior in the classroom. These criteria are well rooted in the existing research on student discipline and show that the majority of assistant principals have a firm foundation in the educational psychology and practice of student discipline. These factors have extra significance because the assistant principals are most often a campus's discipline manager, but by examining the categories identified, it is clear that a broad base of the power in managing student behavior lies in the hands of the classroom teacher. These categories can be used to assist classroom teachers who are struggling with discipline management to understand the areas in which they might need help. In addition, it is important for administrative preparation programs to ensure

that their students have an understanding of the importance of these categories so that when they become assistant principals they will be better equipped to manage a campus-wide discipline program and assist struggling teachers.

Another notable finding in this study is that the perceptions and beliefs of assistant principals may be similar, but they are not universal. Differences were found in the responses of the assistant principals when examined by their ethnicity, gender, years of experience, and the performance level of their campus. Assistant principals at higher performing schools have a very different understanding of student discipline than assistant principals at low performing schools. This is a salient point to consider since the assistant principal job is often the gateway to the principalship, and most assistant principals do not have the luxury of being promoted at the same campus. Given these results it is very possible that an assistant principal at a high performing campus who finds his or herself promoted to the principal of a low performing campus might find that they lack the knowledge and experience base to adequately meet the disciplinary needs of their new students. It is important for school districts to recognize this when considering assistant principals for promotion, and it is also important for administrator preparation programs to ensure that they are training future assistant principals to work with students of all types rather than relying on the campus at which they work to provide the experience. There also seems to be a significant difference in the responses based on the years of experience of the assistant principal. It is not clear from the results of this study whether this difference is due to the winnowing of the sample pool due to the promotion of the more knowledgeable candidates, career burnout, or an entirely different reason; however, the concern remains that the difference is there.

The following is the most important conclusion of this study: the assistant principal occupies a unique and challenging position in the school. They balance managerial issues and student relation issues daily, and this gives them a unique understanding of the successes and shortcomings of the school. It is important to learn more about the assistant principalship and the people who hold the position in order to strengthen their training programs, increase their efficacy, and, in turn, increase the efficacy of the schools themselves.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

COLLABORATION
FOR LEARNING & LEADING

Create School as Community

Through Reflective Practice

Graduate Student's Name [   ]

Section A:

Demographic Information

The Principal's name [   ]

Age in Years: ☐ 30 and Under ☐ 31~37 ☐ 38~45 ☐ 46~55 ☐ 56~62 ☐ Over 63

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female   Years as a Principal [   ]   Years in Education [   ]

Degrees Held: ☐ Bachelors   ☐ Masters   ☐ Doctorate

Management Certification   Year [   ]

Institution [   ]

Ethnicity: ☐ White/Non~Hispanic   ☐ Black/Non~Hispanic   ☐ Hispanic   ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native   ☐ Non~Resident/International

Major teaching field [   ]

Extra~curricular activities directed while a teacher

[   ]

The School's name [   ]

Location: ☐ Rural ☐ Suburban ☐ Urban [   ] The Grades in the school

Number of: Teachers [   ] Students [   ]

Percentage of students: [   ] White/Non-Hispanic [   ] Black/Non-Hispanic [   ] Hispanic

[   ] Asian/Pacific Islander [   ] American Indian/Alaskan Native

[   ] Non-Resident/International

Other certificated personnel [   ] Non-certificated personnel [   ]

TAKS Rating: ☐ Exemplary ☐ Recognized ☐ Acceptable ☐ Low performing

Percentage of students receiving free and reduced Lunch [   ]

Name of School District [   ]

Section B:

In this section we are trying to establish how principals conceptualize their notions of what makes a school a "good" school as opposed to a "fair or poor" school.

Much of the current educational leadership literature focuses on effective schools and more currently how we develop our schools as community. The new nomenclature currently used is "good school." How would you describe a good school?

[   ]

For our purposes school culture is described as "What the school values." How would you describe the culture of a good school?

[   ]

Section C

We are trying to understand the importance of the relationship between the principal and the teachers.

Explain how the relationship between the principal and the teacher important for the school.

```
[                              ]
```

Describe what you think are the most critical feature for a successful working relationship between teacher and principal.

```
[                              ]
```

What do you do to create good relations with your teachers?

```
[                              ]
```

Do you look out for the personal welfare of your teachers? If so, how do you do it?

```
[                              ]
```

Section D

In this section we are trying to establish the attitudes beliefs and values that principals have with regard to teacher supervision.

What is the purpose of teacher supervision?

```
[                              ]
```

Do our assessment practices (TTAS, PDAS) really work? Do you believe that the process achieves the intended outcome? What do you believe are the outcomes?

When supervising teachers do you report on what you observe or do you consider other factors when writing your reports? Explain

Do you think that the principal is the best person in the school to do supervision? For example is there any value for a principal with no education or experience supervising a French language class.

When supervising teachers do you report on what you observe or do you consider other factors when writing your reports? Explain

Section E

We are trying to establish the understandings that principals have about leadership

Describe he difference between a "linear" leader contrasted to a critical thinker and systematic problem solver?

What do you believe are the most important characteristics of a good leader?

How would you describe yourself as a leader?

```
[                                              ▲ ]
[                                                ]
[                                                ]
[                                              ▼ ]
[ ◄ ▯                                          ► ]
```

To what extent do you allow teachers to take risks to make the school better?

```
[                                              ▲ ]
[                                                ]
[                                                ]
[                                              ▼ ]
[ ◄ ▯                                          ► ]
```

To what extent do you believe that teachers should be involved in leadership roles in your school?

```
[                                              ▲ ]
[                                                ]
[                                                ]
[                                              ▼ ]
[ ◄ ▯                                          ► ]
```

Section F

We are trying to establish the understanding and value principals attach to the role of parental involvement in their student's education.

What do you believe is an appropriate and necessary level of parental involvement in the student's education? Explain.

```
[                                              ▲ ]
[                                                ]
[                                                ]
[                                              ▼ ]
[ ◄ ▯                                          ► ]
```

What do you do to encourage and support parental involvement in their student's education?

```
[                                              ▲ ]
[                                                ]
[                                                ]
[                                              ▼ ]
[ ◄ ▯                                          ► ]
```

When a parent asks you to change their student's teacher how do you react?
Check one category below

☐	I do so willingly
☐	I do so hesitatingly
☐	I do so begrudgingly
☐	I try my best to discourage it
☐	I resist their efforts to have a change

Explain your answer here:

Section G

In this section we are trying to establish the obstacles frustrations and changes principals are most concerned with

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least, rate the degree to which each of the following presents a feeling of frustration or being discouraged in being able to carry out your duties.

	1	2	3	4	5
Federal Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School District Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of other resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parent involvement in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor Preparation of Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Teacher Commitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor instruction of teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parental involvement at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Student Motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor basic skills of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least rate the degree to which each of the following presents a genuine obstacle or restriction that cause you the most concern as you try to carry out your duties as principal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Federal Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School District Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of other resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parent involvement in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor Preparation of Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Teacher Commitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor instruction of teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parental involvement at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Student Motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor basic skills of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least rate the following for the things that you would change to make you more enabled in your role as principal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Federal Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
State Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
School District Bureaucracy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of other resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parent involvement in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor Preparation of Teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Teacher Commitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor instruction of teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of parental involvement at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Student Motivation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poor basic skills of students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section H

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important knowledge you should have to be a successful principal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Law	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fiscal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important skills you should have to be a successful principal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important attributes you should have to be a successful principal.

	1	2	3	4	5
Positive disposition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visionary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethical Values	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Communicator	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organizer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section I

We are trying to understand the importance of student behavior in the operation of the school

To what degree is student discipline an important aspect of a good school?

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Explain

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Do you know of teachers who rarely have student discipline problems?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, what is it that those teachers do that results in good student discipline.

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Describe what it is that teachers' do that have poor student discipline.

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Do you see a relationship between a teachers' classroom discipline and students' academic achievement?

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Do you think that schools should teach "virtues" or "character?"   Why or why not?
Do you have any formal programs in your school that focus on character education?

Section J

There is probably a lot of advice you could give to someone preparing to become a school principal but if there was one single piece of advice you could give what would advise.

Section K

How has the influence of high-stakes testing influenced your role as a principal?
How is it influenced teachers, parents, and students?

Section L

To what extent is the achievement gap a problem in your school? What efforts have you made to reduce achievement differences in school?

Section M

To what extent has technology make a difference in your school? How has it influenced teachers, counselors, and students? How has it influenced your role as principal?

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[                                          ]
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Section N

Can you think of an example of research-generated knowledge which you found useful in some aspect of your job as principal?   If so please tell me about that knowledge.

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[                                          ]
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All educators need access to new expert knowledge. What sources of information do you find most useful when looking for new professional ideas? On a scale of 1 to 10 (highest), how would you rate each of these types of information sources for the technical knowledge they provide:

a.   Professional meetings of state or national education associations

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

b.   Workshops

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

c.   Professional Journals concerned with education

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

d.   Professional Books concerned with education

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

e.   Professional Bulletins from regional or national information sources

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

f.   Professional Bulletins from district or state authorities

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

g.   Newsletters from professional organizations

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

h.   University or college courses that you attended for certification or a advanced degree

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

i.   Internet

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

j.   Other sources (please explain)

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│                                          │▲│
│                                          │▼│
│◄█                                       │►│
└──────────────────────────────────────────┴─┘
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☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

On a scale of 1 to 10 (highest), how would you rate the quality of the educational research that you've read over the last year?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

What would it take for you to rate it a 10?

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│                                          │▼│
│◄█                                       │►│
└──────────────────────────────────────────┴─┘
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