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Barriers and Supports to Implementation of Principal Leadership for School Change

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2011

Abstract

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MS, National University, 2003

BS, SUNY Albany, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Practices for supporting school change have not been implemented consistently in K-12 schools in the United States. Researchers have not studied the needs of K-12 principals who fail to implement these practices, and barriers or supports to implementation have not been identified. The purpose of this sequential explanatory mixed methodology study was to understand K-12 principals' perceptions of the supports and barriers related to their abilities to implement the practices of *challenging the process*, *inspiring a shared vision*, *enabling others to act*, *modeling the way*, and *encouraging the heart*. Seven public school principals and 29 teachers in their schools completed Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory and indicated that the principals implemented all of the practices to some degree. Reflective journals and individual interviews helped discern the principals' perceptions of the supports and barriers to implementation of the practices. Analysis using a combination of a priori and open coding showed that internal variables, such as relationships, and external variables, such as central office support, influenced the implementation of leadership practices. The ability to foster relationships was a top support to *inspiring a shared vision* while a lack of central office support was a barrier. Relationships and culture were the top two supports for *challenging the process*, and lack of central office support was a top barrier. Implications for positive social change include improving preparation programs for school leaders, enhancing professional development programs for working principals, and informing school reform. School culture, educational beliefs, and practices can be changed if supported by solid leadership, and ways to increase the capacity of principals were identified in this study.

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Dedication

I dedicate this proposal first to my grandmother who taught me the value of hard work and the essential nature of education. You inspired me to believe, you encouraged me to dream, and you inspired me to never give up on my ability to impact change.

Second, to my husband - whose love, support, and respect inspire me every day to be better, do better, and make the world a better place.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Despite a history of reform efforts in the United States, there is evidence that public K-12 schools are not meeting the needs of some students and that achievement gaps among ethnic populations and between more advantaged and less advantaged subpopulations are still prevalent (Kozol, 1991; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010; Wagner, 2008). Researchers have demonstrated that if schools are to improve, they need strong and effective leaders (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010; Smith, 2008). Continued failure of public schools indicates that in order to address reform efforts, leadership practices in K-12 schools must be further examined (Sarason, 1990; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). In this study, I explored the extent to which sitting K-12 principals implement key research-based leadership practices. I also investigated barriers and supports to implementation.

Researchers who have studied prevalent leadership practices in successful schools revealed associations between the implementation of leadership practices and academic achievement (Diamond, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey, Pitcher, & Decman, 2006; & Marzano et al., 2005). Researchers have coalesced into a consensus around a set of common school leadership practices that are associated with positive student and school outcomes (Marzano et al., 2005; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008; Ylimaki, Jacobson, & Drysdale, 2007). Despite this consensus among educational researchers, effective school leadership practices are not implemented universally by Kindergarten through

Grade 12 (K-12) principals in schools across the United States (Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2003; Fullan 2005; Marzano et al., 2005; Sarason, 1990; Seashore et al., 2010; Smith, 2008). The reasons for this lack of universal implementation have not been fully explored.

Leadership is second only to teaching in terms of its impact on student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Due to the relationship between leadership and academic achievement, school leadership should play a key role in the national educational reform agenda. Research studies exist that have been focused on improving school leadership through addressing leadership preparation (Davis et al., 2005). However, a focus on leadership preparation programs affects only new principals. According to a 2007-2008 report from the National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES], 2009), there are approximately 90,470 sitting K-12 principals in the field. Although the improvement of leadership preparatory programs is important, neglecting to address the needs of these sitting principals may hinder efforts to improve schooling in the United States. A first step in meeting these principals' needs is to assess the reasons that principals implement or do not implement key research-based leadership practices.

<div align="center">**Background**</div>

A Need for Reform

Researchers have indicated that factors such as high dropout rates, weak academic achievement, and a lack of innovative skill development continue to be a problem within the educational system in the United States. Many theorists, politicians, and education critics have commented that the changing world has rendered the educational systems

prevalent in the United States *obsolete* (Wagner, 2008). The factors above contribute to the need for educational reform in the United States; however, a historical perspective demonstrates that educational reform in schools is difficult. The complicated organizational nature of schools, including structure, dynamics, values, and power relationships, contribute to the need for reform (Sarason, 1990; Smith, 2008).

Change

In looking at public education at a national level, it is imperative to understand that it is a system. As the system becomes more closely and publicly scrutinized and national reform efforts become more and more centralized, leadership plays an ever-increasing role in the success of U.S. schools (Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008). Schools need reform that is not only effective for the success of all students, but also reform that is sustainable. The role of the principal in developing, facilitating, and sustaining collaborative relationships is imperative to foster school-level reform (Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008). This local level reform is essential to the success of sustainable national educational reform.

Leadership for Reform

Principals are part of a complex structure of roles and functions within the school system (Sarason, 1996). Within this system, effective leadership is essential for implementing educational change. Changing school culture, however, has proven to be a difficult task (Fullan, 2005; Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008; Stronge et al., 2008). Cultures comprise the values and beliefs of a system, and are often embedded in the day-to-day

actions and interactions within the system. Such cultures focus on learning at levels of the hierarchy, monitor targets, and measure achievement on a regular basis (Wong, 2008).

It is the principal's responsibility to set parameters that foster the development of successful school cultures in order for successful reform to take hold (Fullan, 2005; Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008; Stronge et al., 2008; Wong, 2008). Principals do this by working collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop a vision centered on student learning; supporting this vision with resources, time, and acknowledgement; modeling the way through behavior and actions; promoting learning at every level; supporting professional learning communities and professional development; and focusing on results (Fullan, 2001, 2005).

Research Problem

Successful leadership practices are lacking in many schools in the United States (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood, 2008; & Marzano et al., 2005). School culture, educational beliefs, and key practices can be changed if supported by a solid leadership foundation. The leadership practices that support these changes have been identified by researchers. Many school leaders, however, are not implementing these leadership practices in the school setting.

The Principal and Student Achievement

There is a connection between the quality of the principal and student achievement (Marzano et al. 2005; Stronge et al., 2008). The main responsibility of the principal, or any school leader, is to create opportunities for and to sustain learning (Blankstein, 2010; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, 2008). Successful school principals

create a shared vision for student success and model effective behaviors, strategies, and ongoing learning. They use data consistently to monitor progress toward achieving shared goals for student learning (Stronge et al., 2008). The need for the principal to lead instructional efforts within the school is a necessary role and is important in providing for the success of all students in the nation's educational system (Smith, 2008; Stronge et al., 2008).

Change in Culture

There is a demonstrated need for change in education, and leading for change requires transformation (Wagner et. al., 2006). Change leadership requires individuals to "promote and model a strong normative culture of respect, trust, and accountability for learning" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 111). A change in culture requires relentless personal attention by school leaders (Reeves, 2009). Principals must be willing to work directly with their staff members and support their claims by example. This type of involvement requires a significant commitment to impact and affect change. In fact, the most frequently implemented practice indicated by principals in successful schools is *Modeling the Way* (Siegrist, Weeks, Pate, & Monetti, 2009).

Leadership Practices

Researchers have consistently supported the key leadership practices developed by Kouzes and Posner (1995). Kouzes and Posner discussed five practices of exemplary organizational leaders: "challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart" (p.9). These practices have been upheld as being elemental through decades of research in the field of leadership and recent studies

on educational leadership have been built upon and align with their framework. Kouzes and Posner encouraged leaders to shed the myths, move past the traditions, and face the realities of the situations they are in to foster sustained success. These leadership practices align with those found to be highly implemented in successful schools. Researchers, however, have not further addressed the problem of universal implementation of these practices in all schools.

Problem Statement

Research-based leadership practices that are known to positively correlate with student achievement are not being consistently implemented in all schools in the United States. Consequently, many schools in the country are failing in relation to academic achievement. Although there is plentiful research on successful leadership practices (Davis et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Marzano et al., 2005; Stronge et al., 2008) researchers have not identified factors that may impede or support administrators' ability to implement these practices. Without knowledge of these factors, further research and efforts in the area of leadership implementation in schools will be less effective. A logical starting point for addressing this gap in the literature is to consider the supports and barriers to implementation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the supports and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented universally in all school settings. The practices examined include challenge

the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Although researchers have defined the necessary leadership practices for school success, schools in the United States continue to struggle. By determining the reasons that sitting K-12 principals implement or fail to implement effective leadership practices, this study provides a next step in changing leadership practices in schools, and identifying and overcoming roadblocks to implementation. The goal of this study was to lay the groundwork for future research on leadership for school change.

Nature of Study

In this sequential study, the quantitative survey instrument was implemented first and qualitative measures were used to expand on the results of the quantitative survey. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) tool was used to examine K-12 sitting principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices. Principals and their teachers completed the inventory in order to assess the degree to which they perceive each leadership practice is implemented in their school. Results of this tool were then analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to develop a baseline of data for the qualitative portion of the study. Reflective journals and interviews with principals were used in order to uncover participating principals' perceptions of the implementation level of each of these leadership practices and supports and barriers to their implementation.

A mixed method design was appropriate for this study. A quantitative design alone does not identify the causal factors related to the sitting principals' implementation of key research practices. As prior experiences are not likely to be the sole contributor to

the implementation of key research-based leadership practices, qualitative methodology must be employed to uncover the reason that practices are or are not implemented and the perceptions of successful implementation that sitting principals have.

Research Questions

The primary research questions for this study was: What supports and barriers do K-12 principals' identify in relationship to their implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*?

The quantitative portion of the study was used to address the following questions:

1. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *challenging the process?*

2. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *inspiring a shared vision?*

3. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *enabling others to act?*

4. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *modeling the way?*

5. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *encouraging the heart?*

The qualitative portion of the study was used to address the following questions:

1. What do sitting principals perceive as supports to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

2. What do sitting principals perceive as barriers to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

Theoretical Framework

A *consensus theory* of effective school leadership emerged from an analysis of the literature. A "common core of successful leadership practices" (Leithwood, 2008, p. 110) was identified through a critical review of research literature. These leadership practices have intellectual origins in behavioral leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, and concepts of effective instructional leadership. Each practice stems from key components of successful organizational leadership. These successful organizational leadership practices represent a consensus theory of leadership and are framed by Kouzes and Posner (1995): challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart. When applied to educational leadership, these practices exemplify an effective school leader.

Behavioral leadership theory provides many underpinnings for effective school leadership. Acknowledging that leaders exert influence through behavior, the behavioral leadership approach examines commonalities among the behaviors of effective leaders (Duygulu & Çıraklar, 2009, p. 390). Duygulu and Çıraklar (2009) postulated that effective leadership behaviors and styles are consistent and common across all contexts. Based on this belief, these behaviors can be learned and fostered with training. Thus it follows that all leaders, regardless of their leadership approach, have the potential to learn skills for effective leadership.

Transformational leadership theory provides a framework for leadership for change (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). A key facet of transformational leadership is to look beyond the needs of the individual to the needs of the whole (Demir, 2008). Here,

leadership is viewed as a process of shared commitments, opportunity, and shared goals (Demir, 2008). Key practices in transformational leadership include clear vision, confidence, symbolism, modeling, and empowerment (Yukl, 2002). These practices, when applied to educational leadership, foster school change, positive school culture, and student success (Leithwood, 2008).

As the demands on education deepen, instructional leadership is essential in fostering student success in the school setting (Strong et al., 2008). In order to effectively implement instructional leadership, a principal must maintain a primary focus on teaching and learning in the school. This effort requires shared visioning, understanding the change process, and modeling (Smith, 2008). Instructional leaders support teacher development and foster continuous improvement. They involve all stakeholders in goal setting and the use of data-driven decision-making (Wagner, 2002).

There are common practices that successful leaders exemplify (Bennis, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sashkin, 1996; Yukl, 2002, Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified five practices and 10 commitments representative of effective and successful leaders. The five practices identified in the data include challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Additional researchers' results have been aligned with Kouzes and Posner's practices and illuminated key competencies that lead to successful organizational leadership: building commitment to a core vision, enhancing leadership capacity at all organizational levels, empowering people, promoting communication, using reward systems, and exemplifying leadership by example (Yukl &

Lepsinger, 2004). These competencies or skills can be learned through a combination of both training and implementation practice.

Many researchers have found that there are common successful educational leadership practices (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey et al., 2006; McGuigan & Hoy, 2006; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Nor, Pihie, & Ali, 2008; Saban, & Wolfe, 2009; Stronge et al., 2008). In a study of 15 schools with demonstrated high leadership capacity, Lambert (2006) analyzed factors contributing to sustainable school improvement. Lambert suggested that there are multiple contributing factors to successful leadership capacity in schools. Each successful school had a focus on shared responsibilities; high expectations for learning; student leadership; shared conceptual framework; shared vision, beliefs and values; team structures and collaboration; and a problem-solving approach (Lambert, 2006). Lambert indicated that schools with a high leadership capacity have sustained internal and external support and provide opportunities for professional development and networking. Lastly, according to Lambert, principals in schools with a high leadership capacity share common characteristics:

- A clarity of self and values
- Strong beliefs about democracy
- Strategic thinking about the evolution of school improvement
- A deliberate and vulnerable persona
- Knowledge of the work of teaching and learning
- Ability for developing capacity in others and in the organization.

Prior experiences in implementation and practices facilitate the success of a leader (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). These experiences include past leadership/supervisory responsibilities, time spent teaching, and leadership preparatory experience. In order to foster successful and effective leaders, preparatory programs should include research-based content; curricular coherence; field-based internships; problem-based learning experiences; cohort grouping; practicing, high-quality mentors; and collaboration between university programs and partner school districts (Leithwood et al., 1996; Davis et al., 2005). Involvement in these prior experiences increases the likelihood of success as a school leader (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

Definitions of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study:

Challenging the process: A research-based leadership practice that involves accepting challenges and taking risks to change and improve in order to foster improvement. A key component of this practice is fostering innovation (Dalton, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Enabling others to act: A research-based leadership practice that includes the involvement of all stakeholders throughout the implementation process, promoting ownership, and instilling components of teamwork, power, and trust across the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Encouraging the heart: A research-based leadership practice that involves encouraging and supporting constituents through genuine heartfelt concern and care for people (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Inspiring a shared vision: A research-based leadership practice in which leaders demonstrate the possibilities of change through enthusiasm, providing a clear and compelling vision, and demonstrating that the outcome will promote the common good (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Instructional leadership: An educational leadership model in which school leaders articulate and implement an instructional vision for all students and teachers (Mackey et al., 2006). Data-driven decision-making, a focus on student learning, and shared decision-making are key contributors (Mackey et al., 2006).

Leadership: A process in which an individual guides, structures, and facilitates relationships within a system (Yukl, 2002).

Modeling the way: A research-based leadership practice that involves setting an example and building commitment regularly (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Transformational leadership: Inspirational practices that motivate, instill trust, increase interest, generate awareness, and expand a broad viewpoint beyond individualism to greater benefit the whole (Demir, 2008).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

One primary assumption of the study is that principals and teachers answered questions honestly on the survey, understood the questions, and have the appropriate knowledge base to accurately answer the survey questions. Another assumption is that the follow-up on the data collected using the survey instrument was accurately provided in the qualitative portion of the study. A limitation of the study is that generalizability is limited due to purposive sampling and the population of K-12 principals being restricted

to only three school districts in The Region. A delimitation of the study is that the population has been narrowed down from principals in the United States to sitting principals in a specific region of a northeastern state. This narrows the scope of the study to a particular region in this state, referred to subsequently as The Region.

Significance of Study

Knowledge Generation and Professional Application

This study provides new awareness about the degree to which sitting K-12 principals implement research-based leadership practices and the supports/barriers to implementation. Researchers have identified the practices that are prevalent in successful schools; however, there is a gap in the literature regarding the barriers and supports to implementation for sitting K-12 principals. This study provides baseline data on which to build for future studies on school reform, school leadership, and leadership in practice.

The findings of this study can be used to inform the professional practice and professional development of sitting K-12 principals. Through an identification of implementation gaps, barriers, and supports, I identified key areas for which sitting K-12 principals require further development and knowledge building. Through the identification of prior experiences that predict a higher degree of implementation, I made a contribution to the field in predictive knowledge about individuals possessing educational leadership capacity.

Social Change Implications

There are many implications for social change that stem from the results of this study. As accountability measures become more prominent in education, undergoing

school reform continues to be important. School leaders are fundamental to implementing and sustaining school change; however, they are not effectively implementing the practices that research has defined. There appears to be a common misconception in teaching: *if we teach it, they will learn*. Therefore, leadership preparation programs focus on academics, with few modeling opportunities for practice (Davis et al., 2005). Once tested, it is assumed that leaders understand key research-based practices and thus will implement these practices. That supposition is simply not consistent with actual practice, and this study is an effort to resolve this issue. The results of this study can be used to inform leadership preparatory programs, principal professional development programs, and reform options for school change.

Summary

Many schools in the United States are lacking effective leadership (Diamond, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey et al., 2006; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Wagner, 2008). Successful leadership is second only to teaching in impacting student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). If some school leaders continually fail to uniformly implement leadership practices evidenced in highly successful schools, reform efforts will not be successful. There is a *moral imperative* to meet the educational needs of all children in the United States. In order to successfully achieve this mandate, society must develop, retain, and support school leaders committed to this shared vision. These leaders must be transformative individuals who understand systems thinking, can foster and facilitate culture shifts, and can maintain a focus on student success regardless of barriers and technical responsibilities, and in spite of ever growing demands. Key

research-based leadership practices must be implemented at the local level by the

building principal to facilitate local school change and thus systems reform. In chapter 2 I

will provide a critical review of literature to support the theoretical framework and

underpinnings for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

A critical review of literature contributed to the framework of leadership practices outlined in this chapter. I conducted exhaustive literature searches using the following research databases: The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Education Research Complete, Education: a SAGE full-text database, ProQuest Central, Teacher Reference Center, SocINDEX with full text, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, and Management & Organization Studies: a SAGE full-text collection. A variety of search terms were used in order to identify historical components, theoretical contributors, and current research in the field of educational leadership. Search terms were used individually and in combination and included *assessment, change theory, coaching, college readiness, college and career readiness, education, head teacher, leadership, leadership practices, mentoring, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), principal, principal evaluation, principal preparation, public education, reform, school, school change, school climate, school culture, school leadership, school reform, student achievement,* and *student learning*.

Leadership in schools in the United States is pivotal to improving student achievement; however, school personnel across the United States are failing to adequately prepare all students academically for college and career readiness (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, 2008; Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Smith, 2008; Vance & Trani, 2008). Student achievement results are not universal; the achievement gap continues to plague school systems; and the United

States lags behind other countries in mathematics, English language arts, and science student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Murley, Keedy, & Welsh, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010; Wagner, 2008). Schools need reform, yet decades of school reform initiatives have not successfully met the growing demands of the nation's school system (Sarason, 1990; Smith, 2008; Wagner et. al., 2006).

Leadership is critical to school reform both at the local and national level (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Leithwood, 2008; Sarason, 1990; Smith, 2008). Scholars have examined leadership practices implemented by principals in successful schools, where students are achieving adequate success toward national standards. Practices exemplified by these principals are similar and align with key successful leadership practices utilized by organizations. There is, however, a gap in the literature on school leadership. Few researchers have examined the deficiencies in the universal implementation of these practices in all schools. Scholars have focused on leadership preparatory programs, yet researchers have neglected those K-12 principals already in the field. In order to impact school reform, further research in the field of school leadership is essential.

According to the Wallace Foundation's Learning from Leadership Project, school leadership is a critical component connecting most educational reform initiatives to student learning. In fact, there were two critical findings of the Learning from Leadership Project. The first finding was that only classroom instruction supersedes leadership in promoting student learning. The second is that the impact of the school leader is greater in higher-needs environments. These findings exemplify the need to provide effective

leadership in schools in order to impact large-scale reform (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

The search for current research established that there is a gap in the literature regarding universal implementation of leadership practices. I located studies relating leadership practices to student achievement and successful schools. In addition, I found current literature and studies regarding leadership preparatory programs. Lastly, I located literature providing a historical perspective on leadership and identifying educational instructional leadership practices. I found little literature and research regarding the implementation of leadership practices and barriers to implementation, however, after an exhaustive literature search.

Chapter Two is generally organized to foster understanding of the role of the principal in impacting change for student success. In order to better understand that role, the chapter includes the following sections: National System of Education, School Reform Efforts, Leadership, Leadership for School Change, and Implementing School Leadership. This structure provides a lens for examining the role of public education, the need for reform, and the role of the principal in effecting successful reform efforts for student learning. The research-based leadership practices serve as the basis for discussion of educational reform and the role of the principal.

National System of Public Education

Academic achievement, personal development, and social development are essential components of a public education system (Dewey, 1916; Fullan, 2005). Each of these components plays a role in public education; yet, current research literature has

been centered primarily on academic achievement. As such, there will be a focus on the role of the school leader in fostering the academic achievement of all students. In order for leaders to fulfill this role, they must understand the purpose of the national system of education in the United States and the role of public education itself.

The role of public education is to promote the common good of society and to provide a "cornerstone for a civil, prosperous, and democratic society" (Fullan, 2003, p. 3). Built upon a Jeffersonian view of a public educational system formulated nearly 2 centuries ago, many argue that the modern educational structures in the United States have not come far enough (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Murley, Keedy, & Welsh, 2008; Schmoker, 2006; Wagner, 2008). Though reform efforts, changing demographics, and a changing world have impacted the public education system in the United States, many historical practices are still in existence (Friedman, 2005; Ravitch, 2010; Sarason, 1982; Smith, 2008).

Three main ideas are attributed to Jefferson as the founding father of the United States who was most interested in the development of a free public education system (Brann, 1979). First, Jefferson believed that it was in the best interest of the state to educate its citizens in order to promote democracy through the enablement of both the rich and the poor. Secondly, this free system of public education, as envisioned by Jefferson, would allow for all students to excel through merit and the attainment of an understanding of curriculum from elementary school through university. Finally, Jefferson's ideal system of education would be locally controlled, with as little influence and coercion as possible from the federal level (Brann, 1979). Throughout the past 2

centuries, reform efforts have shaped the U.S. current system of education, national control has increased, and the public demographic has continued to shift. As the world has moved forward, education has continually struggled to keep pace (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ravitch, 2000; Smith, 2008; Wagner, 2008; Wong, 2008).

There is a continuous call for educational change in the United States (Fullan, 2005; Ravitch, 2000, 2010; Sarason, 1982; Wagner, 2008; Wong, 2008). According to Sarason (1982), "No major social institution has been more subject to change than the public school system" (p. 9). Centralized reform initiatives such as common core curriculum standards, competitive federal dollars earmarked for state education systems, and legislation to enforce compliance with both funded and unfunded mandates demonstrate a shift from local to federal control (Wong, 2008). Despite decades of reform initiatives at the national level, all students in the United States are not meeting high standards in terms of academic achievement (Rowan et al., 2010).

The United States consists of a largely diverse population. Education and equity for the underrepresented continues to be a concern (Garcia, 2005; Kozol, 1991). Public education must respond to the various needs of all students within that population, regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity (Dewey, 1916; Murley, Keedy, & Welsh, 2008). By the middle of the century, researchers expect that European American students will comprise the minority for every public school demographic category (Garcia, 2005).

A high quality educational system is essential for success as a democratic society (Dewey, 1916, Fullan, 2005). The system of schooling can overcome disparities caused by the social, environmental, and cultural factors affecting schools (Glasser, 1969).

Students' potential for success should not be judged based on demographic or economic factors. School success should be an option for all children (Glasser, 1969). In the modern educational system, U.S. educators must create means to combat failure (Glasser, 1969; Ravitch, 2010, Robinson & Timperley, 2007).

School Reform Efforts

Effective leadership in schools is necessary in order to impact large-scale reform (Leithwood et al., 2004). Researchers have demonstrated that local reform is essential to the attainment of national reform. School leaders play a key role in impacting local school reform (Colvin, 2009; Leithwood, 2008; Sarason, 1990). It would appear that a historical perspective on school reform is vital to understanding the principal's role in impacting reform for universally successful student achievement. To better understand the role of the principal it is important to understand the role and history of educational reform efforts.

There have been historical educational inequities in the United States dating back to the inception of public education in the early 1800s (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ravitch, 2000). The achievement gap within the United States between minority and disadvantaged students and their European American counterparts is still evident today (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Rowan et al., 2010). Financial disparities between urban and suburban schools are telling. For example, Highland Parks' per capita spending is approximately $17,291 versus Chicago public schools' at $8,482 (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The demographics of these schools are vastly different: Chicago public schools are 87% African American and Hispanic American or Hispanic, and Highland

Park is 90% European American. Funding inequities continue to align with both the racial and ethnic make-up of the schools and the achievement gaps prevalent within the national system (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Kozol, 2005; Rowan et al., 2010). In addition, there are statistically significant differences in student achievement within the United States from state to state, and among local districts and schools within states (Rowan et al., 2010).

Students in the United States are failing to achieve at the level of their peers in other countries (Eberts, Schwartz, & Stone, 1990; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Robinson & Timperley, 2007). In 1983, the United States National Commission on Excellence published a report on the state of education in the United States titles *A Nation at Risk* (United States National Commission on Excellence of Education, 1983). The report offered a host of recommendations for educational improvements in content, standards, time, teaching, and leadership (United States National Commission on Excellence of Education, 1983). Based on the findings reported, a host of federal, state, and local reform efforts ensued; however, the achievement gap is still prevalent in U.S. school systems, and the United States continues to be out performed by many countries in the world (Duncan, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006; Ravitch, 2010).

Based on the results of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study ([PIRLS], 2006) assessment, the average U.S. fourth-grade reading literacy score of 540 was above scale average of 500; however, of the 45 countries assessed, the United States fell below 10 countries: Russian Federation, Hong Kong, Alberta, British Columbia,

Singapore, Luxembourg, Ontario, Hungary, Italy, and Sweden. There was no measurable change in the average reading literacy score for the United States between performance on the 2001 PIRLS assessment and the 2006 PIRLS assessment. In fact, the United States' ranking decreased on PIRLS reading assessment in 2006 (seventh) from its rank in 2001(third) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

In mathematics the trend is similar. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study ([TIMSS], 2007) showed that students from the United States demonstrated fourth- and eighth-grade average scores that were above the TIMSS scale average. Once again on the fourth-grade assessment, of the 35 participating countries, the United States was out performed by eight countries: Hong Kong, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, England, and Latvia. On the eighth-grade assessments, of the 45 countries that participated, the United States was out performed by five countries: Chinese Taipei, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

With a graduation rate of approximately 70%, and only about 30% of those students graduating adequately prepared for college, reform in education is a necessity (Duncan, 2009; Wagner, 2008). Graduating high school students lack the skills required to be citizen ready, work ready, and college ready (Ravitch, 2010; Wagner, 2008). On an international level, the United States continues to fall behind other countries on assessments in reading, science, and mathematics, and on a national level racial minority and financially disadvantaged students continue to achieve at considerably lower levels than their European American counterparts (Eberts, Schwartz, & Stone, 1990; National

Center for Education Statistics, 2006). The findings of *A Nation at Risk* (1983*)* are still primary concerns today. Based on current educational realities and changing contexts, schools require reform to meet the needs of all students in modern society (Murley, Keedy, & Welsh, 2008; Wagner, 2008).

Schools continue to be intractable to reform (Desimone, 2002; Ebert et al., 1990; Fullan, 2005; Ravitch, 2010; Rowan et al., 2010; Smith, 2008; Wagner, 2008; Wong, 2008). The organizational structure of schools, the relational dynamics, the systematic design, and cultural influences on education contribute to the stagnation of school reform in the United States (Desimone, 2002; Fullan, 2005; Sarason, 1990). Meaningful education reform is essential to improve dropout rates, increase the educational standing of the United States in the world, improve student learning, and contribute to necessary skill development (Duncan, 2009; Jordon & Jackson, 2003; Sarason, 1990).

School reform aims to improve school achievement for all students, promote positive and engaged citizenship, and improve skills for graduating students in relation to work readiness (Duncan, 2009; Sarason, 1990). The aims of educational reform in the United States have not been universally met (Eberts et al., 1990; Kozol, 1991; Kozol, 2005; Ravitch, 2010). Education continues to shift from local to federal control; however, the shared responsibilities between federal and state governments are not seamless and are sometimes counterproductive to school reform efforts (Wong, 2008). When *No Child Left Behind* (2001) was adopted, educational reform efforts became mainly performance based increasing federal authority over school systems within the United States. The concept of adequate yearly progress (AYP), standards-driven test scores, and mandated

assessment reporting by subpopulation became the norm in education. These federal policies reinforced "federal threats and sanctions" (Wong, 2008, p. 178); however, did not provide appropriate resources, funds, or supports for states and schools to appropriately implement mandated regulatory requirements (Wong, 2008).

Implementation of No Child Left Behind ([NCLB], 2002) legislation focused on closing the achievement gap between high achieving and low achieving students. However, with a focus on accountability, the legislation quickly became political with school-based performance hinging on student accountability results (Pepper, 2010). This legislation did not provide funding for the implementation of the strategies, reforms, and initiatives that would be necessary for schools to make the great changes now required by legislation (Pepper, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Rowan et al., 2010). As a result, the threat of corrective action created a high-stakes educational environment (Kohn, 2004). This environment has stayed with education, complicating the role of the principal. School principals must now meet the demand set forth by NCLB legislation while continuing to set high expectations for teaching and learning within the school setting (Pepper, 2010; Ravitch, 2010; Wong, 2008).

School reform continues to be on the political agenda (Duncan, 2009; Ravitch, 2010). The Obama administration has an aggressive educational reform agenda that stresses competition, school choice, achievement data, teacher quality, and leadership (Duncan, 2009; Ravitch, 2010). Current theorists debate the merits of local versus national control, progressive vs. traditional methods, school choice, charter schools, and increased accountability (Ravitch, 2010). More than a century ago a locally controlled

educational system was designed on the premise that knowledge is power (Duncan, 2009; Ravitch, 2000). The manner in which education was accessible, relevant, and rolled into learning has been a source of constant debate over the past century (Ravitch, 2000, Sarason, 1990; Wagner, 2008). Current theorists argue that the nation's schools will not improve if the political agenda continues to intrude on decisions that should be made by educators (Kozol, 1991; Ravitch, 2010). A public agenda focused solely on reading and mathematics is sure to create disparate results when comparing the success of schools in the United States to those of other countries, while doing a disservice to U.S. society. A curriculum based on a combination of basic skill level standards and a focus on reading and mathematics will not produce college- or career-ready citizens (Ravitch, 2010).

General systems theory examines systems based on interrelated relationships and an integration of smaller parts to a whole. Processes, interactions, communication, and the organization of each component are essential to the success of the overall system (Bertalanffy, 1969). Local reform is essential to the attainment of national reform. School leaders play a key role in impacting local school reform (Colvin, 2009; Duncan, 2009; Leithwood, 2008; Sarason, 1990). As such, a primary focus for the receipt of federal dollars through *Race to the Top* funds comes in the form of states addressing issues of principal effectiveness, assignment, responsibilities, and preparation (Colvin, 2009). This demonstrates that at the federal level there is a focus on improving the leadership evident in public K-12 schools.

Leadership

The consensus theory of effective school leadership emerges from a critical review of literature. Theorists agree that there is a "common core of successful leadership practices" (Leithwood, 2008, p. 110). The intellectual origin of these practices can be traced to a variety of theoretical traditions including behavioral leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, and concepts of effective instructional leadership. Each of these practices aligns with key components of organizational leadership that have been successful in the business world. There are five organizational leadership practices that exemplify a successful leader: challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). These five practices (and the 10 commitments associated with them) represent a consensus theory of leadership that can be applied to educational leadership. With a focus on leadership roles, understanding these practices is essential to understanding the role of the leader in implementing research-based leadership practices.

Leadership Approaches

There are multiple leadership approaches including trait, behavioral, situational, and integrative. The trait approach supposes that leaders have inherent leadership traits that make them good leaders. These traits (including personality, skills, and values) exist in natural leaders. The behavioral approach focuses on what managers actually do, and the situational leadership approach looks at the setting to identify what situations are in place and the contextual factors influencing leadership. Lastly, the integrative approach combines two or more types of leadership approaches (Yukl, 2002).

Aspects of the behavioral leadership approach play a foundational role in school leadership. The behavioral leadership approach became prominent in the late 1940s, when leadership studies began examining what practices and behaviors effective leaders exhibited (Duygulu & Çıraklar, 2009). According to the behavioral leadership approach "effective leaders influence their fellow members through their behavior (Duygulu & Çıraklar, p. 390). This approach postulated that effective leadership behaviors and styles are consistent and common across all contexts. Based on this belief, these behaviors can be learned and fostered with training (Duygulu & Çıraklar, 2009). Thus is follows that all leaders, regardless of their leadership approach, have the potential to learn skills for effective leadership.

Transformational Leadership Theory

The leadership needs in schools have changed over time (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 166). Leadership has become relationship focused with a critical need to motivate and transform practice. This has had an impact in educational leadership (Leithwood, 2008). In order for local reform to succeed, school leaders must be transformative (Leithwood, 2008). A leader is an agent of and a *catalyst* for change (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985, 1999; Leithwood, 2008). The impact of leadership is greater where there is greater need, leadership responds to unique situations, and there is a "common core of successful leadership practices" (Leithwood, 2008, p. 110). Transformational leadership theory identifies inspirational practices that motivate, instill trust, increase interest, generate awareness, and expand a broad viewpoint so that it reaches beyond self-interest to the good of the whole (Demir, 2008). Transformational

leadership theory identifies leadership as a process in which the leader influences shared commitment and provides followers with the opportunity to accomplish shared goals (Demir, 2008).

Transformational leadership is built on four dimensions: *idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration* (Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003). Transformational leadership theory as initially discussed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985) provides a framework for leadership for change. There are facilitating conditions for transformational leadership, yet Yukl (2002) posited that transformational leadership works for many situations or cultures. Yukl warned, however, that relational effectiveness exists, and there are indeed situations in which transformational leadership may be impeded. For example, an unstable environment or entrepreneurial structures may impede the ultimate success or implementation of transformational leadership (Yukl, 2002). Leadership practices for implementing transformational leadership theory are as follows:

> Articulate a clear and appealing vision, explain how the vision can be attained, act confidentially and optimistically, express confidence in followers, use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values, lead by example, empower people to achieve vision (Yukl, 2002, p. 263).

In school settings, school leaders must implement these characteristics effectively to promote learning, foster change, and guide success (Leithwood, 2008; Yukl, 2002). Transformational leadership in a school context creates a focused commitment to change through motivation and goal setting. In addition, professional development and

collaboration are key components to successful transformational leadership in the school. Training and support are necessary when trying to foster substantial organizational change (Geijsel et al., 2003).

Distributed Leadership

School leadership poses a challenge for researchers because education in the 21st century is in a continuous state of flux (Arif & Sohail, 2009). The modern educational context demands that principals must be more than just an instructional leader (Fullan, 2003; Stein, 2009; Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Williams, 2009). Principals need to implement the practices that will create transformation in teaching and learning (Arif & Sohail, 2009; Fullan, 2003). Meeting this demand requires an understanding not only of transformational leadership, but also of distributed leadership as well. Distributed leadership expands leadership capacity and increases the potential impact on students by distributing leadership responsibilities across many members of the school (Janson, Stone, & Clark, 2009; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Distributed leadership in and of itself, however, is not successful for implementing the critical change that the 21st century will require of schools for all students to succeed (Williams, 2009). In fact the founders of distributed leadership cautioned that it is a perspective, not a practice, and that although it can contribute to insight development for improved leadership practices, it is not a panacea for school leadership (Spillane, 2006). Researchers have noted the importance of a distributed model in decision-making practice and in building leadership capacity (Gronn, 2008; Spillane, Camburn,

Pustejovsky, Pareja, & Lewis, 2008; Williams, 2009). These are two critical facets of transformational leadership models.

Effective Instructional Leadership

The modern principal is an instructional leader (Strong et al., 2008). The successful school leader has a primary focus on teaching and learning and is visionary with an understanding of the change process (Smith, 2008). Such principals are "relational, empowering, strategic, a learner, courageous, a communicator" (Smith, 2008, p. 242). They have a powerful vision of what school can and should be. Additionally, the principal plays an essential role in closing the achievement gap (Wagner, 2008). Modern principals lead through influence, and know what good teaching looks like. These principals are able to support their teachers and sustain continuous improvement (Wagner, 2008).

As the demand to increase student performance continues to grow, the need for the principal to lead instructional efforts within the school has become a necessary role (Stronge et al., 2008; Williams, 2009). Modern principals must build a clear vision for their schools, share leadership responsibilities, and create learning communities (Stein, 2009; Stronge et al., 2008). This key role of the principal requires regular monitoring and data analysis for both curriculum and instruction. The role of the principal as instructional leader has been expanding and is necessary for the success of all students in the nation's educational system (Duncan, 2009; Stronge et al., 2008).

School leaders must be able to respond to the needs of culturally and economically diverse student populations. This effort requires new instructional

pedagogy, decreased class sizes, on-going assessment, and the investment of all

stakeholders. School leaders need to create a safe learning environment for all students

(Johnson & Public Agenda Foundation, 2007). Setting high expectations for learning is

also essential. Successful teachers and leaders set high expectations and believe that high

quality learning will occur for all students. This learning takes place because all aspects

of the school, including meetings, curriculum, professional development and

assessments, focus on student learning (Johnson & Public Agenda Foundation, 2007).

School leaders must provide teachers with the resources necessary for success and expect

teachers to focus on educating every student (Johnson & Public Agenda Foundation

2007; Stronge et al., 2008; Smith, 2008).

Factors such as goal setting, providing support, and maintaining focus have

critical impact on student achievement (Stronge et al., 2008; Williams, 2009). Setting

clear expectations for high levels of learning, sticking to those expectations, and creating

attainable and measurable goals for student achievement is one of the best methods to

improve student learning. Explicit goals related to student achievement, and consistent

monitoring and adjustment in order to attain these goals, leads to improved student

performance. High expectations for learning are not synonymous with a focus on high-

stakes testing. Instead, high expectations for student learning must exist in all areas of the

school, the curriculum, and instruction (Leithwood et al., 2004; Stronge et al., 2008).

Finally, principals impact student learning by using data to guide the decision-

making process (Stronge et al., 2008). Using data for decision-making is the connection

between having goals and attaining them. Principals in successful schools promote

capacity for student learning by making sure that all stakeholders have the appropriate skills to gather, assess, and make critical instructional decisions based on data analysis (Leithwood et al., 2004). Additionally, principals use data to determine progress toward achieving goals. They use multiple indicators for success, and make adjustments as appropriate in order to continue to make progress in attaining high levels of learning for all students (Leithwood et al., 2004; Stronge et al., 2008).

Leadership Practices

Researchers have identified common processes that exemplify successful leadership (Bennis, 1998; Davis et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Leithwood, 2008; Sashkin, 1996; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). Five competencies that lead to successful organizational leadership include building commitment to a core vision, enhancing leadership capacity at all organizational levels, empowering people, promoting communication, using reward systems, and exemplifying leadership by example. The competencies or skills that successful leaders require can be learned through a combination of both training and implementation practice (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified five practices and 10 commitments that are employed by successful leaders and contribute to extraordinary task completion. The five practices identified are challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Dalton, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). These practices were identified through both qualitative and quantitative research methods including questionnaires, interviews, surveys, and written case studies. A triangulation of data was completed in order to develop and support these practices. Over time, the LPI

tool has been used to determine the extent to which leaders exhibit these practices. This tool and the content construct have been tested repeatedly to ensure that these practices are reliable and valid (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) encouraged leaders to shed the myths, move past the traditions, and face the realities of the situation they are in to foster sustained success. Kouzes and Posner's (1995) studies identified practices based on organizational realities, yet these practices have been proven as key foundations to successful leadership in general. Researchers have supported consistently the key leadership practices developed by Kouzes and Posner. These practices have been upheld as being elemental through decades of research in the field of leadership and recent studies that align with their framework (Dalton, 2003; Loke, 2001; Stout-Stewart, 2005).

Challenge the process. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), leaders *challenge the process*; "Those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenge" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995. p. 9). Challenging the process is comprised of two commitments: accepting challenges to change and improve, and taking risks (Figure 1). Through application of these realistic commitments, successful leaders branch out and try new and innovative approaches in order to foster improvement. They do not take single credit for the change; they recognize and support idea development and are willing to challenge the system in order to foster the implementation of new innovation (Dalton, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Stoll & Temperley, 2009).

Successful leadership stories revolve around meaningful change. Leaders "search out challenging opportunities to change, grow innovate, and improve" (Kouzes & Posner,

1995, p. 18). In order to implement change, successful leaders must confront current reality (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Smith, 2008). Leaders are *pioneers*, searching for opportunities to better the situation around them or create something new by facing the challenge of change. Leaders face change by "arousing intrinsic motivation, balancing a paradox of routines, and using outsight: looking outside for stimulation and information" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 39). Often leaders offer extrinsic rewards in exchange for performance. Highly successful leaders use intrinsic motivation in order to foster a sense of fulfillment and moral purpose. Extrinsic motivators limit potential; intrinsic motivation is stimulated by challenge and the opportunity to look at situations in new ways. Kouzes and Posner (1995) found that routines are often impediments to change; therefore leaders must identify dysfunctional routines and make changes as necessary. Leaders are not afraid to look outside the organization for inspiration and information. They stay in contact with networks and specialists in the field.

Successful leaders experiment and take risks (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). All risk-takers may not ultimately become great leaders; however, leaders will not be successful without taking risks. Leaders use nontraditional means, and encourage risk-taking within the system to promote innovation and new ways to do things. Implementing these means involves setting realistic yet high expectations and encouraging new behaviors in order to meet new expectation. Leaders are experimenters by nature, and use experiments to better structure, culture, and outcomes. They build commitment of constituents through reward, encouragement, and task delegation. Leaders learn from their mistakes, and build upon past failures in order to "make something happen" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 68).

Challenge The Process	
Commitment 1: **Search Out Challenging Opportunities to Change, Grow, Innovate, and Improve**	**Commitment 2:** **Experiment, Take Risks, and Learn from the Resulting Mistakes**
• Treat every job as an adventure. • Treat every new assignment as a start-over even if it isn't. • Question the status quo. • Send people shopping for ideas. • Put idea gathering on your own agenda. • Go out and find something that needs fixing. • Assign people to opportunities. • Renew your teams. • Add adventure and fun to everyone's work. • Take a class; learn a new skill. (p. 61)	• Set up little experiments. • Make it safe for others to experiment. • Eliminate fire hosing. • Work even with ideas that sound strange initially. • Honor your risk takers. • Debrief every failure as well as every success. • Model risk taking. • Encourage possibility thinking. • Maximize opportunities for choice. • Make formal clothing and titles optional. (p. 88)

Figure 1. Challenging the process. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

Inspire a shared vision. Leaders envision what could be and hold strong personal beliefs that they can help attain that vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Successful leaders have a clear picture of the results they aim to achieve prior to implementing an initiative. This vision of the future motivates them to achieve success and inspire constituents to share in the dream and make change happen. In order to be successful at this level of inspiration it is essential that leaders understand their constituents and act in their best interest (Figure 2). They demonstrate the possibilities of change through enthusiasm, providing a clear and compelling vision, and demonstrating the role of the outcome in promoting the common good (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

A third commitment of the Leadership Challenge is "envision an uplifting and ennobling future" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 112). Strong leaders use intuition in order to help them develop a vision of the future that is better than current reality. They draw on prior experience to help determine a vision for the future. They then use the resources and reality of the present to begin to develop the opportunity to make the vision reality. Through a commitment to the vision, and conviction of the benefit to the common good, successful leaders begin the process of identifying a path to attain their vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Successful leaders must enlist their constituents in order to foster a common vision. They do this through culture development and a shared sense of identity and common purpose. In order to be successful, a leader must demonstrate a strong conviction to the vision and be able to demonstrate the benefits to the common good. A clearly articulated vision has been shown to increase "job satisfaction, motivation,

commitment, loyalty, clarity about the organization's values, pride in the organization, and organizational productivity" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 124). Inspiring a shared vision is the least frequently applied of the five practices of leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995). There are many factors that influence this phenomenon: only 10% of people surveyed felt they were inspirational, people are emotionally expressive about hopes and dreams, and people lack the skills to demonstrate their beliefs (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). To be inspiring, leaders must believe strongly in the vision, identify the common aspirations of their constituents, and identify purpose in others. Identifying purpose requires knowing the needs of constituents, listening, taking advice, and giving voice to the constituency (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Inspire a Shared Vision	
Commitment 3: **Envision an Uplifting and Ennobling Future.**	**Commitment 4:** **Enlist Others in a Common Vision by Appealing to their Values, Interests, Hopes, and Dreams**
• Think first about your past. • Determine what you want. • Write an article about how you've made a difference. • Write a short vision statement. • Act on your intuition. • Test your assumptions. • Become a futurist. • Rehearse with visualizations and affirmations. (p. 120)	• Identify your constituents. • Find the common ground. • Develop your interpersonal competence. • Breathe life into your vision. • Speak positively. • Speak from the heart. • Make the intangible tangible. • Listen first – and often. (p. 148).

Figure 2. Inspire a shared vision. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

Enable others to act. Leadership requires collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The support of the constituents responsible for implementing a project is essential to its success. It is essential for an effective leader to involve all stakeholders throughout the process, and make it possible for them to successfully implement the work required for success. This involvement ensures a sense of ownership that enables people to work at their highest capacity. It includes instilling components of teamwork, power, and trust

across the organization. In order to best accomplish this task, leaders foster collaboration and strengthen others (Figure 3).

Effective leaders foster collaboration through "promoting cooperative goals and mutual trust" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p.151). Success requires the active involvement and support of staff. Collaboration demonstrably improves performance. Kouzes and Posner base this commitment on Kohn's research on competition and cooperation, noting that cooperation makes a much more efficient use of resources and is much more highly effective than competition. In addition, leaders who foster collaboration are seen as "personally credible" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 153). Effective leaders foster collaboration through developing cooperative goals, establishing a norm of reciprocity between and among staff and teams, developing trusting relationships, focusing on gains, and sharing valuable resources when necessary. Finally, effective leaders build trust through staying true to their word, openly discussing plans, and developing interpersonal trust among teams, partners, and individuals (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Leaders strengthen people by sharing power and information (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Effective leaders provide the resources and training that is needed to successfully complete a task or assignment making individuals feel more capable and increasing effectiveness. They provide choice and decision making authority to ensure ownership and foster teamwork while offering visible support regularly. They assign critical tasks and increase individual influence by increasing systematic authority at multiple levels, supporting independent judgment, encouraging innovation, and enhancing freedom.

Finally, they celebrate successes; provide internal and external opportunities for the

sharing of best practices, and share appreciation often.

Enable Others to Act	
Commitment 5: **Foster Collaboration by Promoting Cooperative Goals and Building Trust**	**Commitment 6:** **Strengthen People by Giving Power Away, Providing Choice, Developing Competence, Assigning Critical Tasks, and Offering Visible Support**
• Always say we. • Increase interactions. • Focus on gains, not losses. • Make a list of alternative currencies. • Form planning and problem-solving partnerships. • Conduct a collaboration audit. • Go first. (p. 179)	• Increase the return on your square footage. • Enlarge people's sphere of influence. • Make sure delegated tasks are relevant. • Educate, educate, educate. • Organize your own *great huddle*. • Make connections. • Make heroes of other people. (p. 206)

Figure 3. Enable others. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

Model the way. Modeling is a key component to effective leadership (Kouzes &

Posner, 1995). Leaders model by setting an example and building commitment regularly.

Consequently, leaders must have a clear understanding of purpose and guiding principles

and maintain integrity to those principles in everything that they do. They must exemplify

their beliefs and the actions they expect of their followers consistently in both word and

deed. They complete these tasks with actions aligned to shared values and achieving

small success consistently demonstrating progress (Figure 4). By completing small, identified tasks, leaders build to great successes (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Effective leaders "set the example" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 209). Establishing and sustaining shared values is essential to organizational success. It is equally important for the leader to model behaviors in order to continually facilitate effectiveness. Modeling promotes teamwork, job effectiveness, company pride, and ethical behavior. Leaders who model choose words deliberately and use symbols to promote change, build culture, and create expectations of effectiveness. They remain available and have regular dialog about both personal and shared values while remaining openly and positively committed to their organization in all words and actions. This commitment sometimes requires dramatic actions that foster the change process and stories that make successful use of teachable moments (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Successful leadership requires that leaders know that change is incremental (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Through this understanding they break processes into small, achievable tasks and celebrate small wins throughout the process. Recognizing the incremental nature of change assists leaders in sustaining the commitment of all stakeholders and provides opportunity for innovation, experimentation, and provision of choice to constituents. Smart leaders take success personally, and commit to attaining progress one step at a time. By doing so, they model expectations and promote a sense of purpose and teamwork. They "sell the benefits" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 263) of success to instill buy-in through use of natural dynamics making sustainability more likely (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Model the Way	
Commitment 7: **Set the Example by Behaving in Ways that are Consistent with Shared Values**	**Commitment 8:** **Achieve Small Wins That Promote Consistent Progress and Build Commitment**
• Take a look in the mirror. • Write your leadership credo. • Write a personal tribute and a tribute to your organization. • Open a dialogue about personal and shared values. • Audit your actions. • Trade places. • Be dramatic. • Tell stories about teachable moments. (p. 241)	• Take it personally. • Make a plan. • Create a model. • Break it up and break it down. • Ask for volunteers. • Use a bulletin board. • Sell the benefits. • Take people to dinner (or breakfast). (p. 266).

Figure 4. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

Encourage the heart. When people are frustrated, ready to give up, or simply exhausted, it is the responsibility of the leader to encourage and support them. "Leaders encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 13). Such encouragement is often best accomplished through genuine heartfelt concern and care for people. Effective leaders must remind people that success is possible and that their work is appreciated. They must be committed to "recognize individual contributions to the success of every project… and celebrate team accomplishments regularly" (Kouzes

& Posner, 1995, p. 18) (Figure 1.5). Leaders uplift constituents with rewards and celebrations. Effective leaders have a genuine appreciation for people, products and organization (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

It is essential for an effective leader to recognize contributions by linking rewards and performance (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Because setting high expectations is essential, building the self-confidence necessary to achieve those expectations is critical. In order to foster confidence, leaders must demonstrate the benefit of success, and align any rewards with meeting only high quality goals and standards. All rewards and public recognition should be done personally, and effective feedback should be provided regularly to articulate and demonstrate expectations. Finally, effective leaders consistently treat people with respect, are friendly, and provide ongoing coaching (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

One final commitment of effective leaders is celebrating accomplishments (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Effective leaders know that getting people together and celebrating is crucial to continued success and sustainability; celebration is motivational. It breaks down barriers, refreshes people, models exemplified behavior, and has a binding effect. Effective leaders are personally involved with success in order to model and to encourage constituents while creating networks for support. "The best-kept secret of successful leaders is love: being in love with leading, with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce, and with those who honor their organization by using its work" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 305). Effective leaders are cheerleaders for their staff members and for their organizations.

Encourage the Heart	
Commitment 9: **Recognize Individual Contributions to the Success of Every Project**	**Commitment 10:** **Celebrate Team Accomplishments Regularly**
• Be creative about rewards and recognition and give the personally. • Make recognition public. • Design the reward and recognition system participatively. • Provide feedback en route. • Create Pygmalions. • Find people who are doing things right. • Coach. (p. 291)	• Set up little experiments. • Schedule celebrations. • Be a cheerleader your way. • Be part of the cheering squad. • Have fun. • Determine your social network – and bolster it. • Stay in love. • Plan a celebration right now.

Figure 5. Encourage the heart. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

Prior Experiences

Prior experiences may impact the principals' degree of knowledge about research-based school leadership practices. Prior experiences such as past leadership/supervisory responsibilities, time spent teaching, and leadership preparatory experience may influence principals' knowledge (Davis et al., 2005). The connection between these prior experiences and principal knowledge of research-based school leadership practices must be examined.

Leadership preparatory experience. There is a shortage of highly qualified principal candidates in the United States (Cray & Millen, 2010; Davis et al., 2005). Many

preparatory programs are graduating candidates from programs that are "ill-defined, irregularly applied, and lacking in rigor" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 4). Critical aspects of successful leadership preparation programs in content, methods, and structure were identified by the researchers of a study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation (Davis et al., 2005). These main components include research-based content, curricular coherence, field-based internships, problem-based learning experiences, cohort grouping, practicing high quality mentors, and collaboration between university programs and partner school districts (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000; Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 1996).

Leadership preparation programs should be content rich and reflect current research on leadership. Programs should include research-based content focused on instruction, organizational development, change management, and leadership skills. Programs should have curricular coherences between vision, purposes, and goals. This curricular coherence ensures logical progression through coursework and activities scaffolding learning with self-directed knowledge. Finally, these programs should be built on research-based professional standards for the field in order to promote effective leadership knowledge (Cray & Millen, 2010; Davis et al., 2005).

Varying methods should be evident in leadership preparatory programs. Through the use of both real and simulated leadership experiences, leaders acquire the skills necessary to face real-world obstacles. The application of field-based internships ensures that future principals will be exposed to situations leading to real-world practice. This critical component of leadership preparation is essential to the development of successful

leaders. In essence, a strong internship provides a real life experience for candidates (Davis et al., 2005). In addition to this field-based intership, adequate preparatory programs shoud include problem-based learning experiences to blend theory and practice for the candidate. Working within a cohort group fosters improved learning and completion rates (Barnett et al., 2000; Davis et al., 2005). Mentoring throughout the preperatory experience provides the candidate with expert modeling (Cray & Millen, 2010). These combined methods help develop a well-rounded leadership candidate with the skills necessary for not only understanding but implementation of leadership practices (Davis et al., 2005).

On-the-job support. Some researchers have suggested that coaching plays a crucial role in a principal's success (Fullan 2003; Wagner, 2008). Mentoring for the school principal has been identified as a means of increasing understanding and implementation of research-based leadership strategies. Saban and Wolfe (2009) examined how mentoring impacts the practices of school principals. Kouzes and Posner's *Leadership Practices Inventory* was used to determine the practices implemented by principals. The survey tool also examined the number of principals who had received mentoring experiences (Saban & Wolfe, 2009). The researchers found that mentoring is an effective practice for providing professional development to school principals. Interestingly, only approximately 20% of surveyed principals had ever received mentoring experiences. Principals who had engaged in mentoring were more likely to engage in the leadership practices within the inventory: "modeling the way,…inspire a shared vision,…encouraging the heart,…enable others to act,…and challenge the

process" (Saban, & Wolfe, 2009, p. 3). According to Saban and Wolfe (2009) the two practices most positively correlated to mentoring were *inspiring a shared vision* and *encouraging the heart*.

Leadership for School Change

The five leadership practices (*model the way, inspire a shared vision, encouraging the heart, enable others to act, and challenge the process*) for fostering organizational success were determined essential based on research in the business world. These practices were also determined to be relevant in education (Dalton, 2003). Researchers examined the best leadership practices of educational administrators and found that exemplary leadership included these five practices. As such, these practices are key elements in the field of educational leadership and leadership for school change (Dalton, 2003; Siegrist, Weeks, Pate, & Monetti, 2009; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, & Jinks, 2007).

<div align="center">

Change Theory

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In order to successfully implement school reform, school leaders must understand the change process. Change leaders in education have successfully attempted implementing change at the first-order level; however, in order for successful and sustainable change to occur, school reform efforts must implement change at the second-order level (Smith, 2008). First-order change increases the efficacy of existing structures without exploring new ideas or imposing new practices. No significant culture shift is required. First-order change alone is not sustainable, and not meaningful to the stakeholders involved. Second-order change is substantial and sustainable as it impacts

the values, beliefs, and practices of a system and all stakeholders involved. Second-order change is not simply diagnostic or an immediate fix; it transforms the core value structure of an organization (Smith, 2008).

Teacher collaborative meeting and planning time and participation in professional communities provides a structure for the power relationships within the school to shift from being authoritarian to being collaborative (Sarason, 1996). The role of the principal in developing, facilitating, and sustaining collaborative relationships, consequently, is imperative to foster school-level reform. Changing thinking, structures, and embedded systems is difficult and change leadership is necessary to support such reform (Sarason, 1996, p. 370).

Education in the United States is a system, and systems theory must be understood by school leaders in order to impact school reform. Local reform must occur in order for successful school reform at a systematic level (Duncan, 2009; Ravitch, 2010; Sarason, 1990; Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008). As the system of education becomes more critical and increasingly centralized, leadership plays a crucial role in school reform efforts. Reform at the second-order level is essential for sustainability. In order for sustainable reform to occur the following eight elements are necessary:

> Public service with a moral purpose, commitment to changing context at all
> levels, lateral capacity building through networks, intelligent accountability and
> vertical relationships (encompassing both capacity building and accountability),
> deep learning, dual commitment to short-term and long-term results, cyclical
> energizing, the long lever of leadership (Fullan, 2005, p. 14).

These guidelines combined with research-based leadership practices are highly effective in facilitating sustainable school change.

Within the complex system of education, principals play a key role for implementing educational change (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey et al., 2006; Okoroma & Robert-Okah, 2007; Sarason, 1996; Smith, 2008). With effective leadership, the faculties in a successful school culture will willingly make sacrifices in order to put students first. The principal must set parameters for the development of successful school culture (Riehl, 2000). This is attained by working together to develop a vision centered on student learning; supporting this vision with resources, time, and acknowledgement; modeling the way through behavior and actions; promoting learning at every level; supporting professional learning communities and professional development; and focusing on results (Fullan, 2005). Through these practices, implemented on a regular basis, school change can occur, be successful, and be sustained (Fullan, year).

Principals can impact both first and second order change (Marzano et al., 2005). Researchers studied the responsibilities of school leaders and found that there are 21 primary responsibilities of the principal. All 21 of these responsibilities constituted first-order change; only seven of the 21 represent second-order change. These include

- *Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment*: The principal must be knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

- *Optimizer*: The principal inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.

- *Intellectual stimulation*: The principal ensures that a focus on current theories and practices are a customary aspect of the school's culture.

- *Change agent*: The principal is both willing to and does challenge the status quo when appropriate.

- *Monitoring/evaluation*: The principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices, uses data regularly, and evaluates the impact on student learning.

- *Flexibility*: The principal modifies his or her leadership behavior based on the current situation and comfortably handles disagreements or opposition.

- *Ideals/beliefs*: The principal communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling by developing a shared vision for teaching and learning throughout the school (Marzano et al., 2005).

These seven key leadership responsibilities must be attended to in order to impact a dramatic shift in culture, beliefs, values, and practice (Marzano et al., 2005).

The Role of the Principal

The responsibilities of the school principal and the impact of leadership behaviors are vast. The school principal is vital to school improvement and school reform and has impact over a vast many things within the school structure (Leech & Fulton, 2008). Scholarly consensus indicates the importance of the principal's leadership style upon climate, morale, and productiveness (Okoroma & Robert-Okah, 2007; Zainal, 2008). In addition to being an instructional leader, the principal has added stress as a result of poor funding, inadequate facilities, student admissions, disciplinarian responsibilities, and building management (Okoroma & Robert-Okah, 2007).

McGuigan and Hoy (2006) examined how the role of the principal in enabling school structure impacts academic optimism and ultimately student performance.

Academic optimism is "a school wide confidence that students will succeed academically" (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006). The researchers examined critically the constructs of academic optimism, whether academic optimism impacts a school's academic success, and the relationship between the principal's role in school structure and a culture of academic optimism (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006). The researchers found that "enabling structures enhance academic optimism" (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006) and that the manner in which the principal runs a school has a statistically significant impact on enabling school structure (McGuigan & Hoy, 2006).

The theory that the role of the principal significantly affects the structure of the school is well established (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey et al., 2006). Both the principal's vision and the principal's role as instructional leader are essential to building-level success. The principal has many administrative responsibilities; however, characteristics such as fostering learning communities, democratic practice and shared decision making, instructional leadership, and using data to improve curriculum and instruction all contribute to fostering positive school culture (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Mackey et al., 2006).

It is the responsibility of principals to meet the development needs of their faculties in order to promote and sustain the vision and goals of the school (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Novice teachers have little or no practical experience in teaching and possess limited skill sets. As an instructional leader, the principal is responsible for promoting high levels of academic success for students; therefore, the principal must enable novice teachers to build strategies, enhance

pedagogy, and attain success in the classroom. Principals must engage in multiple strategies in order to meet this goal: provide professional development, mentoring, and classroom visitation opportunities; assign teaching assignments appropriately; and provide effective feedback regularly (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Principals should attend to the needs of novice teachers out of moral purpose, with the responsibility of educating all students successfully through a safe and nurturing classroom/school environment (Roberson & Roberson, 2009).

Leadership as perceived by the teaching faculty in a school is a critical component of school culture (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996; Karakose, 2008). Culture is a critical variable in school leadership (Halliger & Leithwood, 1996). Principals must behave in a manner that is suited to school culture (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Karakose, 2008). The subjects taught, years of experiences, and gender of elementary school teachers influence their perceptions of the principal's cultural leadership capacity. Particularly, teachers of social sciences perceived a higher cultural leadership capacity than their peers in the sciences (Karakose, 2008).

Implementing School Leadership

Leadership practices have long been understood to influence organizational performance, and this is no different in the realm of education (Fullan, 2005; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008). Literature shows that the school principal is vital to both school improvement and school reform (Leech & Fulton, 2008). Effective leadership is multifaceted and there are commonalities among all effective leaders that are important including concern for people, demonstration of expertise, and the recognitions of

expertise in others (Gordon & Patterson, 2006). Educational leadership practices align with the key organizational leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (Leech & Fulton, 2008). These practices are essential to school leadership. The leadership practice of *Modeling the Way* has been demonstrably noted in research on effective principals, closely followed by *Enabling Others to Act* (Siegrist et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2007). Principals must be culturally respectful of the school environment and inspire a vision for the school that is shared by students and teachers (Karakose, 2008).

There are multiple factors contributing to successful leadership capacity in schools. Schools with a demonstrated high leadership capacity focus on shared responsibilities, high expectations for learning, student leadership, shared conceptual framework, shared vision, beliefs and values, team structures and collaboration, and a problem-solving approach (Lambert, 2006). In addition, these schools sustain internal and external support and provide regular opportunities for professional development and networking (Lambert, 2006). Principals in schools with a high leadership capacity share common characteristics including self belief, democratic philosophies, strategic thinking, an understanding of the teaching and learning process, and the ability to build capacity (Lambert, 2006).

Similarly, there are commonalities in leadership practices for school change. Examination of turn-around schools indicated that there are key leadership practices that make reform successful. Key leadership practices for school turn-around include

- Specifying the priorities of the school…

- Re-branding the school…

- Creating shared values and norms…

- Improving the physical school environment…

- Celebrating successes…

- Increasing parental involvement…

- Supporting inter-ethnic connections…

- Creating a focus on student learning (Nor & Roslan, 2009).

These practices align with those exemplified by highly effective leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Although many studies have been conducted in order to examine the leadership characteristics that are necessary for successful school structure and school improvement to take place, few studies address why these characteristics are not being universally implemented. There is a need for *research-based strategies* that can assist principals with becoming effective instructional leaders (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Findings from studies of successful principals indicate that they participate in networking to share best leadership practices. Successful leaders are supportive of teachers and teaching and provide appropriate resources to teachers (Nor, Pihie, & Ali, 2008). Riehl (2000) conducted a critical literature review to examine the connection between the principal and needs of a diverse student population. Culturally responsive practices are essential to the development of a culture that promotes success (DiGiorgio, 2008; Hawley, Woodrum, Burgess, & Rhodes, 2009). A significant implication of the literature review indicated

that key values that are essential to successful leadership practice should be clearly and

substantially addressed in leadership preparation programs (Riehl, 2000).

Leadership and Student Achievement

There is a link between the quality of the principal and student achievement

(Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Stronge et al., 2008). More research in the field is required,

however, in order to foster conclusive data about the exact leadership styles and practices

that foster student success (Robinson, 2008). The main responsibility of the principal or

any school leader is to create opportunities for learning (Blankstein, 2010; Leithwood &

Mascall, 2008; Robinson, 2008). Principals should make learning the center of all they

do, first for students, then for everyone else in the system. The most important aspect of

the role of the principal is ensuring student learning and success. Fostering leadership

capacity among staff is an essential component of instructional leadership (Stronge et al.,

2008). Successful school principals create a shared vision for student success and model

effective behaviors, strategies, and ongoing learning (Nor & Roslan, 2009; Stronge et al.,

2008). They use data consistently to monitor progress toward achieving shared goals for

student learning (Stronge et al., 2008).

As the demand for accountability to increase student performance continues to

grow, the need for the principal to lead instructional efforts within the school has become

a necessary role (Stronge et al., 2008). Modern principals must build a clear vision for

their schools, share leadership responsibilities, and create learning communities. This key

role of the principal requires regular monitoring and data analysis for both curriculum

and instruction. The role of the principal as instructional leader has been expanding and is

necessary for the success of all students in the nation's educational system (Stronge et al., 2008).

The successful school leader has a primary focus on teaching and learning (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Smith, 2008). Principals who are visionary and understand the process of change implement this focus. Such principals are "relational, empowering, strategic, a learner, courageous, a communicator" (Smith, 2008, p. 242). They have a powerful vision of what school can and should be. These principals understand that there are three elements of school change: context, capacity, and conversations (Smith, 2008). The modern principal is an essential component in closing the achievement gap (Wagner, 2008). Modern principals are instructional leaders who lead through influence and know what good teaching looks like. They are able to support their teachers and sustain continuous improvement (Stronge et al., 2008; Wagner, 2008).

Barriers

There may be barriers to the successful implementation of reform at the local level (Bottoms & Fry, 2009). There are many factors within the school setting that are often out of the control of the principal including budgeting, hiring, socioeconomic factors, stressful environments, and inadequacy of resources. In addition, unrealistic expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of the principal by central office staff often impede principals' time. Finally, principals may have a lack of support and lack of access to essential data. These barriers are often difficult to overcome, and can impede the success of school leaders (Bottoms & Fry, 2009). It is essential that school districts provide the support necessary for principals to succeed (Davis et al., 2005; Honig,

Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Smith, 2008; Bottoms & Fry, 2009).

Self-imposed Barriers

The principal's role as a teacher provides only a marginal view of the role of the principal, leading to the perception of system limitations that are not accurate (Fullan, 2003; Sarason, 1990). There can be a negative effect of the if-only dependency barrier in which principals often get trapped in a situation where they note that if only (x) would happen then … (y) would result. This is a dangerous barrier to successful leadership as it is often necessary to overcome obstacles regardless of outside forces, and this mindset becomes an excuse for inaction (Fullan, 2003).

Loss of a moral compass is often a self-imposed barrier to sustained successful leadership (Fullan, 2003). As noted, the principalship requires a sense of moral purpose. High expectations and a multitude of management tasks can sometimes lead principals to question their choices. Successful principals must consistently revisit and answer such moral questions as, "Why did I become an educator? What do I stand for as a leader? And what legacy do I want to lead?" (Fullan, 2003, p. 20). This constant revisiting helps principals stay morally focused (Fullan, 2003).

The inability to take charge of one's own learning often impedes principal success. Schools are learning organizations. As such, the principal must be the lead learner. Without on-going and sustained learning, principals ultimately will not be able to affect change. The *responsibility virus* can overcome principals as well. Principals may often take over-responsibility or under-responsibility in response to certain situations,

which diminishes their effectiveness as change agents (Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005).

System-imposed Barriers

Principals get caught in the constant centralization/decentralization debacle (Fullan, 2003; Ravitch, 2010). The system is changing frequently, and reform efforts have been both centralized and decentralized, neither of which have been successful (Ravitch, 2010). The principal is often essential to finding the medium for success at the local level regardless of the constancy of change within the system. The system often causes role overload and role ambiguity by placing too many conflicting demands and responsibilities on the principalship (Fullan, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005).

There is a history of neglecting school leadership development imposed by the system on principals (Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2003). In order to affect change this barrier must be overcome locally. There is a limited investment in leadership development. Often there are too many curriculum changes and mandates combined with inadequate planning time for mandated changes, time to spend with students, necessary resources, and time (Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2003; Ravitch, 2010). This may impede the principal's ability to stay current and influence change (Fullan, 2003, p. 24).

Transition during leadership succession and neglecting strategies for systems change are two system-imposed barriers that impede school success (Fullan, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Smith, 2008). Leadership succession is a critical factor in sustaining a school system. Too often a change in leader equates to a change in focus and vision causing confusion and lack of focus within the school. The absence of a system

change strategy contributes to confusion. It is necessary to have cohesive policies that impact student learning in place that increase capacity for teaching and learning (Fullan, 2003).

There is often no clear definition of the "principal's role, resulting in failure to realize the moral imperative of schooling" (Fullan, 2003, p. 17). This shortfall is perhaps one of the key system-imposed barriers to successful school reform. The role of the principal goes beyond both manager and instructional leader (Riehl, 2000). The principal is necessary in the school change process. This is the primary cause of the moral imperative for school leadership (Fullan, 2003). As such, the principal must develop new cultures within the school capable of engaging in problem solving at every level. Clarity of role and responsibility is essential to success (Fullan, 2003; Riehl, 2000).

The barriers to fostering reform play an important role in this study. This study examines the implementation of leadership practices as related to fostering school success. Systematic reform relies on local reform. Reform at the local level relies heavily on the principal and the implementation of leadership practices. Understanding the barriers provides a context and lens toward examining the reasons why principals do or do not implements research-based leadership practices.

<div align="center">Change in Culture</div>

Change in culture requires the unyielding personal attention of school leaders (Reeves, 2009; Smith, 2008). Principals must be willing to work in the trenches with their staff. They must support their claims by example. Through demonstrating commitment and working to support change, principals demonstrate that every job is necessary and

important in the successful school (Reeves, 2009). The most frequently implemented practice indicated by principals in successful schools is *Modeling the Way* (Siegrist et al., 2009).

Leading for change requires transformation (Wagner et. al., 2006). Change leadership requires individuals who "promote and model a strong normative culture of respect, trust, and accountability for learning" (Wagner et. al., 2006, p. 111). School leaders must attend to context, conditions, competencies, and culture when approaching change in their system. Through understanding context, the conditions surrounding a problem, the competencies of the stakeholders involved, and the culture that the problem exists within, the steps to change become possible (Wagner et. al., 2006). The role of the leader in impacting the culture of the school is a component of the research-based leadership practices that were examined in this study.

Leadership Gap

There are specific leadership practices, that, when implemented in school settings, foster student success. Numerous researchers have correlated these practices to student achievement (Diamond, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mackey et al., 2006; & Marzano et al., 2005) or examine cases of successful schools to confirm the validity of these practices (Smith, 2008; Stronge et al., 2008; Ylimaki, Jacobson, & Drysdale, 2007). Little research, however, has been conducted to determine why these practices are not being uniformly implemented in schools. In an effort to enhance research that addresses universal implementation issues, barriers and supports to, perceptions of, and understanding of

implementation of these practices must be further examined. This study addressed this gap.

The principals' vision of programs, their educational background, and how they defined their role as instructional leader may enable principals to influence school initiatives and student test scores (Mackey et al., 2006), yet the actuality of applying these characteristics has not been tested. It is imperative that educational leaders have a clear vision that is articulated with faculty and foster a shared-decision making process in order to foster an appropriate learning environment for all students (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). In addition, a focus on instructional practice is imperative to foster student success. Teacher pedagogy, professional development, and student-centered practice are essential components leading to the success of all students (Diamond, 2007). In order to influence student achievement scores, principals must be able to articulate a shared vision of student learning and provide instructional leadership within the school building (Mackey et al., 2006).

Although research studies on the implementation of research-based leadership practices are limited, the critical connection between strong leadership and student learning has been well established (Hallinger & McCary, 1990; Mackey et al., 2006; Stronge et al., 2008). In a study of successful leadership implementation strategies for secondary schools for increasing and sustaining student achievement researchers found that four factors significantly contributed to student achievement: "changing the culture of the school, focusing on teaching and learning, reviewing the school day, and the purposeful use of data" (West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005). Providing teachers with

support is statistically significant in sustaining reform efforts within the school.

Celebrating successes in order to promote future success and democratic decision making

processes are important in implementing and sustaining the change and promoting

student success (West et al., 2005).

There is a distinct correlation between actual student achievement in a school and

the principal's beliefs about student achievement (Siegrist et al., 2009). Interestingly, the

highest implemented practice indicated by principals in a study conducted to assess this

correlation is *Modeling the Way* (Siegrist et al., 2009). Additional studies suggested the

need for leadership training and development and a need for a plan for leadership

succession after principal turnover (Gu, Sammons, & Mehta, 2008). The relationships

between school context and school improvement has important implications for student

achievement. Leadership practices such as delegation and a collective planning approach

have significance in relation to organizational success (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006).

Schools having the greatest gains had building leadership teams with a shared vision and

attitudes related to student learning (Gu et al., 2008).

In 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) established

standards for the professional practice of school leaders. More than 40 states in the

United States have adopted these standards. These standards set a list of common

practices knowledge, and skill sets for building principals:

Standard 1: An education leader promotes the success of every student by

facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a

vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders. Standard 2: An

education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. Standard 3: An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. Standard 4: An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. Standard 5: An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. Standard 6: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

These standards have influenced the criteria for credentialing programs in many states including California, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Jersy, and North Carolina. Though this set of standards indicates progress in the arena of school leadership, research suggests that the ISLLC standards may not encompass all essential aspects of school leadership (Davis et al., 2005). Thus, it will be essential to refine these standards and criteria based on more reliable, extensive research in the field.

Methodology

Three research designs are prevalent in the social sciences: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods (Bergman, 2008). The design of the study is driven by

the research questions (Bergman, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Design methods provide researchers with strategies for implementing design, sampling, collecting data, analyzing data, and interpreting the findings. As such, the research questions, the purpose of the research, the paradigm, and the forms of data are all methodology dependent (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Quantitative

Quantitative measures are statistical in nature. Quantitative methods are primarily driven by theory. These designs are deductive, studying from the general to the particular. Statistical data analysis is employed in quantitative studies, and generally a quantitative study is more generalizable than a qualitative study. This is primarily due to larger sampling possibilities (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Creswell (2003) noted, "If the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome … then a quantitative approach is best" (p. 21 – 22). Bergman (2008) identified the following qualities attributed to quantitative research: a single reality, independence, value-free research, generalizability, universality, and deductive research using hypotheses. Quantitative studies can be descriptive or experimental depending on the research questions and the design of the study.

Qualitative

Qualitative methods are typically narrative and inductive in nature based on a constructivist research paradigm. Data analysis in a qualitative study is generally thematic and coding is generally used to interpret data. Unlike quantitative traditions, qualitative studies are inductive, arguing from the particular to the more general.

Sampling practices in qualitative studies are often purposive and due to a generally small sample size such studies have limited generalizability (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Bergman (2008) identified the following qualities attributed to qualitative research: multiple constructed realities, interdependence, value-laden data, limited generalizability, contextual findings, inductive approaches, and the inability to clearly define cause and effect. Qualitative studies foster the use of inquiry to develop a deeper understanding of an event or a phenomenon.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methodology combines the quantitative and the qualitative approaches when seeking to generate results that exceed just the quantitative or qualitative components (Bergman, 2008). According to Bergman (2008), "mixed method research design is one of the fastest growing areas in research methodology today" (p. 1). Mixed method designs are pragmatic as opposed to building on constructivism or positivism. Within mixed methods both inductive and deductive logic can be used. There is a quantitative-qualitative cycle that is employed throughout the mixed methods process. In parallel mixed method designs the quantitative and qualitative components are not dependent on one another; however, in sequential mixed method designs, the quantitative or qualitative strands of the study occur in chronological order due to dependency (Berman, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The challenging nature of both the developmental and discovery phases of a mixed methods study requires a great deal of reflection throughout the implementation of a mixed methods study (Berman, 2008).

There are five mixed method design models that contribute to providing a more in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon: triangulation design, concurrent embedded design, explanatory design, exploratory design, and sequential embedded design. The appropriate design depends of the research questions, the data types, and the implementation timeline (Bergman, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methodology has several merits. Mixed methods designs bring a "greater sophistication understanding of social phenomena…it can reach across divisions in the research community…and it can strengthen the methodological armory of researchers when they apply social science to real-world problems" (Bergman, 2008, p. 51).

This research study provided assistance in uncovering socially constructed meaning in relation to research-based leadership practices, their implementation, and the perceived supports and barriers for the implementation of said practices. As a mixed method design using both quantitative and qualitative traditions as appropriate to the research questions was used, it is critical to understand the constructs of mixed methodology. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methodology were employed in order to understand the extent to which and reason why sitting principals employ key research-based leadership practices and develop theory as to why research-based leadership characteristics are/are not being implemented universally in school settings in the United States. I reviewed many studies providing correlation between leadership and student achievement as well as research regarding the implementation of leadership practices. The nature of these studies contributed to the use of mixed

methodology. The similarity in nature of research combined with the research questions driving the study influenced my choice of methodology.

Summary

The implementation of key leadership practices, "modeling the way,…inspire a shared vision,…encouraging the heart,…enable others to act,…and challenge the process" (Saban, & Wolfe, 2009, p. 3) leads to school success and correlates with increased student achievement. These leadership practices, identified in the business world, align with leadership best practices in the educational setting (Dalton, 2003). Further research is needed to better understand the barriers to universal implementation of key research-based leadership practices in the K-12 school setting. In order to increase implementation of these characteristics in K-12 schools and promote high levels of learning for all students it is essential to identify the level to which sitting K-12 principals implement these leadership practices identified clearly by the research literature and understand the barriers and supports to implementation. In chapter 3 I present the research methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this study, I used a mixed methodology to examine K-12 principals'

implementation of key research-based leadership practices. The purpose of this study was

to examine the supports and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of

key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based

leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented universally in all school

settings. The design for this mixed method study integrated both qualitative and

quantitative measures. I used sequential mixed methodology in order to provide a

baseline of data on implementation of leadership practices prior to examining the barriers

and supports to implementation.

Research questions drive the design of the study (Bergman, 2008; Teddlie &

Tashakkori, 2009). According to Bergman (2008), "Mixing methods has become a

popular way of thinking about how to approach research questions" (p. 87). Qualitative

methods are typically narrative and inductive in nature based on a constructivist research

paradigm. Data analysis in a qualitative study is generally thematic, and such studies

have limited generalizability. Conversely, quantitative methods are primarily based on a

positivist paradigm and are frequently rooted in theory. Data analysis for quantitative

methods is statistical, and due to larger sampling possibilities quantitative studies often

have greater generalizability (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed method designs are

built upon a pragmatic paradigm, and include both inductive and deductive logic. Mixed

methodology combines these two approaches when seeking to generate results that

exceed just the quantitative or qualitative components (Bergman, 2008). In sequential mixed method designs, the quantitative or qualitative strands of the study occur in chronological order. In this study, the quantitative strand occurred first, followed by the qualitative strand. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), the phases are relational, and often dependent on one another, creating opportunity for evolution as the study progresses.

Chapter 3 includes a detailed synopsis of the methodology of this study. To expand on the methodology, the chapter includes the following sections: Research Design and Approach, Population, Setting and Sample, Instrumentation and Materials, and Data Collection and Analysis. Threats to quality, feasibility, informed consent and ethical considerations will also be discussed. A summary will provide an overview of the methodology and data collection and analysis processes.

Research Design and Approach

I used a sequential mixed methodology to examine K-12 sitting principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices. I employed a pragmatic research paradigm. In general, a paradigm is the beliefs and practices influencing the research questions and methodology of a study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). For the quantitative component, descriptive statistics were used. For the qualitative component, an electronic journal, interviews, and open coding were used.

I used a 10-point Likert scale survey instrument called the LPI to collect data on the degree to which principals implement each of the five leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the*

way, and *encouraging the heart.* These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to develop a baseline of data on the principals' implementation of these leadership practices for the qualitative portion of the study. I then implemented qualitative methodology in order to uncover participating principals' perceptions of the implementation of these leadership practices. Further, I used open-ended journal responses and conducted interviews with participating principals to better understand perceived supports and barriers to implementing the five key leadership practices.

Role of the Researcher

I do not work in any of the school districts where the study was conducted. However, I do work in The Region and am familiar to some study participants. My role does not maintain responsibility for or influence over the participants, nor did it interfere with or pressure participation. I work as a coordinator for educational resources and oversee professional development activities in which that study participants may have taken part. In addition, I attend professional meetings participants may have attended. My role is in no way supervisory in nature to any staff in outside school districts. Each school district may participate in the services, and important information may be disseminated to component school districts through my office. In this way, participants may experience interaction with me or my office in a professional capacity.

My primary interactive role was to collect and analyze the data from participating principals. I analyzed the results of the LPI self and observer tools using descriptive statistics, sent and received (through e-mail) the e-journal documents to participating principals, and conducted the interview with each participating principal. I remained

unbiased and asked only questions directly related to the content of the study. I engaged

in member checking processes for clarification and minimizing discrepancies in principal

responses as well as obtaining confirmation from principals at the end of the interview to

be sure that I understood their responses. In addition, principals were asked to engage in

transcript review in order to assure its accuracy.

Rationale and Design

In this research, I followed a social constructivist research paradigm as it assisted

in uncovering socially constructed meaning in relation to research-based leadership

practices, their implementation, and the perceived reasoning for the employment of said

practices. I used a mixed method design using both quantitative and qualitative traditions

as appropriate to the research questions. Descriptive statistics and coding of journal and

interview data were used. Themes explaining the barriers and supports that impact certain

leadership practices emerged from this empirical data.

For the quantitative component of this study, I collected data on interval

variables–level of implementation of the elements of key research-based leadership

practices that K-12 principals have. Descriptive statistics were employed to develop

baseline data based on the results provided by the LPI tool. Results of this survey tool

were used to uncover the extent to which principals' implement elements of key research-

based leadership practices that lead to school success. According to Johnson and

Christensen (2008), a quasi-experimental design does not provide for the control of all

variables. In quasi-experimental design, random assignment to groups is not possible,

thereby introducing limitation to the development of rival hypotheses.

In the qualitative portion of this research study, I used an inductive approach in order to explain the contributing factors to implementation as perceived by principals. The qualitative methodology was used to lay the groundwork to better understanding the employment of leadership practices in schools, and why many research-based leadership practices are not universally employed in U.S. school systems. Finally, barriers and supports to implementation were examined. Using open-ended journal responses and interviews, coding of the results, and analysis through an inductive approach, I identified how principals perceive their role through leadership in affecting student achievement. Concepts, categories, and themes were identified in the analysis. The identification of barriers and supports to implementation of leadership characteristics assisted in understanding why certain leadership practices are/are not employed in U.S. educational systems.

Paradigms/Designs/Traditions Rejected

A mixed method design is appropriate for this study. In order to determine a degree of implementation a quantitative design is necessary. Creswell (2003) noted, "if the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome … then a quantitative approach is best" (p. 21 – 22). However, a quantitative design alone cannot be used to identify the causal factors related to implementation. As no one contributor is likely to solely impact implementation of leadership practices, qualitative methodology was employed to uncover the supports and barriers to their implementation. Therefore, a strictly qualitative design or a strictly quantitative design was not appropriate for this study.

Case study tradition was also considered for this study. This tradition would involve an in-depth study of a few specific cases (specifically schools). The research questions distinctly require the subject to be the school principal. As such, a case study limited the sample size substantially. Additionally, it could not provide a solid foundation regarding the degree to which leadership practices are implemented by sitting principals. Therefore this design was not be a good choice for this study.

Research Question and Subquestions

The central question addressed by this study was what supports and barriers do K-12 principals' identify in relationship to their implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*?

The quantitative portion of the study included the following questions:

1. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *challenging the process?*

2. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *inspiring a shared vision?*

3. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *enabling others to act?*

4. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *modeling the way?*

5. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *encouraging the heart?*

The qualitative portion of the study included the following questions:

1. What do sitting principals perceive as supports to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

2. What do sitting principals perceive as barriers to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

Population

For this study, the population for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of elementary building principals in U.S. public schools and the corresponding elementary teachers in the same schools. Johnson and Christensen (2008) defined a population as "The large group to which a researcher wants to generalize the sample results" (p. 224). Although the target population included all public school building principals and teachers, the accessible population from which the sample was sought included principals who serve in Northeastern urban school districts within The Region and their teachers. The population was identified through individual school district demographics obtained through State Report Card data within The Region.

For the qualitative portion of the study the population consisted of elementary building principals in U.S. public schools. The target population included all public school building principals, and the accessible population from which the sample was sought included principals who serve in Northeastern urban school districts. The population was identified through individual school district demographics obtained through State Report Card data.

Setting and Sample

The quantitative portion of this study included purposive sampling in order to identify 8 to 10 elementary school principals and to identify 40-70 teachers from within principal's respective schools from three urban school districts in the northeastern United

States. The qualitative portion of this study included purposive sampling to identify the sample of 8 to 10 elementary school principals from three urban school districts. The same sample of elementary principals was used for the quantitative and qualitative portion of the study. The sample was drawn from this group because of the similar demographics of the districts and schools combined with the access of the researcher to these schools.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), a sample consists of a set taken from a larger population defined by specific parameters. When using a purposive sample, the researcher first locates a group with certain desired characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this study, the desired characteristic is either holding a position as a building principal in a public school or working as a teacher in the same school building as a principal participant. After an appropriate group has been identified, the researcher seeks participants from that group until the appropriate number has been obtained (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this study, I sought 8 to 10 schools and ceased participant recruitment after at least eight principal participants and at least 23 teacher participants joined the study. Purposive sampling does not support generalizability to the same degree as random sampling, yet due to time and fiscal restraints associated with this study, I did not choose random sampling for the quantitative portion of the study.

Stratified sampling and cluster sampling are not appropriate for this study as there were no subpopulations from which to draw. The population consists of only K-12 school principals. Therefore, grouping into homogenous subgroups would not be appropriate for the research questions, hypothesis, and variables of this study. Snowball sampling is not

appropriate either. With a readily identified group of potential participants who are known to meet the participation criteria, snowball sampling would offer no benefit, but would have an additional time cost. Although purposive sampling does reduce the degree of generalizability, it is the best match among the nonrandom sampling techniques. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), inference transferability refers to the extent that conclusions drawn can be applied to other settings and people. Due to the mixed method design of the study, and the demographics of the sampled population, this study has inference transferability.

Instrumentation and Materials

An online survey tool, an electronic open-ended journal, and interviews were used for data collection. An online survey tool (LPI) was appropriate in order to collect the quantitative data from groups of principals and their respective teachers in a reasonable timeframe. The LPI is comprised of five scales of leadership practices. Each practice is measured using a 10-point Likert scale based upon the frequency of leadership behavioral statements recognized by the LPI completer. The LPI Self was used to collect data from each building principal, and the LPI Observer was be used to collect data from the teachers. By using an online survey tool, I was able to reach a greater number of people and I could ask the participants to complete the survey at times and places convenient to them. An electronic journal was used to collect reflections from the participating principals, and a follow-up individual interview with each principal was conducted. The journal provided data on principals' perceptions of barriers and supports related to each

specific leadership practice while contributing to the effectiveness use of principals' time during the interviews.

Data Collection Tools

For the first portion of this sequential mixed method study, I used quantitative survey tools. There was an online survey tool for principals and a separate one for their corresponding teachers. Principals completed the LPI Self in order to assess the degree to which participants have engaged in behavioral elements of key research-based leadership practices. Participants accessed this survey online and responded to statements that provide information regarding their level of implementation of key phrases associated with each leadership practice. This pre-existing quantitative survey instrument, the LPI, was used to determine each participating principals' level of implementation on each of the key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. The LPI was designed by Kouzes and Posner (1995). This instrument comprises 30 statements covering each of the leadership practices identified by current, well respected research in the field. Principals responded to "The Leadership Practices Inventory - Self" (LPI) developed by Kouzes and Posner. This tool has been tested multiple times for reliability and validity. Teachers participated only in the LPI – Observer instrument in order to assess their respective principals' implementation of key leadership practices.

The LPI has sound psychometric properties and has been tested for both reliability and validity. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), "The LPI is internally reliable…test-retest reliability is high… the five scales are generally independent… the

LPI has both face validity and predictive validity" (pp. 6-7). Internal reliability of the LPI

is strong with all five scales obtaining an internal reliability coefficient of .84 or above

for the LPI Self and LPI Observer for direct reports (Leadership Challenge, 2000; Posner,

2010). The LPI tool uses multiple ANOVA statistical analysis to determine differences

between the Self and Observer respondents.

The LPI measures each of the five leadership practices through a 10-point Likert-

type scale measuring implementation from 1 (Almost Never) to 10 (Almost Always). Six

statements correlate with each practice independently. Two online versions of the LPI

were used: *LPI Self* and *LPI Observer*. A participating principal in each of the elementary

schools took the *LPI Self,* while five to seven teachers in each school took the *LPI*

Observer in order to answer statements regarding the implementation of the leadership

practices of their corresponding principal.

Data collection for both principals and teachers occurred online using the online

version on the LPI tool. Participants were given the option to complete a paper form of

the survey, which can be manually entered into the data collection tool upon receipt.

Participants were notified electronically of the survey. They were provided with a

password to use to enter the survey. Data were collected from participants electronically

and stored on a secure server. All participants were able to log in to the survey only one

time using a unique password.

Part 2 of this sequential mixed method study was qualitative. I used an open-

ended e-journal tool developed by the researcher based on findings of the LPI

instruments. Principal participants were asked to reflect upon each of the leadership

practices, and the barriers and supports for the implementation of each practice (Appendix A). This journal was created by using a Microsoft Word Template that was sent to principals through e-mail. This tool outlined each leadership practices and provided a brief description for principals. Principals were asked to reflect on barriers and supports to the implementation of each leadership practice in writing and to email this journal reflection to the researcher.

I conducted an interview with each of the participating elementary principals. Based on the results of the survey, I designed the interview questions (Appendix B). Principals were asked to reflect on the overall results of the survey and to discuss their perceptions of these results. These interviews were recorded digitally using a digital voice recorder with permission of each principal. I kept researcher notes and saved files in mp3 format and downloaded them onto my password-protected computer.

Data Collection and Analysis

Procedure

Participants were notified of the study through email notification. All participants were provided with a letter outlining the procedures, the purpose of the study, and the rights of participants. They were notified of the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data Collection took place online using the LPI online survey tool, through e-mail, and through in-person interviews. Participants were given the option to complete a paper form of the survey that can be manually entered into the data collection tool by the researcher upon receipt. They were provided with a password to use to enter the survey.

I collected data from participants electronically and stored it on a secure server. The data collection was confidential, and all participants received a unique random password in order to log in. All participants were able to log in to the survey using this unique password only once. Responses were requested within one month of receiving the online link to the implementation survey. Collected data were stored electronically and downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. These data were used to provide descriptive statistics as a baseline for the qualitative portion of the study.

Following the analysis of data collected for the survey, I asked principal participants to keep a journal. I collected journal data by e-mail sent from the participants. Journal data were kept confidential. I downloaded responses kept them on my password protected computer. For the interviews, I recorded data digitally. I then transcribed the interviews within a week following the scheduled interviews. Member checking served to help avoid discrepancies in data responses by providing participants the opportunity to make sure their intentions are captured accurately in the transcriptions. It was accomplished by sharing a copy of the transcribed interview with each principal via e-mail and asking for a confirmation of agreement by reply e-mail.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis. I assessed the data to identify outliers, incomplete responses and errors in response. The data consisted of participant responses on the LPI. Descriptive statistics were used in order to describe the basic data collected and what the data demonstrated in relation to principals' implementation of five leadership practices. The results of the LPI survey were compiled in order to determine the mean, median, and

mode of responses by leadership practice and by participant group (principal, teacher).

Overall teacher responses were compared to overall principal responses in order to assess

where discrepancies occur between the perceptions of teachers and the perceptions of

principals on the implementation of each specific leadership practice. Average

implementation values were calculated for each leadership practice. These averages were

used to rate the leadership practices from highest level of implementation to lowest level

of implementation. Overall patterns and themes were identified and reported accordingly.

As a result practices were defined as high implementation, average implementation, or

low implementation. These descriptive statistics were used as a basis for the interview in

the qualitative component of the study.

Qualitative analysis. I used qualitative analysis in order to interpret the results of

both the open-ended journal responses and those of the interview. Grounded codes were

extrapolated from the data. Themes, ideas, and categories were labeled with a code as

each journal and interview was analyzed. Open and axial coding was conducted on the

principals' responses to the e-journal prompts. Themes were extrapolated based on this

coding. Subsequently, data collected through the interviews was similarly coded and

themes identified. Initially, open coding was used to organize data collected through e-

journals and interviews. Constant comparison was used in order to ascertain consistency

in the coding process. Categories were developed, and axial coding was used in order to

refine themes. When necessary, hierarchal coding was used. Overall analysis of the

results of the LPI, the e-journals, and the interviews were analyzed in order to identify

themes leading to the identification of barriers and supports to principals' implementation

of leadership practices. Discrepancies were assessed closely on an individual basis. Any discrepancies that could not be verified for accuracy were disregarded from the data results.

Threats to Quality

Self-report bias was addressed through the use of the LPI instruments for both the principal participants and the teacher observers (multiple sources). The use of the e-journal limited observer effect. I was unassuming and entered the process with no pre-arranged notions of outcome. In addition, I did not influence the outcome as multiple measures were used. The use of carefully predesigned journaling questions also limited researcher influence.

Feasibility and Appropriateness

This study was feasible as a result of low implementation cost, a limited need for research support, and access to data collection software. The study design was appropriate for the mixed method design selected. An online survey tool contributed to feasibility and was appropriate for implementing this study. It provided a means for accessibility, immediate results, and effective data collation. I had access to the tool at minimal cost, and access to the population defined for the study electronically. Through my professional role, I had access to the participating school districts as described above, making dissemination of the survey tool, the electronic journal, and individual interviews a realistic endeavor.

Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations

Efforts were made to protect the rights and well-being of those who participated in this study. Prior to the study, Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was sought. Walden University's approval number for this study is 04-11-11-0145691. I requested permission from and received letters of support from district superintendents. Participating principals received a consent form that clearly outlined the researcher's name, the purpose of the study, and acknowledgement of the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time (See Appendix C). Participating teachers received a similar form (See Appendix D). Informed consent was obtained electronically using the survey tool. Overall principal survey results were reported as a whole, not individually, to protect the principals' privacy. Interview and journal data from principals were reported without personally identifying information. Results of the teacher survey were kept confidential, thus limiting the risks on the part of participants. No minors participated in this study.

The online LPI survey tools offered several resources to aid in the protection of participants. In order to protect unintended access of information during electronic transmission, LPI provides VeriSign certificate Version 3, 128-bit encryption. Additionally, LPI offers the opportunity to mask Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, and this feature was used to protect the identity of participants who used the online survey. Individual survey responses were maintained in a password protected LPI account and were imported to an Excel file, which was maintained on the researcher's password

protected personal computer. Individual survey results were shared with any outside source.

Summary

The sequential mixed method design of this study was appropriate. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methodology were employed in order to understand the extent to which sitting principals employ key research-based leadership practices and the supports and barriers to the implementation of research-based leadership. A quantitative survey tool was used to collect data, and descriptive statistics was employed to explain the data collected regarding principals' level of implementation of the elements of key research-based leadership practices that correlate with school success. Qualitative methodology was employed in order to better understand the factors identified by the survey and to examine the supports and barriers to implementation of key research-based leadership practices in schools. The study is replicable and has the possibility for widespread social change implications. The results of this study provide a framework for future studies on the implementation of key leadership practices for school success at a local level and ultimately have an impact on school reform at large. In chapter 4 I outline the data analysis process and present the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 provides a critical analysis of the data collected throughout this study. Data were collected from teachers and principals in eight small-city, elementary, public schools in the northeastern United States. The purpose of the study was to examine the supports and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented universally in all school settings. I used sequential mixed methodology in order to provide a baseline of data on implementation of leadership practices prior to examining the barriers and supports to implementation. Data were collected using an online survey tool; an electronic, open-ended participant journal; and interviews (see Table 1). The data provided a basis for examining supports and barriers to implementation in order to lay the groundwork for future research on leadership for school change.

Table 1

Data Collection Methods

Data	Public School 1	Public School 2	Public School 3	Public School 4	Public School 5	Public School 6	Public School 7	Public School 8
Principal Survey	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online	Online
Teacher Survey	Online	Online	Online	Online	N/A	Online	Online	Online
Principal Journal	e-mail	e-mail	e-mail	e-mail	N/A	e-mail	e-mail	e-mail
Principal Interview	Person	Person	Person	Person	N/A	Person	Person	Person

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected during a 4-month period. Location in the region and school demographics were used to identify participant school districts that qualified as small-city school districts. Prior to the start of data collection, superintendents were asked to allow their personnel to participate in the study via e-mail and follow-up phone calls in order to obtain signed permissions. Once three small-city school districts agreed to participate, principals were contacted via e-mail and telephone. Several e-mails and follow-up phone calls were made during a 2-month period in order to obtain the minimum sample size of eight principals. After 2 months, I stopped soliciting principals as the minimum sample size had been met, and it appeared unlikely that additional principals would join the study.

Once I received signed permissions from principals, I solicited teachers via e-mail. E-mail was sent repeatedly to the faculty in each participating school in an effort to obtain a minimum of five participants per principal. In addition, follow-up phone calls and mail were used in order to try to increase teacher participation. After a 10-week period, however, with only 29 teacher participants, it became apparent that no further participation would be obtained. Some schools had as many as eight teacher participants; others had as few as one teacher participant. Having sufficient data streams to collect the baseline implementation data sought, I moved forward with data collection.

As participants were identified and written permissions were obtained, I kept a research journal to document participation. The research journal included contact attempts, dates of signed permissions, and connections of teacher participants to principal participants. This journal was updated as the survey was completed by the principals and then by the teachers. Subsequently, as the principal journal prompts were turned in, the research journal served as a tracking tool in order to determine when interviews could be scheduled. I maintained research notes throughout the process as well as during the interviews in order to maintain a log of my perceptions and personal reactions to the data. This journal was referenced to ensure that personal biases were limited during data analysis procedures.

Both principals and teachers were e-mailed survey link information in order to access the LPI survey tool electronically. Bi-weekly e-mail reminders were sent to principals and teachers over a 10-week period to encourage survey completion. All eight principals completed the survey in this 10-week period. However, of the 29 teachers who

agreed to participate in the survey, only 26 completed the survey in this 10-week period. At this point the school year had ended, limiting access to teacher participants.

I analyzed survey data using descriptive statistics to determine the degree to which each of the five leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart*) was implemented by principals in participating schools. As Alyssa Outbank completed neither the journal prompt nor the interview after the 4-month data collection period, I excluded survey data from this school during data analysis. I then used the survey results to inform the interview questions. During the analysis of the survey data, principal participants completed their electronic journal prompts (see Appendix F for a sample journal response) and returned them. Upon receipt of each set of journal responses, I scheduled a face-to-face interview with the respective principals.

The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and files were saved as windows media (.wma) files. I transcribed each of the interviews verbatim. Transcripts were saved as Word files and converted to text files. I then used Hyper Research software to code the journal prompts and transcripts (see Appendix G). Principal journal responses and interview transcripts were combined into one master document. Each individual leadership practice (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart)* was designated as a case. Data were coded separately for supports to implementation, barriers to implementation, and prior experiences. Codes were broken into categories and frequency reports were run on each

case in order to compare findings to the research questions. I used an inductive approach

through open and axial coding in order to identify any themes that emerged from the data.

I created a profile for each practice to include both coded barriers and supports to

implementation. I then categorized codes into internal and external categories based on

the manner in which participants referenced them in relation to perception of control.

Four categories were identified (see Table 2). If principals indicated in their response that

something was directly within their control it was categorized as Internal (I1). Those

items coded as having been influenced directly by the principal's behavior were

categorized as Internal (I2). References for which there was a perception of no control on

the part of the principal were assigned the category External. If the principal indicated

that the support or barrier was systems driven it was categorized as External (E1);

however, if the support or barrier was a structure within the principal's building and the

principal perceived that he or she had no control over it, it was categorized as External

(E2). Data were analyzed individually by practice and overall in order to relate data to the

qualitative research questions.

Table 2

Category Descriptors

Category	Description
Internal (I1)	Directly within principal control
Internal (I2):	Principal's behavior directly influences
External (E1):	Systems driven
External (E2):	Structures within the building (outside principal's control)

Based on the degree of implementation identified in the quantitative portion of

data collection, I coded the top supports and barriers to each of the practices. I compared

the top supports and barriers by code and by category in order to identify key themes and

patterns in the data. I created a profile for each practice and an overall profile for the

practices that included supports by practice, barriers by practice, overall supports and

barriers to the practices, and a comparison of the top supports, and barriers to the

implementation of each practice. I then analyzed these profiles in relation to the research

questions.

Findings

Overview

The purpose of this sequential, mixed-methods study was to examine the supports

and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of key research-based

leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership

characteristics are or are not being implemented universally in all school settings. The

practices examined include challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to

act, model the way, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). After I analyzed the quantitative survey results, I found that the elementary principals, who were from small, urban, city school districts, all implemented the five leadership practices to some degree. Although teachers and principals disagreed slightly on the degree to which each practice was implemented, the findings were consistent. After coding the journal prompts and the interview transcriptions, I identified that there were internal and external supports and barriers to the implementation of each of the practices. Supports were predominantly internal; perceived barriers had a heavier external influence. Data were analyzed for each research question.

Participant Profiles

The seven schools with participating principals were from small-city urban school districts (see Table 3). Of these schools four had between 250 and 500 students, and three had between 500 and 700 students. Of the seven participating principals, three were a principal for 0 to 5 years, two from 6 to 10 years, and two for 11 to 15 years. Six principals had been a teacher prior to becoming a principal and one was a school psychologist. Of the seven, only three had been a teacher for more than 10 years, two for 5 to 10, and one for 5 years. Only four of the seven had received mentoring their first year as a principal, and two had received coaching. Six of them had experiences as an assistant principal prior to becoming a principal; however, all seven had prior supervisory experience. Only one principal identified past professional development experiences as being geared specifically toward principal leadership roles and responsibilities to a high degree; the other six acknowledged that this occurred infrequently.

Table 3

Participant Profiles

Participant Pseudonym	School	Years Principal
Joanne McGurney	Public School 1	6 - 12
Jacob Schmidt	Public School 2	0 - 5
Cassandra Levy	Public School 3	0 - 5
Lewis Prawn	Public School 4	6 - 12
Alyssa Outbank	Public School 5	Unknown
Melissa Smith	Public School 6	0 - 5
Shelly Hawson	Public School 7	6 - 12
Susan Thomlin	Public School 8	0 - 5

All seven principals had been involved in a principal preparatory program prior becoming certified as a principal (see Table 4). Of the seven, four felt the program included a field-based internship experience that allowed them to perform real principal responsibilities to a high degree. Only one principal felt the program attended had a strong focus on instructional leadership, and two felt the programs they attended did not focus on instructional leadership at all. Five principals participated in a program that had cohort grouping; however, only one participated in a program that involved mentoring from experienced principals.

Table 4

Leadership Preparatory Experiences

Experience	Degree	Number of Principals
Field-based internship	High degree	4
Field-based internship	Some degree	3
Instructional leadership	High degree	1
Instructional leadership	No degree	2
Instructional leadership	Some degree	3
Real-world problems	High degree	1
Real-world problems	No degree	2
Real-world problems	Some degree	4
Cohort grouping	No degree	5
Cohort grouping	High degree	2
Formal mentoring	high degree	1
Formal mentoring	No Degree	6
Support from peers	High degree	2
Support from peers	No degree	1
Support from peers	Some degree	4

Joanne McGurney was a principal from Public School 1. Her school had from 300-500 students. She has been a principal between 6 and 12 years and has experience as an assistant principal. The leadership preparatory program that Joanne participated in for principal licensure was not a cohort model and provided a field-based internship with minimal opportunities for real-life leadership practice. Although Joanne did receive formal mentoring from her school district the first year of her principalship, her leadership preparatory program did not provide mentoring from accomplished principals.

The principal of Public School 2 was Jacob Schmidt. Public School 2 had from 300-500 students. Jacob has been a principal between 0 and 5 years and has experience as a teacher. The leadership preparatory program that Jacob participated in was not a cohort model and provided a field-based internship with only some opportunities for real-life leadership practice. Jacob did not receive formal mentoring from his school district during his first year as principal nor did his leadership preparatory program provide mentoring from accomplished principals.

Cassandra Levy was a principal from Public School 3, which had from 300-500 students. Cassandra has been a principal between 0 and 5 years and has experience as an assistant principal. The leadership preparatory program that Cassandra participated in for principal licensure was a cohort model and provided a field-based internship with a high degree of real-life leadership practice. Cassandra received formal mentoring from her school district in her first year as principal, as well as mentoring from accomplished principals through her leadership preparatory program.

Lewis Prawn was a principal from Public School 4, which had between 500-750 students. Lewis has been a principal between 6 and 12 years and has experience as a teacher. The leadership preparatory program that Lewis participated in was not a cohort model, yet it provided a field-based internship with a high degree of opportunities for real-life leadership practice. Lewis did not receive formal mentoring from his school district in his first year as principal, nor did he receive it from his leadership preparatory program.

The principal of Public School 6 was Melissa Smith. Public School 6 had from 500-700 students. Melissa has been a principal between 0 and 5 years and has experience as a teacher. The leadership preparatory program that Melissa participated in for principal licensure was not a cohort model; however, it provided a field-based internship with a high degree of real-life leadership practice. Melissa did receive formal mentoring from her school district the first year of her principalship, yet her leadership preparatory program did not provide mentoring from accomplished principals.

Shelly Hawson was a principal from Public School 7, which had between 500-700 students. Shelly has been a principal between 6 and 12 years and has experience as a teacher. Shelly's leadership preparatory program was not a cohort model but it provided a field-based internship with a high degree of real-life leadership practice. Shelly did receive formal mentoring from her school district in her first year as principal and her leadership preparatory program did not provide mentoring from accomplished principals.

Public School 8 has between 300-500 students. Susan Thomlin was the principal of Public School 8. Susan has been a principal between 0 and 5 years and has experience

as a teacher. The leadership preparatory program that Susan participated in for principal

licensure was a cohort model and provided a field based internship with minimal

opportunities for real-life leadership practice. Susan did not receive formal mentoring

from her school district in her first year as principal or from her leadership preparatory

program.

Research Questions

In this study I examined the primary research question: What supports and

barriers do K-12 principals' identify in relationship to their implementation of the

following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a*

shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart? This

research question drove the mixed method design of the study. To address this research

question, a baseline of implementation data was required (quantitative) in order to

determine principals' perceptions of supports and barriers to implementation of key

leadership practices. Five quantitative subquestions and two qualitative subquestions

were investigated in order to address this overall research question.

Quantitative Research Questions

The quantitative research questions addressed the degree to which principals

implemented each of the leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared*

vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) in order to

construct a baseline of data to conduct the interviews in the qualitative portion of the

study. Both principals, and teachers within principal's schools, responded to 30

statements of leadership behaviors on a 10-point Likert scale. Six statements correlated to

each leadership practice (see Table 5). The responses to these statements were used to

calculate the degree to which each practice was implemented for each principal.

Table 5

Statements on LPI by Leadership Practice

Practice	Statements
Model the Way	1. Sets a personal example of what is expected 6. Makes certain that people adhere to agreed-on standards 11. Follows through on promises and commitments 16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance 21. Builds consensus around organization's values 26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership
Inspire a Shared Vision	2. Talks about future trends influencing our work 7. Describes a compelling image of the future 12. Appeals to others to share dream of the future 17. Shows others how their interests can be realized 22. Paints "big picture" of group aspirations 27. Speaks with conviction about meaning of work
Challenge the Process	3. Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills 8. Challenges people to try new approaches 13. Searches outside organization for innovative ways to improve 18. Asks "What can we learn?" 23. Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set 28. Experiments and takes risks
Enable Others to Act	4. Develops cooperative relationships 9. Actively listens to diverse points of view 14. Treats others with dignity and respect 19. Supports decisions other people make 24. Gives people choice about how to do their work 29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs
Encourage the Heart	5. Praises people for a job well done 10. Expresses confidence in people's abilities 15. Creatively rewards people for their contributions 20. Recognizes people for commitment to shared values 25. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments 30. Gives team members appreciation and support

Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

An average score for all principal participants based on self-report and an average score based on all observer responses was calculated (see Table 6). On average, principals and teachers disagreed slightly on the degree to which each of the practices was implemented. An analysis of the standard deviation of the overall responses indicated that there was a greater degree of variation within the responses of the teachers than within the principals' self-reported responses (see Table 6). For the LPI there are six statements, each measured on a Likert scale of one to 10, making the maximum points available by practice 60 points.

Table 6

Average Perceived Degrees of Implementation of All Practices

Practice	Self Average	Self Standard Deviation	Observer Average	Observer Standard Deviation
Modeling the Way	52.9	3.4	44.5	15.2
Inspiring A Shared Vision	49.6	6.3	42.7	16.5
Challenging the Process	47.1	6.3	42.7	16.5
Enabling Others to Act	52.4	6.0	46.9	14.5
Encouraging the Heart	52.0	4.9	43.2	15.9

No practices were perceived to be implemented to a low degree by any of the principals or teachers. In fact, within Public Schools 1 through 8 (excluding data from Alyssa Outbank) no principal scored fewer than 40 points, which would be considered

low implementation, for any individual practice. Overall, three practices were implemented to a high degree (*modeling the way, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart*), and two practices were implemented to some degree (*inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process*).

Research Question 1: quantitative. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *challenging the process?* The survey results showed that principals and teachers perceived *challenging the process* to be implemented to the least degree in all of the schools. The average implementation score self-reported by principals was 47.1 with a standard deviation of 8.5 between the highest level of implementation self-reported and the lowest level of implementation self-reported. The average implementation observer (teacher) score was 42.4 with a standard deviation of 16.4 between the highest level of observed implementation and the lowest level of observed implementation.

Research Question 2: quantitative. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *inspiring a shared vision?* The survey results showed that principals and teachers perceived *inspiring a shared vision* to be implemented to some degree in the schools. Of the five practices, the implementation of *inspiring a shared vision* was ranked fourth by both principals and teachers. The average implementation score self-reported by principals was 49.6 with a standard deviation of 6.3 between the highest level of implementation self-reported and the lowest level of implementation self-reported. The average implementation observer (teacher) score was 42.7 with a standard deviation of 16.5 between the highest level of observed implementation and the lowest level of observed implementation.

Research Question 3: quantitative. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *enabling others to act?* The survey results showed that principals and teachers perceived *enabling others to act* to be implemented to a high degree in the schools. Of the five practices, the implementation of *enabling others to act* was ranked second by principals and first by teachers. The average implementation score self-reported by principals was 52.4 with a standard deviation of 6.0 between the highest level of implementation self-reported and the lowest level of implementation self-reported. The average implementation observer (teacher) score was 46.9 with a standard deviation of 14.5 between the highest level of observed implementation and the lowest level of observed implementation.

Research Question 4: quantitative. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *modeling the way?* The survey results showed that principals and teachers perceived *modeling the way* to be implemented to a high degree in the schools. Of the five practices, the implementation of *modeling the way* was ranked first by principals and second by teachers. The average implementation score self-reported by principals was 52.9 with a standard deviation of 3.4 between the highest level of implementation self reported and the lowest level of implementation self-reported. The average implementation observer (teacher) score was 44.5 with a standard deviation of 15.2 between the highest level of observed implementation and the lowest level of observed implementation.

Research Question 5: quantitative. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *encouraging the heart?* The survey results showed that principals and

teachers perceived *encouraging the heart* to be implemented to a high degree. Of the five

practices, the implementation of *encouraging the heart* was ranked third by both

principals and teachers. The average implementation score self-reported by principals

was 52.0 with a standard deviation of 4.9 between the highest level of implementation

self reported and the lowest level of implementation self reported. However, the average

implementation observer (teacher) score was 43.2 with a standard deviation of 15.9

between the highest level of observed implementation and the lowest level of observed

implementation.

Qualitative Research Questions

The quantitative data provided a baseline of data on which to build in order to

better understand the perceived supports and barriers to the implementation of the

leadership practices. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the supports and

barriers to implementation, qualitative analysis was necessary. Using the degree to which

each practice was implemented and the principals' electronic journal prompts as a

foundation, data was collected through interviews. This data were used in order to

address the two qualitative research questions

Research Question 1: qualitative. What do sitting principals perceive as

supports to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership

practices and why? In order to provide each principal with enough time to think about

and uncover key supports to implementing the leadership practices, principals were

provided with an electronic journal that included a brief description of the leadership

practices. This tool provided a foundation of knowledge prior to each individual face-to-

face interview. Building on the information collected in the quantitative portion of the study, I conducted principal interviews in order to identify key supports to implementing each of the leadership practices. I coded journal and interview data using open and axial coding to uncover not only the perceived supports to implementation, but also the reason that each principal perceived the supports to lead to a higher degree of implementation.

Overview. An analysis of data indicated that there are multiple supports to the implementation of key leadership practices. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the data, during the coding process I separated codes into internal and external categories, as described above, based on the manner in which participants referenced the perceived support. These categories were used in order to identify overall patterns within the data. For the purposes of analyzing data, key supports are considered those that were referenced by more than half of the principals in their journal and interviews.

During the interviews I asked principals if they could identify any key factors they felt supported the implementation of all of the practices. Though responses were limited, aspects of school culture were regularly referenced. Eight key supports were referenced across all five leadership practice (see Table 7). These supports were relationships, communication, collaboration, personal traits, expectations, professional development, knowledge building, and experience. A key overall theme referenced repeatedly throughout both the journals and the interviews was the principal's ability to foster, develop, and sustain interpersonal relationships with stakeholders, primarily teachers. Susan Thomlin noted that culture and relationship building were essential to overcoming barriers to implementation:

Ensuring that you have a strong culture in the school, that you have established

strong relationships with the teachers through doing all of these… acknowledging

their successes and acknowledging their good work. It's just, just getting them on

board…they need to see that human side of you so that they can also kind of,

they'll have a resistance to something new, but they'll say you know what I like

her and she recognizes what I do, so you know, let me listen at least.

With the exception of professional development, all of the supports that were noted in

every practice were internal supports (see Table 7).

Table 7

Key Supports to Implementation of All Practices Frequency Report

Category	Code	All	Encouraging the heart	Enabling others to act	Modeling the way	Inspiring a shared vision	Challenging the process	Overall
I1	Relationships	24	5	5	1	6	6	1
I2	Collaboration	16	1	7	1	3	4	0
I1	Expectations	14	1	3	5	2	3	0
I2	Communication	21	2	6	5	5	2	1
I1	Personal Trait	18	5	1	7	2	2	1
I1	Experience	11	1	1	4	1	2	2
I1	Knowledge Building	13	1	5	2	1	2	2
E2	Professional Development	13	1	5	2	2	1	2

Modeling the way. Leaders model by setting an example (Kouzes & Posner,

1995). Modeling requires principals to have clear purpose and a level of knowledge in

order to build commitment. As such, all principals identified modeling as something that is a personal trait. Joanne McGurney offered this example of how modeling is personal:

> Modeling behavior through exemplary personal acheivements, character, and professional conduct is essential in effective leadership. Your staff will become more productive if they have someone they can gague their performance and commitment with. I often examine how my behaviors and attitudes may have an impact on individual staff members and the climate of the building as a whole.

A similar reasoning was exemplified by Melissa Smith, who focused on the need to lead by example:

> Leading by example is important because you want to emulate what you would like to see others exemplify. Very few will step above and beyond without the leader setting an example. More people will rise up to be leaders if the leader is visible, sets a positive example for others and I believe from my experience that people will rise to these opportunities to lead.

Lewis Prawn believed strongly that in order to model the way, it must be part of your personal philosophy. Lewis noted, "You mean practicing what you preach? That's a personal belief too, to do what I do and not what I say, you have to really mean that inside yourself." Lewis also noted the critical relevance of communication in the process of modeling:

> To be able to go out into a classroom, talk to teachers the way you want them to talk to children, talk to children the way you want teachers to talk to children, deal

with adults the way you want teachers to deal with other adults, deal with teachers the way you want them to deal with you.

Communication and setting clear expectations is an essential support to the leader's ability to model the way. Susan Thomlin noted, "It is important for staff to know that they are not alone in the move forward." There is a common perception among principals that setting clear expectations, and then modeling and communicating those expectations is a prominent support. Shelly Hawson indicated that as a principal there are opportunities to share these expectations with others. She explained, "There are opportunities to share my beliefs as a leader if I take advantage of the chance to model what I expect from others. Informal conversations and some group settings allow this value sharing as well." Several other principals supported the trilogy of a strong personal belief combined with communication and clear expectations. Susan Thomlin answered her own question: "How do I do that? Either through dialogues, meetings, always outline what the expectation is and saying this is how it should look."

Experience played a critical support role in implementing the practice modeling the way. Four of the seven principals referenced their ability to model related to their past experiences in both leadership and teaching. Shelly Hawson reflected on the importance of having an instructional background. As an example she shared,

> So to me, every time I do or I live something within my school community that speaks to what it is we are trying to instill, that is another mode of teaching. And sometimes it may even be an instructional technique. I don't necessarily always have the opportunity to have training with all of the little buzz words and the

literacy techniques–and what have you–but, if you know good teaching… and half of good teaching is a well managed instructional environment… so if you go into a classroom and you see through that third set of eyes…or that second set of eyes, and you kind of observe even in your little walkthroughs – and you see some practices, and you're ready because as an administrator you should never be without your teacher hat- and your teacher lens.

Joanne McGurney agreed:

I was once in the teacher's contract and was "one of them" for about 10 years. Those staff members that I worked with under the teacher's contract have seen me work hard to obtain my current position. They see that I can be hard on myself and put sometimes too much of a high expectation on what I need to accomplish.

When the four key supports are looked at as a whole, a theme emerges. Principals can build on their personal experiences, set clear expectations for their staff, and communicate and exemplify those expectations regularly in order to support the practice of modeling the way. These four supports (personal trait, communication, expectations, and experience) are all internal supports either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principal's behaviors (see Table 8). No supports categorized as external were identified in relation to implementing modeling the way to a high degree.

Table 8

Modeling the Way Top Supports

Code	Category	Frequency
Personal Trait	Internal - Principal Control	7
Communication	Internal - Behavior Influenced	5
Expectations	Internal - Principal Control	5
Experience	Internal - Principal Control	4

Enabling others to act. It is essential for an effective leader to make it possible for constituents to successfully implement the work necessary for success (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Principals identified supports that enabled them to instill a sense of ownership that enables teachers to be their best. Principals indicated that a combination of collaboration, communication, and relationship building are essential components of enabling others to act. Additionally, they reflected that building their own personal knowledge, combined with providing professional development for their teachers supports the implementation of the practice enabling others to act (see Table 9).

Table 9

Enabling Others to Act Top Supports

Code	Category	Frequency
Collaboration	Internal - Behavior Influenced	7
Communication	Internal - Behavior Influenced	6
Relationships	Internal - Principal Control	5
Knowledge Building	Internal - Principal Control	5
Professional Development	External - Structures in Building	5

One key way to support the implementation of enabling others to act is to provide opportunities for collaboration. This collaboration is essential within the school in order to foster relationships and enhance communication. Jacob Schmidt exemplified the need for collaboration, communication, and the role of relationships noting that "being modest and respectful will open opportunities for communication." He then explained, "You will not limit input to coming up with solutions." Joanne McGurney reflected on the importance of teamwork combined with the critical components of communication and the nature of relationships in the process:

> The second part of developing a team is to understand the players involved. As the building principal you develop a sense of various personalities, strengths and weaknesses of staff. You need to take the knowledge and make it work for the school. It is critical to listen to suggestions from the team and implement some of

those suggestions. It is also important to initially let the team know your position

on the project and that you are final decision maker.

Knowing and understanding faculty is essential to implementing the practice enabling

others to act. These relationships are essential to the success of the school. Susan

Thomlin offered this perception:

Understanding your staff. Learning to involve people in a meaningful way even if

you already know the directions in which you want to go. Be open. Listen. Learn

and teach those that need to carry out the project…Without support from the

school personnel any project would be difficult to implement and sustain.

As far as maintaining these relationships, every principal agreed that having a

relationship with teaching faculty is a key support to implementing this practice to a high

degree. Shelly Hawson acknowledged a level of pride when talking about her faculty:

I feel fortunate to have a very capable staff in terms of skills and interests. I

strongly support the concept of "WE" in any initiative. In the second year at this

school I've seen more collaboration and participation. I hope to work with the

Building Council in my school to further the team approach as we continue to

grow and bring in new staff.

The three top supports to enabling others to act were articulated by the principals in

connection with each other. Collaboration was noted by all principals as essential, and at

the same time communication and relationships support collaborative structures within

the building.

Knowledge building is an essential component of enabling other to act. Principals noted that it was critical to not only build their personal knowledge, but that of their faculty. Opportunities for professional development are considered a support, yet they were not always within the control of some principals. In fact, Shelly Hawson noted,

Within the district, there are definitely opportunities for professional development. Are there enough? Absolutely not. One of the things that in recent years, we have been doing in our district is having these professional development half days and there are supposed to be building based. I have found that the idea is good, however I don't know if the practice is always there. Because when students leave, we should be able to go right into these modes of training for that last two, two and a half hours once they [teachers] return from lunch. But often times, the principal gets bogged down with the child that did not get picked up, or this situation, or that situation…. So the theory is spot on, but the implementation becomes challenged.

Professional development and personal knowledge building were expressed repeatedly as supports to enabling the process. Joanne McGurney shared that "we do a lot in our building on facilitating and turnkey training." Susan Thomlin noted that professional development is essential because "individuals need to have a clear understanding of what's expected… the value (importance) of the new initiative." Principals admit that they too need to build their own personal knowledge base in order to effectively implement the practice of enabling others to act. Joanne McGurney stated, "I will do

everything that I expect my staff to do. I participate in trainings and workshops alongside them."

There are five supports identified by a majority of principals for enabling others to act. The perceived supports are collaboration, communication, relationships, professional development, and knowledge building. Each of these perceived supports fall in the internal category, either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principal's behaviors with the exception of professional development.

Encouraging the heart. It is the responsibility of the principal to support and encourage faculty. This is a critical component of leadership, and essential to the overall well being of the school. There is a personal component to a principal's ability to encourage the heart. Shelly Hawson shared, "This is not attributed to my leadership style as much as it's just my personality," and Joanne McGurney stated, "I have to go with - it's more built into me." Principals agreed that relationships and providing recognition are critical supports to implementing the process of encouraging the heart.

Meetings were referenced as a key support, and they were used as a tool for the delivery of recognition and facilitating the building of relationships. Joanne McGurney shared the following example: "At the end of each monthly faculty meeting there is an "applause" section where staff members can discuss any highlights in their personal lives. It is important to celebrate all accomplishments and risks." Shelly Hawson shared her ability to provide recognition: "I am able to recognize people for their accomplishments during meetings, announcements, and letters to their personnel file. Nothing takes the place of the heartfelt personal word of thanks."

Melissa Smith provided a synopsis explaining why these practices support the implementation of encouraging the heart. She noted the importance of "taking time to meet and get to know staff and to build relationships that are based on trust and honesty." She further explained, "You cannot move a building, motivate people, or support them if relationships and trust are not established." The public school principal further explained:

It is critical to recognize individual contributions to the success of a school. I feel that it is critical to acknowledge the accomplishments of staff members. If staff members attend an after school event such as a PTO event, they get a thank you card in their mailboxes the next day acknowledging their participation…People need to know that they are appreciated or when they go the extra mile. Everyone wants acknowledgement on the work they do. If they feel valued then they will continue to put forth the extra effort for you.

The four key supports that principals perceived for encouraging the heart were: *personal trait, recognition, relationships*, and *meetings* (see Table 10).

Table 10

Encouraging the Heart Top Supports

Code	Category	Frequency
Personal Trait	Internal - Principal Control	5
Recognition	Internal - Principal Control	5
Relationships	Internal - Principal Control	5
Meetings	External - Structures in Building	4

These supports are primarily internal and within the principal's control. The only support in the external category noted was meetings; however, as modeled by principal responses, these meetings served as a platform for implementing recognition and relationship building.

Inspiring a shared vision. Successful leaders have a clear picture of the results they aim to achieve and inspire constituents to share in implementation. Principals must work to build a shared vision within the school in order to successfully implement change and do what is best for children. Joanne McGurney explained,

Listen first-and-often is a key element in implementing a vision and initiating it…

It is important to find a common ground and allow the staff to be part of the

decision-making. Ultimately, the final decision is mine but it is based upon input

from all constituents. I feel that I have established a line of communication in the

building that is open and accepting. I listen first before making a decision. The

staff understands that the final decision is always, "what is in the best interest of

the student." Some may disagree with certain decisions but understand that it was

made for the students.

Implementing this practice effectively requires building *relationships*, having clear *communication*, *consistency*, and building *trust* within the building and among the faculty (see Table 11).

Table 11

Inspiring a Shared Vision Top Supports

Code	Category	Frequency
Relationships	Internal - Principal Control	6
Communication	Internal - Behavior Influenced	5
Consistency	Internal - Principal Control	4
Trust	Internal - Principal Control	4

When asked for his perception regarding why inspiring a shared vision was not implemented to a high degree, Lewis Prawn explained: "Because it is hard to get people to share a vision." When asked what supports help to implement this practice, principals generally agreed that having relationships with stakeholders is fundamental. In fact when asked what supports principals' ability to implement the practice of inspiring a shared vision, Jacob Schmidt noted simply "conversations with others" and Susan Thomlin responded, "establish a relationship of trust with staff, parents, and community… build relationships." Melissa Smith supported the importance of relationship building further by noting that the support that best helps her implement inspiring a shared vision is "taking the time to build relationships with the staff."

In addition to building relationships with the faculty, consistency and open lines of communication are critical to inspiring as shared vision. The message being shared with faculty must be consistent. Melissa Smith reflected back on her experiences as a teacher to provide an example: "From my own experience when I was a teacher anything that was consistent for a period of time that we were allowed to get involved in really

helped to support a vision." She explained that "sharing a vision that is clear, simple, and focused" is the best way to ensure consistency. The manner in which the vision is articulated and communicated is also important. Susan Thomlin agreed: "I would say continuing to be consistent with that vision and conveying that in the various programs that we do, always staying focused on that." Communication is critical when it comes to faculty buy-in. Lewis Prawn said that in order to ensure faculty buy-in the message must be communicated clearly: "One must be able to communicate their vision and to convince others that this is the best for the organization…It is extremely difficult for people to support ideas that they cannot buy into."

Trust is built into relationships and communication at the school level. If teachers do not believe in their principals and do not trust that they will be supported, building consensus and a belief system around a shared vision is unlikely. Melissa Smith explained that in order to move forward, having integrity is essential. She noted: "People need to feel secure and that they can trust a leader." Inspiring a shared vision is vital to running an effective school. Susan Thomlin discussed the overall need for relationships, communication, consistency, and trust. She identified the importance of each of these supports as a new building administrator and sums up the importance of the supports:

> If the leaders are not creating and not establishing a strong relationship with the staff, with the parents and communities, and that is not part of the culture then that vision will fall apart, that shared vision will just fall apart.

Each of the key supports for inspiring a shared vision is internal and either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principals behaviors and yet this

practice was not implemented to a high degree. Building relationships, effectively and

consistently communicating, and fostering trust within the school house are perceived to

support the implementation of insprining a shared vision.

    Challenging the process. In order to implement change, successful leaders must

confront current reality (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Smith, 2008).

Challenging the process is an integral component to school change. If principals do not

challenge the status quo, significant school change is unlikely to occur. Shelly Hawson

spoke about the nature of change in school:

> The constant change in the policies and practices in public schools allows the
>
> opportunity to take on new challenges. Facilitating teamwork and encouraging
>
> others to take on the charge is an everyday experience. I welcome the excitement
>
> of challenge and change. My staff is energetic and constantly changing so new
>
> approaches are possible.

Lewis Prawn used his experience as a building leader to portray his perception of

challenging the process:

> Experience supports my ability to recognize challenges inherent in the process of
>
> change and improvement. One must be open minded enough to realize he/she
>
> does not possess all of the answers and to allow others to challenge his/her ideas.
>
> One must gain through their actions the support of the staff in order to move
>
> schools forward. On a more practical level tenure and the ability to take risk
>
> without being subject to whim is important for a principal or instructional leader.

Five internal supports were identified to support the implementation of challenging the process (see Table 12). These supports revolve around building *relationships* and a *culture* that supports change. In addition, implementing a shared *vision* was identified as a support to challenging the process. Jacob Schmidt noted the importance of relationships, culture, and *collaboration* in the process of challenging the process. He discussed the importance of a collegial environment among faculty members with a focus on doing what is best for students. He noted that in order to challenge the process "knowing where we are going so we know what we are looking for, and how to change it, and having measurable assessments to see if we've accomplished what we are looking to do" is important.

Table 12

Challenging the Process Top Supports

Code	Category	Frequency
Relationships	Internal - Principal Control	6
Culture	Internal - Behavior Influenced	5
Trust	Internal - Principal Control	4
Collaboration	Internal - Behavior Influenced	4
Vision	Internal - Principal Control	4

Relationships and culture are two supports that Melissa Smith identified. She noted that trust, collaborations, and the development of a vision are essential in her building as well. She explained,

It is important to take time to analyze and determine areas within a building's structure and organization that provide strength and support and those areas that cause weaknesses and gaps, not only in instruction but in the daily functioning of the building. As a leader takes time to identify strengths and weaknesses and to prioritize what must be done first, it builds trust in relationships and opens the door for change. Once people see that a change can be positive and that they play a role in "working smarter, not harder" changes can begin. One must recognize that change cannot happen overnight and that identifying key priorities and addressing them first until they are fine-tuned is a key to this change and best practices.

According to Joanne McGurney, culture and trust go hand-in-hand when it comes to providing support for the implementation of challenging the process. She acknowledged, "I feel it is critical to establish an environment where people feel it is safe to experiment. I try to encourage risk and recognize those efforts." She believed that if the staff is not willing to take risks a leader will not be successful in challenging the process. Having a shared vision plays a crucial role in establishing this willingness:

I feel that continuity in one building has provided me the years to gain the trust of staff members. Also, having continuity of leadership in the building has provided the ability to develop a common vision for the building and have everyone be part of the development and implementation of the vision… It is important to get all staff members on board for the change.

Challenging the process was not implemented to a high degree. The five key supports (relationships, culture, trust, collaboration, and vision) identified by principals to facilitate implementing challenging the process to a higher degree are all categorized as internal supports (see Table 12). Each of the supports is perceived to be either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principals' behaviors.

Summary. There are common supports perceived to positively impact the implementation of the key leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart.* The support of interpersonal relationships appeared consistently as a perceived support to the implementation of every leadership practice. The supports to implementation are predominantly categorized as internal supports. Moreover, of the 22 supports identified across the five practices, 14 supports were categorized as internal and directly within the principal's control, six supports were categorized as internal and directly influenced by the principal's behavior, and only two were categorized as external structures within the building. It is important to note that no supports driven by external forces were identified.

Research Question 2: qualitative. What do sitting principals perceive as barriers to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why? In order to address this research question, I asked principals to reflect on the barriers that they have experienced to implementing each of the leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*). In addition, principals were asked to discuss these

barriers in the face-to-face interview in order to uncover the reasons for the perceived barriers. Data were then coded and analyzed to examine the barriers to implementation.

   Overview. An analysis of data indicated that there are multiple perceived barriers to the implementation of key leadership practices. I divided codes into both internal and external categories identical to those used for categorizing the supports. These categories were used in order to identify overall patterns within the data. For the purposes of analyzing data, key barriers were considered those that were referenced by more than half of the principals in their journal and interviews.

   Modeling the way. The barriers perceived to impact the implementation of the practice modeling the way are a mix of those categorized as external and those categorized as internal (see Table 13). *Management* and *time* are the two key barriers in the external category, and a *personal trait* barrier is categorized as internal as is *experience*. There is a relationship among the two external and the two internal barriers indicated. There were no external systems barriers identified in relation to modeling the way.

Table 13

Modeling the Way Top Barriers

Code	Category	Frequency
Management	External - Structures in Building	6
Time	External - Structures in Building	5
Personal trait	Internal - Principal Control	5
Experience	Internal - Principal Control	3

Completing noninstructional management tasks, including student discipline, building emergencies, and dealing with parents, obstructs the principal's ability to model effectively. Lewis Prawn acknowledged, "often time and other managerial activities prevent us from fully implementing the practice of modeling." Engaging in management activities often impact a principal's available time. Shelly Hawson explained, "There are so many things that come up during a school day: testing, discipline, professional development, observations, meetings that can distract from the focus of improving student performance." In fact, in addressing time as a barrier, principals acknowledge their need to make time in order to model the way. Joanne McGurney noted:

> I have to make the time. The one structure we had recently, when we did the whole Columbia Teacher's College implementation… [the district] provided the opportunity for us to go into the week long summer institute and … if you chose to spend half the time in the building that was not a problem. I chose to stay the whole time because if I'm going to have my teachers start implementing a new initiative I want to know what I'm supposed to be observing. It was excellent. I just feel for me and in part of who I am if I'm learning something I have to be actively engaged in it, to really understand it, and if I'm going to have expectations for others than I should be doing the same thing…

The number of management activities, and thus their time impact, was perceived as a critical barrier, particularly because of the seven participating principals, only two had an assistant principal or other administrative support within the building.

Principals often have personal barriers to overcome in order to effectively implement modeling within their buildings. Joanne McGurney described these barriers as "my own insecurities and doubts that can creep in once in awhile." She explained that often not taking the time to be reflective and examine things that have been put in place is a barrier to her own ability to model. Melissa Smith agreed that sometimes they key to implementation is just about having "the energy to stay focused" These personal insecurities and attributes often impede the building leader's ability to move forward and model with fidelity. Jacob Schmidt indicated that sometimes insecurities provide a significant personal barrier for him: "You can have all the experience but not accept that you are ready or feel that you are ready and attempt to execute ideas prematurely/ineffectively."

Three principals agreed that experience was a barrier to implementing modeling the way. Two of these principals have been a building principal for fewer than 3 years, and one was not a classroom teacher. They each indicated that a lack of experience was a barrier to successful modeling. Shelly Hawson explained, "I have not formally implemented [this] practice. Again this is my second year in a tough setting where there have been a lot of major changes over a short time." Jacob Schmidt acknowledged that it is important to acquire enough experience to develop "the sense that you know enough to support the cause."

Enabling others to act. Principals identified a variety of barriers to enabling others to act; however, they did not universally agree on any one barrier. There are three top perceived barriers to implementing the practice enabling others to act: *time,* the

teachers' *union*/contractual obligations, and *professional development*. All three of these barriers were categorized as external (see Table 14).

Table 14

Enabling Others to Act Top Barriers

Code	Category	Frequency
Time	External - Structures in Building	4
Teachers' Union	External - Systems Driven	4
Professional Development	External - Structures in Building	3

Principals identified time as a barrier to enabling others to act. Shelly Hawson explained that "usually time limitations are a major constraint when it comes to planning and meeting around initiatives." According to Cassandra Levy, in Public School 3 the general day-to-day functions of the building cause time impediments that make enabling others to act difficult:

Sometimes there are times in a high traffic building, there are times when my building's very busy and I like to be a part of all of this and sometimes I can't be. So if I have a crisis situations that goes on or a crisis at central office that I have to be a part of, a parent that comes in that demands my attention, that time definitely takes away from being a part of this as a stake-holder, which gives me less time with the staff. Sometimes I've had to miss meetings that I've wanted to be a part of for parents or just the daily stuff that happens in school.

Lewis Prawn indicated that often central office mandates, meetings, and general building management take away from the time needed to successfully implement this practice.

In the small-city, urban school districts participating in the study, building principals perceive that the teachers' union is strong and powerful. As such, many principals perceive the teachers' union itself as well as contractual obligations a barrier to the implementation of enabling others to act. In general the principals perceived the union and negotiated language to prohibit the development of structures and supports that enable others to act. Shelly Hawson explained,

> Sometimes contractual issues arise that impede forward movement. Many teachers have misinformation or choose to apply contractual language in a manner that even ties their hands. Often they are pressured to do or refrain from doing things that benefit children. While I have total respect for procedure, it can lock out fresh ideas that new people bring.

These types of contractual barriers exist across the educational system. Melissa Smith acknowledged that this is not only a perceived barrier within her school:

> Well, honestly I think one of the things that is a barrier to this is that we have tenure in the system that supports mediocrity, so sometimes it's difficult to enable people to help themselves because maybe they don't want to or maybe they feel that they don't need to. I'm not necessarily speaking of my building… I mean there are always a few teachers in every building, but I think that that's a huge barrier to getting people on board because it just can be really easy to sit back and not be a part of that.

Principals perceive these contractual obligations to impede the implementation of effective professional development opportunities. In addition, often professional

development opportunities are not available for the district in key areas that faculty members need support. Susan Thomlin noted there are "limited funds for professional development" and therefore the support is not always available. Susan Thomlin explained how this deficit creates a barrier to enabling others to act:

> Again as I said, can we have more professional development, that could be always increased and I find that with the budget cuts our funds have been limited and so our professional development program is not as rich as we would like it to be. We have offered and will continued offering but I feel with some certain areas we can provide more, so I see that as a barrier.

Principals agree that even when professional development is offered, sometimes it is not well planned. Joanne McGurney noted that "last year's superintendent conference days were only offered twice and they weren't well executed." This lack of opportunity provides an even greater perceived barrier to principal's implementation of enabling others to act.

All of the perceived barriers to enabling others to act were external barriers. Principals do not feel that there are any internal barriers either directly within their control or influenced by their behaviors to their ability to implement this practice. Time, the teacher's union, and the opportunity for teachers to attend professional development are all perceived to impede the principal's ability to successfully enable others to act. There were no barriers to the implementation of this practice, which were implemented in all participating schools to a high degree.

Encouraging the heart. There was only one perceived barrier to encouraging the heart identified by a majority of the principals: *time*. Jacob Schmidt noted that a key barrier is "feeling that there is not enough time to do it all." He further explained that this lack of time results in "focus[ing] on the problem so much that you do not leave energy to work on a solution." The principal from Jacob Smith actually acknowledged that there are "no barriers that I face in this area except if the craziness of the day takes over and I forget to acknowledge someone in a timely fashion." This is a generally supported perception among the participating principals. Melissa Smith shared a similar sentiment:

> Some of it's finding and making the time to move away from paperwork. And I would say they're more personal. Really putting energy in to making sure you connect with everybody and not just the people you know are doing a good job. I think time is the biggest issue with that.

Shelly Hawson identified time as the main barrier to implementing this practice. She noted that sometimes it is "the limitations of time" that cause the recognition and encouragement of staff to get overlooked.

Principals also noted that relationship and staff transition may be a barrier to implementing encouraging the heart. Lewis Prawn shared that "failure to learn and understand you staff is a barrier." The principal in Joanne McGurney identified how both relationships and staff transition are contributing barriers:

> Transition of staff, sometimes you establish an environment where you know what kind of people you want in your building and had to make some tough choices about terminating and that kind of shakes it up a little bit – you've let so

and so go or she moved another teacher who established in the building for such a
long time, so now you have a little emotional upheaval going on, so as much as
your trying to do things for the right decisions for kids, the personal piece comes
in, the teachers react, it's their friend, it's their colleague whose being effected,
not really seeing where the decision was being made because it was in the best
interest for kids, those are barriers too when you have to deal with the different
personalities, different undertones, and you have to be very aware of that and
sometimes you can be, and then sometimes you just can't.

In school buildings where staff is transitioned often from one building to another,
encouraging the heart is even more difficult. As this sort of movement is a somewhat
frequent occurrence in small-city school districts, some of the participating principals
reflected on the impact of transition on this practice. Shelly Hawson reflected on the
causes of this barrier:

Constantly transitioning people in and constantly transitioning people out, who
knows what piece of the initiative, who's gotten what level of training, so you
have to stay fresh on who's gotten what, who you can use as turnkey individuals
to kind of keep information and keep it fresh and at the same time not allow the
people who are seasoned to become discouraged. That sometimes can be a
barrier.

Time, *relationships*, and *staff transition* were identified by some principals as a
perceived barrier to the implementation of encouraging the heart. There were no
universally perceived barriers to implementing this practice, which was implemented by

participating principals to a high degree. Time was the only practice acknowledged by a majority of participating principals. Two of these practices, time and staff transition, are external practices related to structures within the building, while fostering and dealing with interpersonal relationships is an internal practice (see Table 15).

Table 15

Encouraging the Heart Top Barriers

Code	Category	Frequency
Time	External - Structures in Building	4
Relationships	Internal - Principal Control	3
Staff Transition	External - Structures in Building	3

Inspiring a shared vision. Principals agreed on the greatest number of perceived barriers for the practice of inspiring a shared vision. There are six top barriers to this practice: a lack of *central office supports*, *culture*, lack of *consistency*, absence of a *central office vision*, a lack of *experience*, and the degree to which teachers are *willing to change*. Four of these barriers were categorized as internal, and two were categorized as external (see Table 16). The internal barriers are both directly within the principal's control or influenced by the principal's behavior, the external barriers are both systems driven within the district.

Table 16

Inspiring a Shared Vision Top Barriers

Code	Category	Frequency
CO Support	External - Systems Driven	7
Culture	Internal - Behavior Influenced	6
Consistency	Internal - Principal Control	5
CO Vision	External - Systems Driven	5
Experience	Internal - Principal Control	4
Willingness to Change	Internal - Behavior Influenced	4

Universally, principals agreed that a lack of central office support was a top barrier to inspiring a shared vision. This lack of central office support was perceived to drive the following three top barriers that principals perceived to impact their ability to implement this practice to a high degree. They felt that this lack of support resulted in a lack of shared vision at the district level, created a lack of consistency within the district, and impacted the culture of the building. Shelly Hawson worried about trust as a result of this lack of central office vision noting that "the lack of trust for the district's central administration can be a challenge." Principals found it difficult to move forward without the supports of the district office, and without guidance. Those who found a lack of central office vision to be a barrier directly related that lack of vision to a lack of central office support. Cassandra Levy did not see visioning at the central office level and felt strongly that this lack of vision impacted the support that she received from the central office. She explained,

At the district level I don't think that [inspiring a shared vision] was done at all. We spoke about things that we wanted to work on and it just never came to fruition for whatever reason: turnover in administration, turnover at the central level and the district level - so I think there were some barriers there.

Jacob Schmidt agreed. He shared that this lack of support leads to a lack of cohesiveness from the other schools in the district. He reflected,

I feel it's looking for direction from central administration … so we can have the continuity and alignment to move forward together. Being a newer administrator I feel that I was waiting for that, at this point I feel like I'm fragmenting in the district, becoming like a rogue elementary school because of that, because I don't feel like I got the direction or support.

Principals concurred that this lack of support was fragmenting, and provided an immense obstacle to implementing the practice of inspiring a shared vision internally within their school building. It often was perceived to cause a lack of focus, unclear parameters, and undefined goals for principals to focus on. Joanne McGurney expressed concern regarding the lack of support, vision, and structure available at the central office level. She explained how big of a barrier the lack of support is

How do you make decisions and how do you set a practice if you don't have anything that gives you that information to bring back to your staff that says this sight based management teams were working on this is what we are finding as a district is we don't have those in place… The lack of support is a huge barrier, huge.

Melissa Smith simply noted that it is difficult to move forward as a building when the

central office doesn't provide support or changes initiatives frequently. She stated that the

barrier is caused by,

> Some protocol and practices not being in place at the district level, and so
>
> sometimes you may try to move forward as a building and you might have to stop
>
> because you're moving too fast or you're not in line with where the district is.

The lack of central office support was emotionally concerning to principals as well. They

universally noted frustration, a feeling of having their time wasted, and a lack of district-

wide community. Principals indicated that with a lack of central office support the district

begins to fragment, and principals feel that they lose peer support, and can sometimes

feel the schools are no longer working in tandem. Finally, the lack of central office

support causes principals to feel as if they can no longer make sound building-based

decisions, which makes inspiring a shared vision very difficult to implement.

The culture and lack of central office vision were both barriers that were

uncovered as principals reflected on why a lack of support from the central office is a

barrier to implanting the leadership practice inspiring a shared vision in their building.

Joanne McGurney shared the need for the central office to provide that opportunity for a

district-wide shared vision:

> If we were ever brought back together and told this is what the vision is of the
>
> district now go ahead and move that forward in your building the way you need
>
> to, but this is the primary vision. We don't have that baseline, that data, this is

how we want things to be this is where we want to look at, your whole prior

CDEP, site based management teams are gone.

Culture is affected by history. Lewis Prawn noted, "history and experiences can be

barrier to implementing a vision." He discussed how often, trying to implement a shared

vision was impeded by teachers' recognition of the many initiatives that have come and

gone, the culture within the building, and the manner in which change had been

attempted in the past. Susan Thomlin acknowledged the importance of school culture:

> If the leaders are not creating and not establishing a strong relationship with the
>
> staff, with the parents and communities and that's not part of the culture then that
>
> vision will far apart, that shared vision will fall apart.

Principals also reflected on the impact of setting clear expectations, communication,

relationships, and consistency. These attributes must be part of the culture at the building

level as well as the district level in order for the principal to successfully implement the

practice of inspiring a shared vision. Melissa Smith shared her experiences:

> I think often times people on any end of the spectrum whether it be central office,
>
> building leadership, even teachers in different departments may think that they're
>
> being very clear about what it is they need or what their goal is, but it may not
>
> necessarily be so. So I would think they may be very confident but they might not
>
> have communicated it clearly.

> Lack of consistency from the principal is also a barrier to implementing inspiring

a shared vision. If the goals, objectives, and expectations that the principals set forth are

not consistent, staff will be hesitant to support the vision. Melissa Smith acknowledged

this: "My experience has demonstrated that it is the resistant staff and sometimes inconsistency in attitude from administration—self included." Changing direction mid-course also impacts the principal's ability to foster a shared vision. Lewis Prawn reflected that in his experience, sometimes implementing changes as "stop gap measures don't allow us to really work very well." He supported this observation by sharing by noting "unsustainable efforts destroy a schools ability to change."

For those principals who have been at the building level for fewer than 5 years, experience was a contributing factor. Jacob Schmidt stated, "lack of longevity is the biggest obstacle for me." This is not an uncommon sentiment among the newer principals. The lack of time spent within their building caused a gap in their ability to implement the practice of inspiring a shared vision. Cassandra Levy similarly identified "newness to the building, my lack of experience, definitely" as a barrier to inspiring a shared vision. She explained how lack of experience caused a barrier:

> I was pretty much in a whirlwind and just learning how to be a principal and all of the tasks that come with it. I didn't focus in that area, I did a lot of modeling and talking about what I was interested in and where I wanted the building to go but didn't have a real thoughtful plan.

It is a common theme. Susan Thomlin shared another similar reflection, noting, "I think it's just lack of experience in the building and trying to put out what my focus is. I've addressed the needs of the building. I haven't been able to get there yet." Shelly Hawson concurred: "It could be the newness in this building—it could be the transition."

Finally, principals identify willingness to change as a barrier to inspiring a shared vision. This resistance can be caused by many of the earlier-defined barriers including central office support, central office vision, culture, and lack of principal experience. "Those employees who are resistant to change and hide behind the union are a barrier," explained Melissa Smith. The principals also reflected on the cause for the resistance. Joanne McGurney noted,

> There are times in the school year where teachers feel the most stressed (state administration, report cards, DRA testing etc.) where they are compounded with deadlines…When this occurs, staff become resistant to change or having more put on their plate. With this they can become defensive and resistant to change and timelines

This degree of willingness to change is perceived as difficult to overcome by school principals.

A combination of these six barriers to implementing the practice of inspiring a shared vision (central office support, culture, consistency, central office vision, experience, willingness to change) create a portrait of why this practice was not implemented by participating principals to a high degree. Shelly Hawson reflected deeply on this. Ultimately she shared,

> Sometimes people are not as able or willing to see what you as a leader can see. The lack of trust for the district's central administration can be a challenge. The building leader is in the middle, between central office, between the state. The bombardment of assessments and other mandates takes away from opportunities

to effectively engage staff in the dialogue and professional development needed to

establish let alone work toward a shared vision. Perhaps they (teachers) have

vision and ideas as well.

The external lack of support provided by the central office is a key barrier to

implementing the practice of inspiring a shared vision. Principals strongly asserted that

without central office support, inspiring a shared vision at the building level was difficult,

and frustrating for them personally.

Challenging the process. Challenging the process requires principals to take

risks. Principals demonstrated discomfort at the idea of implementing this leadership

practice. Many noted that they were not surprised that this practice was implemented to

the least degree. Shelly Hawson offered a thought: "There are no risk-takers in our

business." Susan Thomlin reflected further on the degree of implementation. She shared,

Some leaders may not be strong enough to truly challenge the process. They may

be more concerned with keeping a status quo, and not wanting to greet too much

change and too much static in the organization, in the school building, or the

district.

Lewis Prawn reflected on implementing the practice of challenging the process

and its low degree of implementation. After some thought he identified a cause: "fear of

the unknown, fear of failure, not really knowing where you want to bring it, not knowing

what the process was, how you want to change it, not knowing what the purpose is—why

you're changing it." Overall the principals share a common perception: It is difficult to

implement the practice of challenging the process. Universally they attributed this

perception to the barrier of a lack of central office support. Without central office support there is a great deal of anxiety associated with challenging the process. For example, Joanne McGurney noted, "I want to move the staff along but not knowing what a future superintendent or assistant superintendent's vision is for education—it is a challenge." Shelly Hawson supported this level of anxiety by sharing that often there is so much going on at once, and to the principal central office support is critical to being able to handle everything. However, to challenge the process requires more. She noted "the biggest obstacle can be the lack of information available to the building principal from central administration." Cassandra Levy explained the need for this information and support in greater detail. She reflected on why a lack of support from the central office is a barrier to implementation but shared that it is hard to challenge a process, when processes and practices are not well defined:

> It is difficult to not know what the process is - for whatever it may be, it could be interviewing, grading, it could be anything; how you approach board members, anything there wasn't a real sound process for. And on top of that having turnover in administration and no support is hard because every time you get somebody new it's a different process. There is no process to challenge.

A lack of consistent vision combined with a lack of support can disjoin a district. Not knowing where support will come from hampers a principal's willingness to take risks and is perceived as an impediment to the implementation of the leadership practice challenging the process. Joanne McGurney expressed the difficulty imposed by lack of support and vision on the part of the central office:

The barriers I experience (in particular this year) is the inconsistent and lack of

leadership from central office. There are areas that need to be addressed and

implemented (AIS, RTI, Professional development) but this has not occurred.

Not having a district-wide vision and educational plan that is implemented and

followed has presented many challenges for me.

These challenges are perceived to impact the implementation of challenging the process.

Teacher's resistance and willingness to change make it difficult for principals to

implement the practice of inspiring a shared vision. This difficulty is sometimes the result

of a changing central office vision, union contracts, lack of a building wide vision, or

simply a reluctant staff member. Principals perceive the ability to implement challenging

the process to be dependent on their ability to implement a shared vision. Shelly Hawson

noted, "I think sometimes that staff, you can see it and hear it and feel it, but getting them

to see it and hear it—they are resistance to change." This resistance on their part impacts

the principal's willingness to take a chance. Principals acknowledge that their faculty had

to be willing to take a risk right along with them. Jacob Schmidt noted, "Those that do

not want to face challenges, to gain progress, at times will focus more on the problems

and avoid discussing solutions." If teachers are comfortable with the status quo, building

consensus and challenging the process is difficult to implement.

The system of education is an external, systems barrier to the implementation of

the leadership practice challenging the process. Principals agree on the perception that the

educational system in the United States requires reform. Shelly Hawson explained,

The fact that teachers are tenured and it is difficult to fire or remove an ineffective

teacher greatly impacts the ability to make necessary changes within the

educational system. Though the unions served a purpose to protect university

professors and those in the educational profession prior to 1975, the needs of

professionals have changed…When one out of 2,500 ineffective teachers loses

their license to teach, it is a detriment to change, effective teaching and improved

student performance across the nation.

Often the politics of the system of education in general inhibits a principal's willingness

to challenge the process. Principals reflected on changing and unfunded mandates, in

conjunction with a new APPR that evaluated both teachers and principals on student

performance. Principals perceived that these statewide reform initiatives are implemented

too quickly and are difficult to challenge. Shelly Hawson was clear about her concerns:

"There's a lot within the system that isn't set up to be centered around what's in the best

interest in children. It's more about supporting the adults." In general, all of the principals

expressed similar sentiments regarding the need for reform and their frustration with the

state's implementation of the reform agenda.

The barriers to challenging the process were primarily categorized as external (see

Table 17). Principals' indicated that these systems barriers deter from the successful

implementation of challenging the process as a result of a feeling of frustration and lack

of clarity. They acknowledged that within their building faculty become resistant and

have a lack of willingness to change often as a result of these external factors. Principals

themselves indicated that they are not clear on the processes, structures, and reform

mandates. They feel this lack of information impeded their ability to both build a shared vision around them and ultimately challenge the process.

Table 17

Challenging the Process Top Barriers

Code	Category	Frequency
CO Support	External - Systems Driven	7
CO Vision	External - Systems Driven	4
Willingness to Change	Internal - Behavior Influenced	4
Resistance	Internal - Behavior Influenced	4
System	External - Systems Driven	4

Primary Research Question

In this study I examined the primary research question: What supports and barriers do K-12 principals' identify in relationship to their implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart*? This research question drove the mixed method design of the study. To address this research question, a baseline of implementation data was required (quantitative) in order to determine principals' perceptions of supports and barriers to implementation of key leadership practices. Supports and barriers to a principal's ability to implement the leadership practices were identified, and I categorized these supports and barriers as internal or external. I used an inductive approach to better understand the impact of these internal and external barriers on the implementation of the practices.

Summary. Perceived barriers to the implementation of key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way*, and *encouraging the heart*) included those in both internal and external categories. The three leadership practices implemented to the highest degree (*modeling the way, enabling others to act,* and *encouraging the heart*) had the least number of barriers. For these three practices 6 of the 10 barriers across the three practices were categorized as external barriers related to structures within the building and one is an external, systems-driven barrier. The systems-driven barrier is the teachers union within the district, which principals perceived as strong and resistant to change. Only three of the 10 barriers were categorized as internal. Of those barriers, time was a key barrier across all three of the practices. The two practices that are implemented to the lowest degree (inspiring a shared vision, and challenging the process) had the greatest number of barriers agreed on by the most principals in the study. For both practices a lack of central office support was identified by all participating principals as the top barrier to implementation. For these two practices, all of the external barriers were systems barriers.

Additional Findings

LPI responses. In an effort to uncover the discrepancy between teacher and principal responses on the LPI survey, I asked principals why they believed the results were discrepant. Universally, principals attributed this discrepancy to a communication barrier and a collaboration barrier. When I asked about the discrepancy between responses Cassandra Levy noted,

> Communication with your staff is critical, not talking with your staff—thinking
>
> one thing and not really asking and listening to what they feel or believe. I feel
>
> they are the crux of the building. I think (this can be overcome by) having
>
> somebody working at the head—working with the teachers union president. I feel
>
> that things were done a certain way for so long and people were able to get away
>
> with so much or whatever it was and it tainted the district. I feel that in a district
>
> we need to work together and we need to find a common ground to work together
>
> and I felt that a lot of times that didn't happen, it was us versus them as a district
>
> and that's something that needs to be looked at, because we're all here for the
>
> same reason.

Principals discussed both internal and external communication barriers. These

communication barriers were sometimes the result of culture and trust within the building

as can be seen by the response of Susan Thomlin:

> I think that probably because maybe there are a few teachers that see that maybe
>
> they're not being recognized, maybe their working isn't being highlighted as
>
> much, maybe they feel it should be. Maybe they have other ideas of how they
>
> think this should be celebrated, and maybe they're not voicing that, but voicing
>
> that enough to let the leader know to some extent.

The manner in which principals and teachers approached the survey was also addressed.

Melissa Smith noted that if communication isn't clear, sometimes teachers and principals

are looking through a different lens:

I just think that we have different perspectives: The teacher perspective is focused

on what is important to them which is their classroom, their grade level, and a

principal is looking at the big picture, not only on how the building functions but

knowing where the districts headed. And sometimes I think it may not even be

that you didn't give somebody the answer they wanted or how they think it should

be because maybe they're just looking at a small piece or they don't see the big

picture in the same way. So I think maybe a lot of it's perspective and your role in

the process.

The principals all agreed that having more of a dialogue and opening lines of

communication with their teachers would facilitate addressing this discrepancy. Susan

Thomlin clearly addressed this issue:

Having more of a conversation with teachers, more dialogue, allowing them to

feel comfortable enough to open up. Sometimes they may restrain and not share

for whatever reason. They may not want to appear as if they were complaining.

Lewis Prawn offered a straightforward response regarding how the discrepancy could be

overcome: "better communication."

Synthesis

The principals who participated in this study perceived the supports to the

implementation of all leadership practices to fall generally within the internal category.

Three practices were identified as implemented to a high degree: modeling the way,

enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. The primary barrier that principals

perceive to impact the implementation of these practices is time. A common theme of the

importance of building interpersonal relationships and fostering communication is clear across all supports for all practices. All of the identified supports to the implementation of these practices are categorized as internal either within the principal's control or influenced by the principal's behavior.

More barriers were within the external categories; however, in all of the barriers identified, only three top barriers identified by a majority of the principals were categorized as external system barriers. These barriers are the teachers union, a lack of central office support, and a lack of central office vision. Other external barriers identified were building specific and included time, building management, and staff transition.

For the two practices implemented to the lowest degree of implementation, inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process, the primary barrier identified by all principals for both was a lack of central office support. Principals felt that without central office support the implementation of inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process becomes increasingly difficult. In fact, for these two practices, all of the external barriers were systems barriers. A comparison of the supports and barriers indicated that all of the perceived supports to implement both inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process were categorized as internal supports. The primary support to the implementation of both of these practices is interpersonal relationships.

Discrepant Cases and Nonconfirming Data

Although the principals displayed variance in some of the supports and barriers identified specific to their district structures, in general, the data fell within common

constructs. No entire case stood out from the data, or revealed discrepant results. There was one principal of the original sample of eight who did not complete the study. As a result, the partial data collected from this principal and her one teacher on the LPI survey tool were discarded prior to conducting the descriptive statistical analysis. This action protected the overall accuracy, reliability, and validity of the baseline data used for the design of the interview questions. Another principal identified changing initiatives as a support to challenging the process. This was unique only to this one principal, and discrepant from the data identifying relationships as the primary support of challenging the process. However, this principal also identified relationships as a support, which aligned with the overall data. As such, changing initiatives was not considered as a primary support to challenging the process. In fact, changing initiatives was not identified as a primary support or barrier to any practice, which is surprising considering the current State Board Reform Agenda.

Evidence of Quality

The overall quality of the study was enhanced through the use of multiple measures. A research log, the triangulation of data, transcript review, and member-checking were all techniques used to ensure the quality of the data collection and analysis process. The techniques were implemented as appropriate throughout the study. Each individual measure was chosen to improve the general quality of the study.

A research log served as a bias management tool in order to record my personal perceptions as I progressed through the study. Given the nature of my experience and my detailed understanding of the leadership practices studies, combined with my familiarity

with the region in which the study was conducted, controlling for personal perception and bias was appropriate. The identification of personal biases, combined with perceptions of supports or barriers that I personally anticipated, were recorded. Throughout the data analysis process, I referenced this journal. The reflection served the purpose of preventing personal bias and perception from influencing the findings of the study.

Many levels of data triangulation occurred throughout the study. Multiple data collection measures from multiple sources were used. The quantitative survey data were collected from both principals and their teachers in order to ensure fidelity of the self-report responses on the part of principals. In addition, the qualitative portion of the study included journal reflections and interviews. Though the interviews served to help uncover a deeper level of understanding in relation to the research questions, these two data collection methods served to check the integrity of principal responses.

Throughout the interview process both member-checking and transcript review were used to influence quality. Member checking was conducted throughout the interview in order to clarify my understanding of the principals' responses and to validate my interpretations. Each principal was asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and to determine if any interpretations made were valid. The member-checking procedures ensured that personal perception was controlled for and that participant responses were clear.

Summary

Principals implement the key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the*

heart) to varying degrees. Overall, three practices were implemented to a high degree: modeling the way, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Two practices were implemented to some degree: inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process.

The overall perceived supports to the successful implementation of all of these practices are primarily categorized as internal: either directly within the control of the principal or influenced by the principal's behavior. A general theme identified that the development and fostering of interpersonal relationships on the part of the principal is the greatest support to the implementation of all of the leadership practices. Although there are barriers categorized as external that principals perceive to impact their ability to implement shared leadership practices, data revealed that the supports are primarily categorized as internal. For the two practices implemented to the lowest degree, external barriers are indicated, including a lack of central office support and a lack of central office vision. The barriers identified for these two practices demonstrated the highest degree of consensus among principal participants.

The findings of the study are examined in greater detail in chapter 5. A discussion and interpretation of the findings will be provided. I will also include conclusions and recommendations for further study. Chapter 5 will culminate with the implications that this study have on social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will provide discussion of the study, a summary of the findings outlined in chapter 4, and an interpretation of those findings. I will also include conclusions and recommendations for further study. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications that the findings and interpretations of this study have on social change will be presented. Subsequently recommendations for future study will be offered.

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

The theoretical framework for this sequential, mixed methods study is based on a consensus theory of effective school leadership. A "common core of successful leadership practices" (Leithwood, 2008, p. 110) provided a framework for the study. The practices are built on behavioral leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, and concepts of effective instructional leadership. The practices were framed by Kouzes and Posner (1995): challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart. These practices exemplify an effective school leader.

The purpose of this study was to examine the supports and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented universally in all school settings. I examined the primary research question: What supports and barriers do K-12 principals identify in relationship to their

implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart*? These practices were validated in a recent study of secondary school principals. The LPI is a valid measure despite familiarity between faculty and leadership (Pugh, Filligim, Blackburn, Bunch, & Thomas, 2011). I used sequential mixed methodology in order to provide a baseline of data on the implementation of leadership practices prior to examining the barriers and supports to implementation.

Principals in this study implemented the key leadership practices to varying degrees. The implementation of all of the five practices was perceived to be within the capacity and control of the principal. There were external barriers that principals perceived to impact their abilities to implement leadership practices; however, the internal nature of the perceived supports indicated that it was within the school principal's capacity to overcome these barriers. This finding has important implications.

Quantitative Research Questions

In this study I examined five quantitative research questions in order to determine the degree to which principals implement each of the five leadership practices:

1. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *challenging the process?*
2. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *inspiring a shared vision?*
3. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *enabling others to act?*
4. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *modeling the way?*
5. To what extent do principals implement key elements of *encouraging the heart?*

I collected quantitative data from both principals and some of the teachers within their schools, using the LPI online survey tool, in order to determine the degree of implementation of each practice. None of the practices were implemented to a low degree. Overall, three practices were identified as being implemented to a high degree: modeling the way, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Two practices were implemented to only some degree: inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process. Challenging the process was implemented to the lowest degree in participating schools. In order to better understand this discovery, qualitative analysis was necessary.

Qualitative Research Questions

The qualitative component of this study served to create a deeper understanding of the perceived supports and barriers to the key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart*). The electronic journal prompts served to allow principals time to reflect on the key practices and to examine their perceptions of the supports and barriers to implementation. It also provided the opportunity to reflect on why and how perceived supports and barriers impact implementation. The face-to-face interviews provided a deeper conversation about the practices and offered principals the time to reflect on the degree of implementation in relation to perceived supports and barriers. Two research questions were examined in the qualitative portion of the study:

1. What do sitting principals perceive as supports to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

2. What do sitting principals perceive as barriers to the implementation of elements of these key research-based leadership practices and why?

Modeling the way. Principals perceived the practice of modeling as a personal trait. The supports to implementing this practice include communication, expectations, and experience. Principals perceived the personal trait feature to be essential in the process of modeling. All of the supports for this practice were internal and either directly within the principal's control or influenced by the principal's behaviors. No external supports were identified in relation to modeling the way to a high degree.

Although the perceived barriers to modeling the way were both external and internal, there were no external systems barriers perceived. Principals identified both building management and time as barriers. Building management refers to student discipline, mandatory paperwork, dealing with parents, teachers, and all of those functions that a principal has to complete that are not directly related to building leadership. These factors are perceived to impact the time available for modeling. In addition, principals perceived that they can foster their own personal barriers to facilitating the implementation of modeling. The supports and barriers, when viewed collectively, indicate that principals perceive the implementation of the leadership practice modeling the way to be within their control. As such, modifying their own behaviors will enable principals to implement this practice to a high degree.

Enabling others to act. A majority of principals perceived five top supports for enabling others to act: collaboration, communication, relationships, professional development, and knowledge building. With the exception of professional development,

each of these supports is internal, either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principal's behavior. Professional development opportunities are sometimes within the control of the principal, but frequently they are district driven. Overall, the perceptions of the principals indicated that they believed the supports to enabling others to act were internal to their own capacity.

All of the perceived barriers to enabling others to act were external barriers and not directly within the control of the principal. Time, the teacher's union, and the opportunity for teachers to attend professional development are all perceived to impede the principal's ability to successfully enable others to act. Principals did not perceive any internal barriers to their ability to implement this practice. There were no universally perceived barriers to the implementation of this practice, which was implemented in all participating schools to a high degree. Principals indicated the belief that it is within their control to overcome these external barriers within their buildings. Although time and contractual obligations can cause barriers, collaboration, communication, and relationships can be employed to overcome those external forces.

Encouraging the heart. The four key supports perceived by principals to implementing encouraging the heart are primarily internal and within the principal's control. Principals identified personal traits, recognition, relationships, and meetings as supports to implementing this practice. Although meetings are an external support (building structure), principals perceived their ability to use meetings effectively as a support for implementing recognition and relationship building. This perception implies

that the behaviors of the principal are the greatest support to the implementation of encouraging the heart.

Time was the only barrier to implementing the practice of encouraging the heart perceived by the majority of principals. For the most part, principals perceived the implementation of this practice to be a personal trait and within their control. As such, principals felt autonomy in the implementation of encouraging the heart, and identified the need to make time in their practice to do so. This implies that it is within the internal capacity of principals to implement this practice to a high degree.

Inspiring a shared vision. Inspiring a shared vision was not implemented to a high degree by participating principals. The key supports to implementing inspiring a shared vision perceived by principals are internal and either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principal's behaviors. The supports to implementing this practice effectively include building relationships, having clear communication, being consistent, and building trust within the building and among the faculty. These factors are all within a principal's control. Yet this practice was not implemented to a high degree indicating that there are barriers that impede implementation.

A majority of principals agreed on more barriers for this practice than for any other single practice. Six barriers were perceived to impact principals' ability to successfully implement enabling others to act: a lack of central office supports, culture, lack of consistency, absence of a central office vision, a lack of experience, and the degree to which teachers are willing to change. The barriers to implementing the practice

of inspiring a shared vision (central office support, culture, consistency, central office vision, experience, willingness to change) provide a framework to portray why this practice was not implemented by participating principals to a high degree. The barriers relate to one another and pull external systematic barriers into the internal school building and practices of the principal.

Although there are multiple barriers identified by principals, including two external systems barriers, all of the supports identified are internal. There seemed to be a sense of control and autonomy on the part of the principal. The principals perceive the supports to overcoming the barriers to be internal and within their control. As such, building principals have the capacity to adjust behaviors in order to implement this practice to a high degree. It also implies that although principals feel that a lack of support and vision from the central office create obstacles, they perceive their role to be autonomous enough to overcome these obstacles at the building level.

Challenging the process. The practice of challenging the process was implemented to the lowest degree by participating principals. If principals do not challenge the status quo, significant school change is unlikely to occur. It is important to better understand the supports that best facilitate the implementation of challenging the process in schools. Principals identified five key supports (relationships, culture, trust, collaboration, and vision) to facilitate implementing challenging the process to a higher degree. These are all internal supports. Each of the supports is either directly within the control of the principal, or influenced directly by the principal's behaviors. Although

there were barriers to implementing this practice, the supports were perceived to be within the control of the principal.

Principals identified a lack of central office support as a key barrier to implementing challenging the process. Without central office support there is a great deal of anxiety associated with challenging the process. Additional barriers include a lack of central office vision, willingness to change, resistance, and the educational system itself; however, the lack of central office support was a key and critical barrier identified by all principals. The barriers to challenging the process are primarily external. This indicates that principals feel that external variables influence their ability to implement this practice.

Though principals' perceptions signify that systems barriers deter from the successful implementation of challenging the process, the perceived supports tell a different story. All of the supports to implementing this practice are internal supports either within the principal's control or directly influenced by principal behavior. Principals felt in control of being able to implement this practice despite the lack of central office support. Similar to the findings from inspiring a shared vision, principals perceived their role to be autonomous enough to overcome these obstacles at the building level.

Summary. The perceived supports to the successful implementation of all of the leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way,* and *encouraging the heart*) are primarily internal. Principals identified no external systems driven supports. Principals perceive all supports to

implementing the key leadership practices to be within their capacity to influence or to be

building driven. Principals feel a sense of independence and autonomy within their

building that supports their ability to implement leadership practices. It also suggests it is

within the principal's capacity to implement each of the five key leadership practices

effectively.

The principal-perceived barriers to the successful implementation of the key

leadership included both internal and external barriers. The barriers for practices

implemented to a high degree vary from those for practices implemented to a lesser

degree. The three leadership practices implemented to the highest degree (*modeling the

way, enabling others to act,* and *encouraging the heart*) had the fewest barriers. Time

was a key barrier across all three of these practices. Principals perceive they have the

ability to implement these practices, but time can sometimes inhibit implementation. For

the two practices that are implemented to the lowest degree (inspiring a shared vision,

and challenging the process), however, a lack of central office support was identified by

all participating principals as the top barrier to implementation. Although inspiring a

shared vision and challenging the process had internal and external barriers, all of the

external barriers were systems barriers uninfluenced by the school principal. Therefore, it

is less likely that principals will implement a practice to a high degree when system

barriers are involved.

Comparatively, the supports to the lowest implemented practices (inspiring a

shared vision and challenging the process) are internal and within the principal's capacity

to influence, and the barriers are primarily external. The overall barrier agreed on by all

principals is central office support, and the primary support is the development and fostering of interpersonal relationships within the school building. In fact, the development and fostering of interpersonal relationships is universally identified to support the principal's ability to implement all of the leadership practices effectively. As all of the supports to the implementation of inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process are internal, it appears that principals identify with a sense of independence within their building structure. This building-level autonomy can serve to empower principals to overcome external barriers. In order to do so, principals must be sufficiently skilled at leveraging the internal supports to implementing the practices.

Principal Autonomy

Given the expressed lack of central office support, principals believe they have a great deal of autonomy and control over what goes on in their buildings. Relationships, communication, and collaboration within the building are critical to the development of a school culture that is open to change. For the two practices implemented to the lowest degree, the identification of external systems barriers, combined with the identification of solely internal supports exemplifies this openness. If principals are not getting external support, they perceive the things that they can do themselves to make the greatest difference within their building. A lack of central office guidance fosters a feeling of independence and autonomy at the building level.

The key supports across the practices indicate principals have a great deal of influence within their buildings. Principals have the capacity to control how they communicate, foster relationships, and promote collaboration within the building.

Though external systems supports can impose obstacles, it is within the principals'

control to support internal structures and implement appropriate behaviors to modify the

impact of these external variables on the success of their building. Some principals

discussed the importance of protecting their faculty and student population from these

external variables. They perceived their leadership role in fostering internal supports as

critical to building success. Melissa Smith discussed the principal's responsibility in

maintaining a focus on student learning within the building in her closing statement. She

glumly noted, "I strongly believe that the education system is not always designed to

support kids. Sometimes it is more about making adults happy than what kids need." The

building level independence of principals indicates that it is within the principals'

capacity to keep their building culture focused on the importance of student learning.

Implementing all of the leadership practices is within principals' own internal capacity;

their ability to do so relies on that assumption that principals have the knowledge and

skills to implement all of the internal supports.

Implications for Social Change

This study has significant implications for social change in the realm of school

leadership. In chapter 1, I identified a gap in literature regarding the barriers and supports

to the implementation of key leadership practices on the part of principals in K-12

schools. Through the results of this study I have made a contribution to closing that gap

and provided a baseline of data on which to build future studies on school leadership and

reform, leadership in practice, and principal preparation.

School Leadership and Reform

As accountability measures increase in education, school reform continues to be important. Principals are fundamental to implementing and sustaining school change; however, they are not effectively implementing the practices that research has universally identified as supporting desired change. Though effective leadership practices for school leaders have been identified throughout the literature, the reasons that practices were not universally implemented had not been addressed. The identification of key supports and barriers brings the field one step closer to overcoming this lack of universal implementation.

Leadership in Practice

The findings of this study inform the professional practice of school principals. The key finding that the primary supports to implementing the key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*) are primarily internal and within the principals' capacity to influence impacts the principalship, school structures, and professional development opportunities. Formally recognizing the inherent importance of relationships within the role of principal is a critical finding with significant social change implications. It builds a knowledge base for the behavior of the principal that should inform leadership preparatory programs and professional development experiences for principals. It implies that principals must enhance their skills and abilities in relationship to soft skills in their daily practice. Lastly, based on the identification of the supports and barriers to the successful implementation of key leadership practices, this study makes a contribution to

the field in predictive knowledge about individuals possessing educational leadership capacity. It suggests that sitting principals must have not only a sound comprehension of instructional leadership, but the capacity to employ soft skills (including fostering relationships and enhancing communication within the school building).

Principal Preparation

The results of this study inform leadership preparatory programs. Although some leadership preparatory programs are currently undergoing a shift in practice, many focus primarily on academics, with few modeling opportunities for practice (Davis et al., 2005). Once tested, it is assumed that leaders understand key research-based practices and thus will implement these practices. Through this study I have added to the knowledge base in the field related to the importance of mentorship, a field-based internship, and problem-based learning in principal preparation in order to ready the field for the effective implementation of school leadership. I suggest that preparatory programs must have a primary focus on both instructional leadership and soft-skill attainment (including fostering relationships and enhancing communication within the school building).

<div align="center">Recommendations for Action</div>

As a result of this study I have identified a need for action in three primary areas: principal practice, central office supports, and principal preparation. A primary concern is addressing the needs of current sitting principals as they relate to the implementation of school leadership practices. The second indicated need is to build the capacity of the central district office to provide support and guidance to principals and schools. Finally, a

need for continued reform in principal preparation is advised. Within each of these areas there are specific opportunities for action suggested by the findings of this study.

Principal Practice

There is a direct need to improve the practices of sitting principals in relation to the implementation of key leadership practices. Key internal supports that are perceived to facilitate implementation of the leadership practices to a high degree were identified. Principals must have the skills and knowledge base to apply those supports in order to impact school change. At the same time, the identified barriers must be addressed in order to limit their impact on the implementation of leadership practices. In order to improve principal practice there is an implied need for action in the design of school structure, relationship capacity, and principal professional development.

School structure. An analysis of the supports and barriers to the implementation of the key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*) indicates that there are building structures that facilitate the implementation of some practices and other structures that impede implementation. For example, across the three practices implemented to a high degree, time was a key barrier. As the fiscal environment within the system of education diminishes, resources diminish. Many elementary schools no longer have assistant principals, and have limited support personnel (school secretaries). Principals are left to deal with many aspects of building management in addition to their instructional leadership responsibilities within the school. Mulford and Silins (2011) noted principals must develop a positive school climate, develop shared vision, monitor

instructional and curricular practices, and implement systems that support initiative and professional development in order to positively impact student success. As such, it is essential for principals to build in structures that enhance their opportunities for collaboration and communication and maximize time spent with teachers.

Principals should analyze school structures to determine how to best maximize their available time. Meetings should be used for the purposes of collaboration, planning, and professional development. Management activities should be communicated in a more effective manner, perhaps through memo or electronically, in order to focus scheduled meeting times on instruction, recognition, data analysis, goal setting, and planning. Principals should also identify key factors that most impact their time in order to better plan supports to make them more available. These supports can include support personnel, guidance personnel, teacher scheduling, scheduled parent meetings, teachers meetings, and student discipline meetings.

Finally principals should focus on providing a clear and consistent message - focused primarily on student learning - to all stakeholders. Principals should be clear that choices made within the school are made because they are in the best interest of the children. When discussing initiatives, data, and goal setting the message should be consistent for all parties. This consistency will minimize the need to readdress initiatives or individuals. Additionally, consistency will foster a higher level of communication within the building.

Relationships. Principals should evaluate the degree to which they foster interpersonal relationships within the school setting. They should address key factors like

consistency, trust, culture, and collaboration. Principals should be fair and consistent in the manner in which they interact with faculty. They should provide ample opportunities within the school structure for collaboration and maintain a culture focused on student learning. Clear and consistent communication will foster a trusting relationship between the principal and faculty as well as enhance the culture of the school building. This will provide an essential framework for school change. Fostering learning communities in this fashion will enhance the overall professional practice of the school.

Professional development. The need for principals to be autonomous within their building in order to overcome external barriers implies the need to implement a number of internal supports including: fostering relationships and enhancing communication and collaboration. As such, principals may need to evaluate their skills and abilities in relation to implementing these variables. Principals should participate in professional development to enhance their communication capacity. Principals in schools successfully undergoing reform initiatives are key communicators. Principal communication is a critical component in successful school reform and the implementation of data-based school wide practice (Cosner, 2011). Doing so will assist in the facilitation of relationships and professional learning within the school. In addition, principals should engage in professional development to improve their knowledge and skills in implementing professional learning communities. These activities will improve sitting principals' soft skills and increase their ability to facilitate the key internal supports identified by this study.

Central Office Supports

A lack of central office support was a key barrier identified in both inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process. These two practices were implemented to the lowest degree. This lack of support suggests a need for reform at the district office level. A higher degree of support from the district office limits the barriers that principals have to overcome in order to effectively implement leadership practices.

Supporting building leaders. Central office administrators should focus on providing a higher level of support to their building leaders in an effort to overcome some of the autonomy and independence that is currently perceived by principals. A focus on consistency and continuity across schools within the district should be cultivated. District office administrators should work collaboratively with their principals to engage in district-wide goal setting that is consistent and attainable. This level of support will foster a sense of purpose as well as provide principals with coherent structures and guidelines to support their practice.

District-wide vision and goal setting. District administration should foster a district-wide vision for success. This vision should be based effectively on data and focused on improving student learning. District-wide goal setting should be fostered collaboratively in order to create a foundation of expectations for each building principal. Providing this higher-level vision for principals will support them in implementing key practices at the building level. These practices are essential to move a district forward uniformly and ultimately in impacting successful school reform as a whole.

Principal Preparation

Principal preparation programs should be examined to ensure that they are producing effective school building leaders. Strong leadership preparatory programs, with a quality internship experience, are significantly associated with effective leadership and the implementation of effective practice (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Preparatory programs should include research-based content with a focus on instructional practice; curricular coherence; field-based internships; problem-based learning experiences; cohort grouping; practicing, high-quality mentors; and collaboration between university programs and partner school districts (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 1996). Experiences should be specifically designed that promote principal candidates' ability to implement the internal supports most highly aligned with implementing key leadership practices (including fostering relationships and communication).

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, I have identified the need for future research in a number of areas. As the current gap in literature implies, future studies related to the implementation of leadership practices in K-12 schools is critical. This study provides a baseline of barriers and supports to implementation, and overcoming or limiting these barriers must be examined further. Additionally, research must be conducted to examine how to develop sitting principals' capacity to best support the implementation of leadership practices.

I recommend future research related to the impact of external variables on the degree of implementation of key leadership practices. As the degree of reliance on

external variables increased the degree of implementation of the practices decreased. This was evident in both practices that rely more heavily on external variables: inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process. This issue should be examined further. As central office support was a key barrier to both practices implemented to a lesser degree, this barrier provides a point of entry. Conducting a multiple case study evaluating the type of supports that central office administrations provide in high performing urban school districts could be examined. A comparative analysis of a high performing and low performing school district could also be conducted. Such a study would provide a framework that models effective central office supports in districts where key leadership practices are not being effectively implemented. This approach might also provide a scope for limiting the impact of a key barrier to implementing building-level leadership.

The question of how to overcome barriers to implementation is critical. A qualitative grounded theory study could be conducted in order to develop theory related to overcoming key barriers to the implementation of key leadership practices. A key research question would be: How do sitting principals in high success urban schools overcome identified barriers to implementing key leadership practices. This question would provide a framework for leadership for school change across a large system of school reform. It would also address the needs of sitting principals already in the field as opposed to only new principals through principal preparation. It also supports the development of structures to overcome or limit barriers to the implementation of effective leadership practices.

Another study could be designed to examine the supports to implementation in order to determine how to improve sitting principal's execution of key supports in order to improve the implementation of key leadership practices. This study would require an experimental design involving pre- and post assessment of the degree to which principals implement each of the leadership practices. A first step would be to examine how building a principal's capacity to develop and foster effective interpersonal relationship and communication skills impacts degree of implementation. In this case, professional development focused on relationships, coaching, and facilitation skills could be provided. After participating principals have had time to practice and develop these skills, implementation variables could be reassessed. Doing so would provide feedback to the field on ways to improve the execution of key internal supports identified in this study.

Structures to enhance principals' ability to function in an instructional capacity should be examined to a greater degree. A comparative analysis of the structures in place in schools meeting high levels of student achievement based on state normative results versus structures in schools failing to achieve could facilitate this study. A study of this nature would help to define those practices and structures that foster a principal's ability to implement key leadership practices and minimize time spent on building management. Findings of this study might provide critical feedback to the field on overcoming key barriers to the implementation of successful leadership practices.

A study focusing on improving implementation of the leadership practice inspiring a shared vision should be conducted. This study could be a multiple case study of principals who implement the practice of inspiring a shared vision to a high degree.

The daily activities, supports, and practices of these principals could be followed in order to develop theory as to what factors most greatly influence the practice of inspiring a shared vision. A focus on the supports to implementation of inspiring a shared vision could provide a framework for this study.

The implementation of each individual leadership practice should be studied to a greater degree. Such a study could notionally involve multiple studies. Examining specifically if implementing the key internal supports for each practice does in fact assist the principal in overcoming the external barriers identified by this study, each of the main themes could be studied both independently and collectively. Overall themes could be examined in relation to school success. These studies would inform the field of educational leadership as well as build knowledge regarding school reform capacity.

Finally, a study addressing a higher level systems approach to understanding the implementation of the practices inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process should be conducted. This study would examine the systems barriers to these two practices in greater detail. Focusing on the perceptions of the central office district administration in relation to supporting principals with the implementation of inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process would facilitate this study. A key research question could be: How do central office administration personnel influence the ability of the principal to implement the key research-based leadership practices of inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process. Systems theory would provide a framework for this study.

Researcher Reflection

Educational reform and school leadership are deeply embedded passions for me. As such, I began this process with a number of preconceived notions, possible biases, and a preconceived set of ideals. I believed that surely anyone in a leadership capacity within a school has a clear vision focused on student learning and a deeply rooted philosophy about impacting significant school change. Therefore, I believed that there must be factors that act upon a principal's ability to implement key leadership practices associated positively with school change. Clearly, there are some schools that are successful, and therefore all schools can be regardless of demographic factors, poverty level, neighborhoods, or teaching population. My passion and my ideals caused a need for me to separate personal beliefs and notions from the research process. As I progressed through data collection and analysis this need became more defined, and the research journal served as a safe guard to protect the integrity and the quality of this study.

One personal bias that came to the surface throughout this process was my belief in lifelong learning and improving practice. My commitment to these ideals caused me to believe that all principals would be interested in reflecting deeply on their practice and supporting research that had potential to uncover those supports and barriers to the implementation of key leadership practices. I became aware of this bias as it became ever more difficult to meet my sample of a minimum of eight principals. As an avid proponent of school change, and an advocate of student learning, I had to set my notions about professional practice aside in order to be able to effectively uncover true trends, supports, and barriers. I had to be careful not to allow my bias and ideals to impact the study. This

effort was particularly essential in the face-to-face interview process. Having a semi-structured interview with predetermined questions assisted in remaining unbiased.

Having worked across multiple school districts in varying degrees of leadership and school improvement capacity, I had preconceived notions about the barriers and supports that principals experience in relation to implementing effective leadership practices. I also had preconceived ideas in relation to what I expected to hear from principals. The use of open coding limited the impact that these notions had on the data analysis process. Again, the research journal allowed me to reflect on these feelings as separate and distinct from my study. I maintained a continual reflection cycle to make certain that these notions did not impact the research. I did find it surprising when some of the barriers that I anticipated did not appear throughout the journal reflection or the interview process. Participating principals did not place blame on students, families, populations, faculty, or politics.

As the study took place in the area in which I have lived my entire life, I had to make sure that I bracketed for any prior knowledge or biases that I had about participating districts or schools. Again, the research journal served as a safe guard for me to reflect on those factors and keep those feelings separate from the study. I was particularly careful not to phrase any interview questions by acknowledging trends or restructures within the buildings or districts of which I was already aware. As I also work in the Region, I felt that it was critical to remain unbiased, and keep all prior knowledge completely out of the data collection process.

Finally, my sense of responsibility led me to believe that signed consent on the part of principals or teachers confirmed intent to complete the study, in its entirety, in a timely fashion. The length of the data collection process began to wear on me, yet I continued to hold true to my belief in professional practice, and my belief that all principals would participate as they had indicated. After 2 months, it became apparent that this would not be the case. One principal was unreachable and nonresponsive. This impediment required an analysis of the process and some difficult decisions to be made about moving on.

Having worked in the Region for a number of years, several principals knew me and my body of work. As such, I believe there was greater personal openness than I might have received otherwise. As I analyzed the qualitative data that had been collected, I began to notice some surprising trends. It became apparent that principals had a much greater sense of autonomy than I had realized. They appeared to have great authority and decision-making potential within their buildings. I also began to uncover deeper emotional effects of district dynamics that I may not have been privy to had the familiarity not been there. I used member checking so that participants could clarify any statements they made to me that referenced something that I might know from outside the realm of the study. Some principals felt very comfortable exhibiting open and honest emotion when discussing barriers. As such, I was careful to separate any personal reactions that I had to this data by journaling and by reviewing codes and findings deeply.

Throughout this process I realized that there are varying degrees of personal, professional, and instructional commitments on the part of educational leaders. As the

study progressed and the data analysis began to unfold into internal and external barriers, my original perceptions regarding supports and barriers wavered. I was overwhelmingly moved by the fact that no one principal blamed any deficiency on their part on the student populations that they served. In fact, I was humbled by the honest and raw responses that principals offered. As the trend in the supports unfolded to be primarily internal, my thinking shifted once again on the structure of schools and the nature of school reform. Teaching is a very personal process, and I should not have been surprised to find out that so is leadership. Like in teaching, outside variables are brought in to the classroom. Yet we know that it is what we do with students when we have them in the classroom that counts. As it turns out, principals believe that it is what they do within their buildings that impacts their ability to foster successful school change.

Concluding Statement

Effective school leadership is a critical component to much needed school reform. There are key practices that exemplify a successful school leader. Schools are complex and dynamic systems. As such, a host of internal and external supports and barriers act upon a principal's ability to implement the key leadership practices (*challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*).

As is indicated by the nature of systems theory, the relationships within the school system are of critical importance. In fact, principals perceive the development of interpersonal relationships to be a primary support to the successful implementation of all

leadership practices. These relationships lay the foundation for a school culture that supports taking risks, working collaboratively, and ultimately impacting student success.

The supports to implementing all of the leadership practices are primarily internal: either directly within the principal's control or influenced by the principal's behavior. Though barriers were more heavily influenced by external parameters, a comparison of supports versus barriers indicated principals' perceptions of autonomy. The primarily internal supports indicate that principals perceive that it is within their capacity to implement all of the leadership practices. For the most highly implemented practices, (modeling the way, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart), there were few barriers. One key barrier was time. In general principals believe that if the barrier of time were controlled for, it would be within principal capacity to implement these practices to a high degree.

Moreover, the two practices implemented to a lesser degree, inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process, share the same top support and top barrier. The barriers to these practices were predominantly external systems barriers; the supports were only internal. The top barrier was a lack of support from central office, and the top support was relationships. As noted, schools are complex structures. External supports can act upon the system. The universally internal supports indicated by principals suggest that the control for the successful implementation of the leadership practices lies within the school and is within the power of the principal.

As the focus on educational reform continues to dominate national and local agendas, the need for effective instructional leadership becomes more critical than ever.

The results of this study provide a foundation of knowledge regarding the effective implementation of school leadership; however, more work is needed. Leadership practices must be effectively implemented universally in order to impact large-scale school change. The students in the United States depend on principals' leadership capacity to not only identify supports and barriers to implementation, but to find ways to overcome those barriers. Based on the results of this study I believe that there is possibility. Hope lies within the internal capacity of principals and school culture. If the internal supports to implementation are executed with fidelity, external barriers to effective leadership can be overcome. What happens within the school is what counts when it comes to student learning, and improved student learning is the heart of school reform.

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Appendix A

JOURNAL PROMPTS
Leadership for School Change:

Barriers and Supports to Universal Implementation

The purpose of this study is to examine the supports and barriers to K-12 public school principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. Please take a moment to review each of the five leadership practices (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart). For each practice please identify any supports or barriers to the successful implementation of these practices. You may take notes or journal in any way that is comfortable for you.

Practice One:

Challenge the process. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995) leaders *challenge the process*. "Those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenge" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995. p. 9). Challenging the process is comprised of two commitments: accepting challenges to change and improve, and taking risks (Figure 1).

• Treat every job as an adventure.	• Set up little experiments.
• Treat every new assignment as a start-over even if it isn't.	• Make it safe for others to experiment.
• Question the status quo.	• Eliminate fire hosing.
• Send people shopping for ideas.	• Work even with ideas that sound strange initially.
• Put idea gathering on your own agenda.	• Honor your risk takers.
• Go out and find something that needs fixing.	• Debrief every failure as well as every success.
• Assign people to opportunities.	• Model risk taking.
• Renew your teams.	• Encourage possibility thinking.
• Add adventure and fun to everyone's work.	• Maximize opportunities for choice.
• Take a class; learn a new skill. (p. 61)	• Make formal clothing and titles optional. (p. 88)

Figure 1. Challenging the process. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?
1b. Why?
2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?
2b. Why?

Practice Two:

Inspire a shared vision. Leaders envision what could be and hold strong personal beliefs that they can help attain that vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Successful leaders have a clear picture of the results they aim to achieve prior to implementing an initiative. This vision of the future motivates them to achieve success and inspire constituents to share in the dream and make change happen. In order to be successful at this level of inspiration it is essential that leaders understand their constituents and act in their best interest (Figure 2).

• Think first about your past.	• Identify your constituents.
• Determine what you want.	• Find the common ground.
• Write an article about how you've made a difference.	• Develop your interpersonal competence.
• Write a short vision statement.	• Breathe life into your vision.
• Act on your intuition.	• Speak positively.
• Test your assumptions.	• Speak from the heart.
• Become a futurist.	• Make the intangible tangible.
• Rehearse with visualizations and affirmations. (p. 120)	• Listen first – and often. (p. 148).

Figure 2. Inspire a shared vision. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?
1b. Why?
2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?
2b. Why?

Practice Three:

Enable others to act. "Leadership is a team effort" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The support of the constituents responsible for implementing a project is essential to its success. It is essential for an effective leader to involve all stakeholders throughout the process, and make it possible for them to successfully implement the work required for success. This involvement ensures a sense of ownership that enables people to work at their highest capacity. It includes instilling components of teamwork, power, and trust across the organization. In order to best accomplish this task, leaders foster collaboration and strengthen others (Figure 3).

• Always say we.	• Increase the return on your square footage.
• Increase interactions.	• Enlarge people's sphere of influence.
• Focus on gains, not losses.	• Make sure delegated tasks are relevant.
• Make a list of alternative currencies.	• Educate, educate, educate.
• Form planning and problem-solving partnerships.	• Organize your own *great huddle*.
• Conduct a collaboration audit.	• Make connections.
• Go first. (p. 179)	• Make heroes of other people. (p. 206)

Figure 3. Enable others. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?
1b. Why?
2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?
2b. Why?

Practice four:

Model the way. Modeling is a key component to effective leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Leaders model by setting an example and building commitment regularly. Consequently, leaders must have a clear understanding of purpose and guiding principles and maintain integrity to those principles in everything that they do. They must exemplify their beliefs and the actions they expect of their followers consistently in both word and deed. They complete these tasks with actions aligned to shared values and achieving small success consistently demonstrating progress (Figure 4).

• Take a look in the mirror.	• Take it personally.
• Write your leadership credo.	• Make a plan.
• Write a personal tribute and a tribute to your organization.	• Create a model.
• Open a dialogue about personal and shared values.	• Break it up and break it down.
• Audit your actions.	• Ask for volunteers.
• Trade places.	• Use a bulletin board.
• Be dramatic.	• Sell the benefits.
• Tell stories about teachable moments. (p. 241)	• Take people to dinner (or breakfast). (p. 266).

Figure 4. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?
1b. Why?
2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?
2b. Why?

Practice five:

Encourage the heart. "Leaders encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 13). When people are frustrated, ready to give up, or simply exhausted, it is the responsibility of the leader to encourage and support them. Such encouragement is often best accomplished through genuine heartfelt concern and care for people. Effective leaders must remind people that success is possible and that their work is appreciated. They must be committed to: "recognize individual contributions to the success of every project… and celebrate team accomplishments regularly" (p. 18) (Figure 5).

• Be creative about rewards and recognition and give the personally.	• Set up little experiments.
• Make recognition public.	• Schedule celebrations.
• Design the reward and recognition system participatively.	• Be a cheerleader your way.
• Provide feedback en route.	• Be part of the cheering squad.
• Create Pygmalions.	• Have fun.
• Find people who are doing things right.	• Determine your social network – and bolster it.
• Coach. (p. 291)	• Stay in love.
	• Plan a celebration right now.

Figure 5. Encourage the heart. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?

1b. Why?

2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?

2b. Why?

Appendix B

INTERVIEW PROMPTS AND PROBES
Leadership for School Change:

Barriers and Supports to Universal Implementation

1a. (Repeat for all high implementation).The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) are implemented to a high degree. What do you think key supports are that enable you to implement this practice?

1b.Have you experienced barriers that you have had to overcome in order to implement this practice to a high degree? If so, what are they?

2a. (Repeat for all low implementation).The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) are not regularly implemented. Why do you think that is?

2b. What barriers impact your ability to implement this practice?

2c. Have you experienced supports that would contribute to your ability to implement this practice? If so, what are they?

2d. What supports would better help you implement this practice?

3a. What are the main barriers to you ability to implement key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

3b. How do you think these barriers impact your ability to implement these practices (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart)?

3c. Is there one key barrier that impacts your ability to implement the key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

3d. What supports would help you overcome these barriers?

3e. Is there one key support that would help more than any others?

4a. In which of the five key leadership practices (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) do you encounter the most barriers in implementation.

4b. Why do you think that is.

4c. How can you be supported better in their implementation.

4d. What could facilitate that support?

5. (Repeat for all discrepancies). According to the survey, principals and the teachers disagree on the implementation of (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart). What do you think might be the cause(s) of that discrepancy?

5b. What barriers contribute to that discrepancy?

5c. What could support overcoming that discrepancy?

6. What personal characteristics do you have that facilitate implementation of the five leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

7. What personal characteristic do you have that inhibit your implementation of the five leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

8. Can we talk briefly about your prior experiences?
  A. What is the geographic descriptor that best describes your school?
  - Urban
  - Suburban
  - Rural

  B. How many students does your school have?
  - 0-250
  - 250-500
  - 500-750
  - 750-1000
  - 1000-2000
  - 2000+

  C. How many years have you been a principal?

D. Were you a teacher?
    If yes, for how many years were you a teacher?

E. Did you experience mentoring your first year as a principal?

F. Did you experience coaching your first year as a principal?

G. Were you an assistant principal prior to your first job as a principal?

H. Prior to becoming a principal did you have leadership or supervisory responsibilities?

I. To what extend did your leadership preparatory program provide:
- A field-based internship experience that allowed you to perform real principal responsibilities??
-
- Strong emphasis on instructional leadership?
-
- Opportunities to solve real-world problems (problem-based learning)?
-
- Cohort grouping?
-
- Formal mentoring from accomplished principals?
-
- Support from peers?

J. How regularly do you engage in professional development geared specifically toward principal leadership roles and responsibilities?

9. What other prior experiences supported or created barriers to your ability to implement the key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

10. Is there anything else related to the leadership practices that you would like to share?

Appendix C

Principal Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of elementary principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices and the barriers/supports to implementation. You were chosen for the study because you are an elementary principal in a school district located ████████████████████████████████. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This research is being conducted by Jodi DeLucia, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Please note that this study is not in relationship to any professional capacity in which you may know Jodi DeLucia, Coordinator of Educational Resources ██████████████████████████████████████

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to examine the supports and barriers to sitting principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented. This study will strive to answer the primary research question: What are the supports and barriers to K-12 principals' implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*?

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study:

- You will be asked to complete an online survey which will take approximately 25 minutes to complete.
- In the week following survey completion, you will be asked to engage in reflection on the leadership practices *challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart* (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) through an electronic journal prompt. This will be done once and may take up to one hour.
- You will be asked to participate in a one-on one audiotaped interview, which will occur at your school site or another location of your choice. The interview will take 30-60 minutes.
- After the content of your interview has been transcribed, you will be asked to review the content and may request changes if needed. This will be done via email, and you will be asked to respond within one week. Please allow approximately 30 minutes for this review.
- Once initial interpretation of your interview has been completed, you will be contacted a second time and asked to verify that your intentions are represented

accurately. This will be done via email, and you will be asked to respond within one week. Again, please allow up to 30 minutes for this review.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at your local school district or ███████ will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are minimal identified risks through participation in this study. All survey responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the study will not indicate individual principals or schools.

Benefits of participation in the overall study include:
- This study may provide feedback for participating school districts in relation to the implementation of research-based leadership practices.
- The findings of this study may provide a baseline for principal professional development requirements. Particularly, the areas of need in the implementation of leadership practices may be identified.
- Through the identification of barriers and supports to the implementation of key leadership practices, districts may be able to focus on improvement plans.

Compensation:

There is no compensation provided for participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

Information you provide will be kept confidential. Individual survey results will not be identifiable to anyone other than the researcher, and this will be only to track who has responded and to allow you to have your participation discontinued and responses removed if you wish once the study has begun. Your journal and interview results will be de-identified once you have completed the review of the initial interpretations as described above. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. The researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at xxxxxx or e-mail at jodi.delucia@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **04- 11-11-0145691** and it expires on **April 10, 2012.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent   _____

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature

                                                         _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature

                                                         _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix D

Teacher Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of elementary principals' implementation of key research based leadership practices and the barriers/supports to implementation. You were chosen for the study because you are a teacher in a school where a sitting principal has agreed to participate in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Jodi DeLucia, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Please note that this study is not in relationship to any professional capacity in which you may know Jodi DeLucia, Coordinator of Educational Resources, ███.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to examine the supports and barriers to sitting principals' implementation of key research-based leadership practices in order to better understand why research-based leadership characteristics are or are not being implemented. This study will strive to answer the primary research question: What are the supports and barriers to K-12 principals' implementation of the following research-based leadership practices: *challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart*?

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study:
- You will be asked to complete an online survey which will take between 15 and 25 minutes to complete. This survey is related to the behaviors of your principal.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at your local school district or ██████ will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the survey. If you feel stressed during the survey you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are minimal identified risks through participation in this study. All survey responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the study will not indicate individual principals or schools.

Benefits of participation in the overall study include:

- This study may provide feedback for participating school districts in relation to the implementation of research based leadership practices.
- The findings of this study may provide a baseline for principal professional development requirements. Particularly, the areas of need in the implementation of leadership practices may be identified.
- Through the identification of barriers and supports to the implementation of key leadership practices, districts may be able to focus on improvement plans.

Compensation:
There is no compensation provided for participation in this study.

Confidentiality:
Information you provide will be kept confidential. Individual surveys will not be identifiable to anyone other than the researcher, and this will be only to track who has responded and to allow you to have your participation discontinued and responses removed if you wish once the study has begun. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at xxxxxx or e-mail at jodi.delucia@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **04-11-11-0145691** and it expires on **April 10, 2012.** The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix E

Sample Journal Response

Practice One:
Challenge the process. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995) leaders *challenge the process*. "Those who lead others to greatness seek and accept challenge" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995. p. 9). Challenging the process is comprised of two commitments: accepting challenges to change and improve, and taking risks (Figure 1).

• Treat every job as an adventure.	• Set up little experiments.
• Treat every new assignment as a start-over even if it isn't.	• Make it safe for others to experiment.
• Question the status quo.	• Eliminate fire hosing.
• Send people shopping for ideas.	• Work even with ideas that sound strange initially.
• Put idea gathering on your own agenda.	• Honor your risk takers.
• Go out and find something that needs fixing.	• Debrief every failure as well as every success.
• Assign people to opportunities.	• Model risk taking.
• Renew your teams.	• Encourage possibility thinking.
• Add adventure and fun to everyone's work.	• Maximize opportunities for choice.
• Take a class; learn a new skill. (p. 61)	• Make formal clothing and titles optional. (p. 88)

Figure 1. Challenging the process. Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations," by J. Kouzes and B. Posner. Copyright 1995 by Jossey-Bass.

1a. What supports your ability as a school leader to implement this practice?
The constant change in the policies and practices in public schools allows the opportunity to take on new challenges. Facilitating teamwork and encouraging others to take on the charge is an every day experience. I welcome the excitement of challenge and change. My staff is energetic and constantly changing so new approaches are possible .

1b. Why?
 We are always trying to do it better or at least in a manner that renders a better result. New leadership in my district has brought the push to change several systemic practices.

2a. What barriers do you face as a school leader that impact your ability to implement this practice?
The biggest impacts are usually lack of time, constraints of the teachers' contract and the fear some folks allow to become roadblocks. The leader must promote and champion positive change even if it is not a personal belief. To sell others on it is another issue. Often the rapid pace of required tasks and initiatives get in the way. The biggest obstacle can be the lack of information available to the building principal from central

administraion. Sometimes it is better to move at a slower or more moderate pace prior to implementation. I would like to spend less time firehosing.

Appendix F

Screen Shot of Coding Sample

Below is a screen shot of coding completed using HyperResearch.
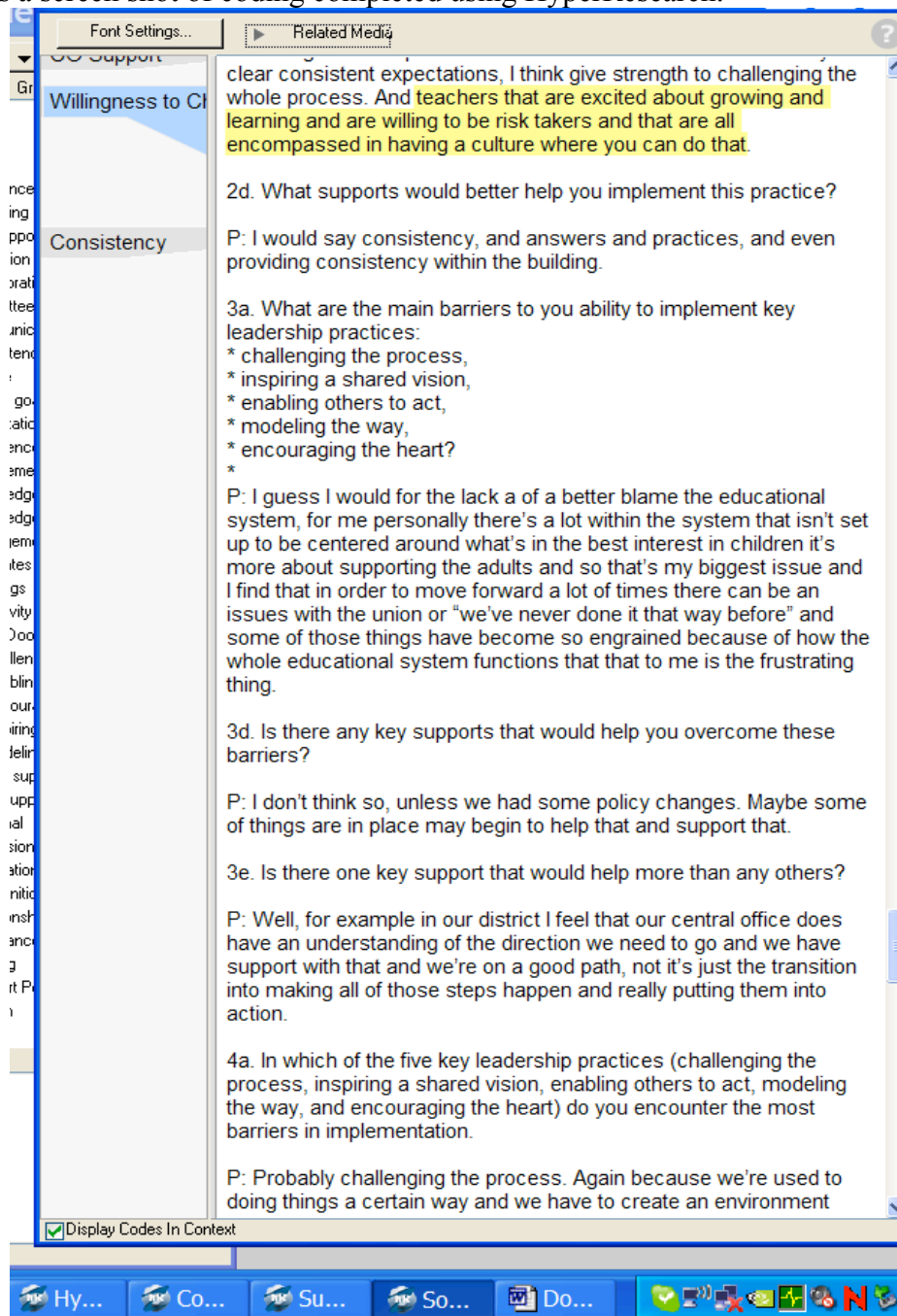
Appendix G

Sample Interview Transcript

I: The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that *encouraging the heart is* **implemented to a high degree. What do you think key supports are that enable you to implement this practice?**

P: Making yourself available, being visible, and working to connect daily with some group of teachers. On a daily basis trying to reach everybody in the building, on a weekly basis letting people know when you appreciate the positive things they've done when you see something that your students have done that they take the time to display, acknowledging it. Those small things that I think add up, because they help lead to building trust and honesty in a work relationship.

I: Do you think there are any structures in place either in your building, or in your district that help support that implementation?

P: The only thing I would say about my building, and I've only been there for a year, going in to my second year, but there is a culture that is a little more friendly and welcoming so I think that assisted that in being able to start building relationships.

I: Have you experienced barriers that you have had to overcome in order to implement this practice to a high degree? If so, what are they?

P: Some of it's finding and making the time to move away from paperwork, and I would say they're more personal. Really putting energy in to making sure you connect with everybody and not just the people you know are doing a good job. I think time is the biggest issue with that.

I: (So, three practices were found to be implemented to a high degree. We already talked about encouraging the heart.) The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that *enabling others to act is* **implemented to a high degree. What do you think key supports are that enable you to implement this practice?**

P: Asking people to be a part of committees, we have monthly grade level meetings where teachers are expected to participate and really for an example take a look at their student work and share and compare what that student work looks like and really start digging into that data and talking about it. So in other words, providing an opportunity for them to take responsibility for that work and talk about it as a collegial group. But being there to help guide the conversation and one other thing just to keep others enabled in acting is I do weekly, it's called FYI but it has a calendar of what's going on in the building and in the district for that week. Put on the back of it is just memos, sometimes their just quick updates but it always includes updates of maybe what a data team meeting accomplish or the direction they're headed so trying to share so people have and understanding of the steps that are happening that maybe they're not a direct part of so those are a couple ways.

I: Have you experienced barriers that you have had to overcome in order to implement this practice to a high degree? If so, what are they?

P: Well, honestly I think one of the things that is a barrier to this is that we have tenure in the system that supports mediocrity, so sometimes it's difficult to enable people to help themselves because maybe they don't want to or maybe they feel that they don't need to. I'm not necessarily speaking of my building… I mean there are always a few teachers in every building, but I think that that's a huge barrier to getting people on board because it just can be really easy to sit back and not be a part of that.

I: The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree *modeling the way* is implemented to a high degree. What do you think key supports are that enable you to implement this practice?

P: Really sharing my own experiences and being honest about that. Really listening to what teachers need and responding to it, working together in a shared vision even if that's connected to the district vision. Not just modeling practices but modeling behaviors of what you expect from your teachers is really important, so just really working to do that on a daily basis and how you handle interactions and how you deal with difficult situations and how you praise people all of those pieces together.

I: Are there any systems in place -district or building- that help you implement that or help you do those things?

P: I would only just say the standard typical traditional, the faculty meetings, the conference days.

I: Have you experienced barriers that you have had to overcome in order to implement this practice to a high degree? If so, what are they?

P: I think the biggest barrier would be paradigm shifts for people, and how we teach and what we teach, what we look at, student data really knowing and understanding it. I think it takes a lot of effort and energy and patents to stay insistent with some of the same things that you're trying to model and look at so that people get comfortable with it. I would say that's the biggest barrier is getting shifts in thought of how we do things in education.

I: The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that *inspiring a shared vision* is implemented to some degree. Why do you think that is?

P:I think often times people on any end of the spectrum whether it be central office, building leadership, even teachers in different departments may think that they're being very clear about what it is they need or what their goal is, but it may not necessarily be so. So I would think they may be very confident but they might not have communicated it clearly.

I: What barriers impact your ability to implement this practice?

P: Again, maybe some protocol and practices not being in places at the district level, and so sometimes you may try to move forward as a building and you might have to stop because you're moving too fast or you're not in line with where the district is. I think thoughts about education, I think education can be very stagnated, people get very stuck in "this is how we do it" because they're comfortable there and change takes longer in education.

I: Have you experienced supports that would contribute to your ability to implement this practice? If so, what are they?

P: In my building this year, we developed a culture statement together as a building and did it in stages and that was an effort to really get everybody on the same page of why we are here in this building and what are we focused on each day. I think that we're making efforts to do that, even everyone doing a set plan for the state and our district and working even if we're not a city school working on what we've put in our building goal plans to align with the district I think that's helping for some clarity and maybe to connect that vision to where we're going. From my own experience when I was a teacher anything that was consistent for a period of time that we were allowed to get involved in really helped to support a vision. And so, with this year in my building I would say the main focus that we brought everything that we were doing back to was about RTI.

I: What supports would better help you implement this practice?

P: You know what, I don't know right now.

I: You don't know what you need?

P: Well, what would really help to assist that would be consistence and having protocol in place for how you do certain things and a plan of action that's very clear to everybody about who's responsible for what in the whole staff.

I: When you say that are you talking about within your build or maybe coming from your district?

P: Coming from the district and that's like the umbrella over the building.

I: Let's talk about the final practice. The results of the survey indicate that principals and teachers agree that challenging the process is not regularly implemented. Why do you think that is?

P: I think time, there's not enough time sometimes to do everything you feel you need to do or to follow through with some things. I think some of it can be a lack of clear consistent expectations sometimes that has to do with leadership whether it's at the building level or the district level. And I think a lot of it is the educational system it's self and what already in place with contracts a lot of things I think become contractual.

I: Would you say these are barrier, just because I have them as two separate questions and I wouldn't want you to have to repeat yourself.

P: Yeah, I would say those are barriers too.

I: Are there any other barriers that impact your ability to challenge the process?

P: I really think it's that and then sometimes mandates change so quickly or plans change so you're in mid-process and you have to shift and I think that contributes to maybe all of these but making the process of challenging difficult because you are back stepping.

I: Have you experienced supports that would contribute to your ability to implement this practice? If so, what are they?

P: Strong leadership across the board in the district that has very clear consistent expectations, I think give strength to challenging the whole process. And teachers that are excited about growing and learning and are willing to be risk takers and that are all encompassed in having a culture where you can do that.

I: What supports would better help you implement this practice?

P: I would say consistency, and answers and practices, and even providing consistency within the building.

I: What are the main barriers to you ability to implement key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

P: I guess I would for the lack a of a better blame the educational system, for me personally there's a lot within the system that isn't set up to be centered around what's in the best interest in children it's more about supporting the adults and so that's my biggest issue and I find that in order to move forward a lot of times there can be an issues with the union or "we've never done it that way before" and some of those

things have become so engrained because of how the whole educational system functions that that to me is the frustrating thing.

I: Is there any key supports that would help you overcome these barriers?

P: I don't think so, unless we had some policy changes. Maybe some of things are in place may begin to help that and support that.

I: Is there one key support that would help more than any others?

P: Well, for example in our district I feel that our central office does have an understanding of the direction we need to go and we have support with that and we're on a good path, not it's just the transition into making all of those steps happen and really putting them into action.

I: In which of the five key leadership practices (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) do you encounter the most barriers in implementation.

P: Probably challenging the process. Again because we're used to doing things a certain way and we have to create an environment where it's okay to be a risk taker, and you have to break the cycle of mediocrity. There's just something within teaching too that a lot of times, not always but the excellent teachers are kind of cast aside instead of really being embraced for how they do things.

I: How can you be supported better in their implementation.

P: From central office I would just say again their consistency, not backing down on what expectations are and supporting building leadership when you're trying to enforce something or really move people forward in a directions having that backing is really important.

I: According to the survey, principals and the teachers disagree on the implementation of (challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart). What do you think might be the cause(s) of that discrepancy?

P: I just think that we have different perspectives: the teacher perspective is focused on what is important to them which is their class room, their grade level, and a principal is looking at the big picture, not only on how the building functions but knowing where the districts headed. And sometimes I think it may not even be that you didn't give somebody the answer they wanted or how they think it should be because maybe they're just looking at a small piece or they don't see the big picture in the same way. So I think maybe a lot of it's perspective and your role in the process.

I: What barriers contribute to that discrepancy?

P: I don't know if there are really any barriers I just think that's how it is.

I: What could support overcoming that discrepancy?

I: What personal characteristics do you have that facilitate implementation of the five leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

P: I have a passion for education. I am patient and I believe strongly that education is for kids, and so frequently the system is about adults.

I: What personal characteristic do you have that inhibit your implementation of the five leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

P: I sometimes have anxiety about implementing some of these practices. Especially when it is about change.

I: Can we talk briefly about your prior experiences?
       I: What is the geographic descriptor that best describes your school?

       P: Urban

       I: How many students does your school have?

       P: 500-750

       I: How many years have you been a principal?

       P: Two

       I: Were you a teacher?

       P: Yes

       I: For how many years?

       P: Seven

       I: Did you experience mentoring your first year as a principal?
       P: Yes

       I: Did you experience coaching your first year as a principal?
       P: No

       I: Were you an assistant principal prior to your first job as a principal?
       P: Yes

       I: Prior to becoming a principal did you have leadership or supervisory responsibilities?

       P: Yes

       I: To what extend did your leadership preparatory program provide:
          • **A field-based internship experience that allowed you to perform real principal responsibilities?**

               P: To a high degree

          • **Strong emphasis on instructional leadership?**

       P: Some

          • **Opportunities to solve real-world problems (problem-based learning)?**

P: Some – One Course

- **Cohort grouping?**

P: No

- **Formal mentoring from accomplished principals?**

P: No

- **Support from peers?**

P: No

I: How regularly do you engage in professional development geared specifically toward principal leadership roles and responsibilities?

P: Two times per year. I engage in it by myself or if the district offers something.

I: What other prior experiences supported or created barriers to your ability to implement the key leadership practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart?

P: Really - Just teaching.

I: Is there anything else related to the leadership practices that you would like to share?

P: I strongly believe that the education system is not designed to always support kids. Sometimes it is more about making adults happy than what kids need.

Vita

Jodi M. DeLucia

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Department of Education, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN, 2011
Major Field: Education; Specialization: Educational Leadership

Dissertation: "Barriers and Supports to Implementation of Principal Leadership for School Change" Committee Chair: Dr. Christina Dawson

M.S., National University, La Jolla, CA, 2003
Major Field: Educational Administration (2003)

B.S., SUNY Albany, Albany, NY, 2001
Major Field: Physics

CERTIFICATIONS

School Administrator / Supervisor (SAS)
School District Administrator (SDA)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2010 - Current	Coordinator Educational Resources
2005 - 2010	Staff Specialist Educational Resources
2003 - 2005	Model Schools Technology Integration Specialist
2002 – 2003	Program Assistant/Teacher
2000 - 2002	Technology and Curriculum Trainer

PUBLICATIONS

Online Survey Checklist: Online Surveys Are a Time-and Cost-Efficient Way to Gather the Data You Need for Important Decision Making. (2005). *Technology & Learning*, 25(11), 48. Co-Authored with Parsons, C.

Decision Making in the Process of Differentiation. (2005). *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 33(1), 8-10. Co-Authored with Parsons, C.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: ASCD
School Administrators Association of State
State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education
International Society for Technology in Education: ISTE
Staff Curriculum / Development Network

PRESENTATIONS

Poster: "Understanding and Implementation: The Path to Leadership for School Change" (January 2010)
Walden University Winter Research Symposium

Presenter: "Decision Making in the Process of Differentiation" (June 2005)
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE - National Educational Computing Conference

Presenter: "Survey for Success" (April 2005)
School Administrators Association of State Annual Conference

Facilitator: "Promoting Professional Learning" (November 2006 – May 2007)

Presenter: "Assessment for Learning for Building Administrators" (December 2008)

Presenter: "Introduction to Assessment for Learning" (March 2009; August 2009; July 2010; October 2011)

Presenter: "Portfolios of Student Work" (May 2009)

Presenter: "Creating Performance Assessment Rubrics" (June 2009)

Facilitator: "Assessment for Learning In Practice" (October 2009; January 2010; February 2010; June 2010; December 2010)

Presenter: "Formative Tools, Tips, and Tricks" (May 2009, November 2009; March 2010)

Presenter: "Providing Effective Feedback" (April 2009; July 2010)

Presenter – Webinar: "An Overview of the Common Core State Standards for School Building Leaders" (November 2010)

Presenter – Webinar: "An overview of the Amendments to the APPR of Teachers for the School Building Leader" (March 2011)