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WHAT EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS DO TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION
AND INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this mixed method study were to (a) Examine the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; (b) examine the differences among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership and student achievement; and (c) investigate what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement within their schools. All 585 pre-K through grade 5 elementary public schools in Indiana were included in the original sample. Phase 1 was quantitative using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS, Hallinger, 1983) to examine the perceptions of the principal’s instructional leadership, the Principal Leadership Inventory (PLI; Downey, 1999) to measure principal effectiveness, and the Indiana standardized test (ISTEP) to look at student achievement. Statistical analysis of the data for the 232 schools that returned all of the instruments included descriptive statistics regarding the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and standard error. A Pearson product moment correlation, one-way independent measured ANOVA, one-way between subjects ANOVA, and standard multiple regression were used to test the study questions at a .05 level of significance. Findings indicated a teacher’s perception of the principal’s overall leadership ability makes no difference in student achievement data, but the teacher’s perception of the principal’s instructional leadership abilities does positively predict student achievement on standardized mathematics and English/language arts tests. Phase 2 was qualitative, identifying five more effective principals’ schools whose standardized test scores were above predicted and above state average and three less effective
principals’ schools whose standardized test scores were below their predicted performance level as well as below the state average for site visits. The quantitative data in this study laid the foundation for the qualitative portion of this study informing the on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups that explored what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Principals and teachers were asked the same open-ended, semi-structured interview questions. Keeping the focus group and interviewing questions in mind, themes for more and less effective principals could be grouped into four categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics, (b) instructional expectations, (c) procedures for change, and (d) measures of student achievement.
DEDICATION

In memory of my father, Richard J. “Rick” Borries –

who was an educator in every sense of the word.

Joining the teaching profession, I followed in his footsteps as he was in education for 34 years. He was inspiring and touched so many lives between his public service and years in education that people waited over two hours to offer their condolences at his funeral. From day one, Dad and I “got” each other, and he was always one of my greatest cheerleaders. I regret that I did not finish this dissertation in a timely manner, as he would have been one of the proudest people in the world and so enjoyed this moment. So I take solace in knowing that he knew I loved him and I always knew he loved and was proud of me. I also like to think that he is watching over me today singing my praises to whoever will listen.

Thank you, Dad, for always encouraging me,

finding the good in me

and always, always being there for me.

I love and miss you, Dad.
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When writing acknowledgements, I am reminded of something my father often used to say, “Never start naming people individually because you will inevitably leave someone out.” So I begin by saying, I have truly been blessed and highly favored in life and am extremely grateful for all the wonderful people who have touched my life.

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Finally, my family–I love you all. To the Pruitt family who joined the assembly line when possible to assist in getting out my over 2,500 letters and instruments to schools, there is nothing like the ties that family provide and the security that comes with knowing they will be there for you always–thank you. My only sister and dear friend Susan, we celebrated this day a little over 10 years ago thinking when you completed your Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Law and Social Science, I would be right behind you. It has been reassuring to know you are always by my side through the travels of life and interesting to think that you took Dad’s public service and political loves, while I am continuing his love for education. He has to be smiling on us. Aaron, you have brought added levity to our family and another level of reassurance knowing I can always count on you. Ella and Sophia are bright spots in a stressful day. My mother has been that one person who does not judge, continues to nudge, and offers advice and words of encouragement. She has thoroughly broken in the new I-69 from Evansville to Crane, keeping my children so I can have the peace of mind to burn the midnight oil to complete this dissertation. There truly are not words that can express my love or gratitude I feel toward my mother. Mark, my husband of almost 20 years, has stood by me through the ups and downs of this entire process. In the beginning, he took over the dissemination of my survey instruments, set up assembly lines and stuffing schedules, running it much like a mail drop for Dad’s mayoral
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Public outcry for reform comes from the perception that schools are failing to meet basic standards. Yet, when rating their own local schools, the public has and continues to give the schools their children attend high ratings while acknowledging little faith in the nation’s schools as a whole (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012; Goldberg, 2000). The contradiction that local schools are good while most schools in the nation are bad begs the question, “Why is there such dissatisfaction with public schools, and how can we solve this problem?”

Education continues to be the number one concern among American citizens today. According to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll in March 2000, Americans rank education as “the most important problem facing the country today” (Glassman, 2000). Politicians use education as a platform when vying for office, advocating they will provide real reform even when their prospective office has very little influence or control over educational policies or funding.

The call for education reform is nothing new. Debates surrounding the purpose of education were essentially the same throughout the 20th century. Should students be exposed to a well-rounded education, or should students receive an education that would prepare them for their future occupations? As early as 1910, school efficiency surveys were being conducted that resulted in an increase in intelligence testing to enable schools to better meet the students’ needs.
When considering the delivery of curriculum, social efficiency, child-centered, activity-based, and an integrated approach were all catch phrases even before the 1930s. What Ravitch (2000) found in her historical review of 20th century education is that the reasons for implementing changes remained the same:

Society is changing, and the schools must change too; the family and the community have become weaker, and the schools must now do what the family and community used to do; the best way of addressing the social and economic problems of society is to change the curriculum so that young people can solve these problems themselves (by studying social living, family life, and consumer education); the traditional curriculum of academic subjects is undemocratic, appropriate only for a minority of students and surviving for no reason other than college entrance requirements; a democratic society must have democratic classrooms, where the curriculum flows from the interests and needs of students and teaching methods do not rely on teacher authority. (p. 335)

With the demands to reduce violence and conflict during the 1960s, academic requirements became less rigorous, prompting the back-to-the-basics movement of the 1970s. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 served as a catalyst for the current period of educational reform and the beginning of today’s standards movement (Staton & Peeples, 2000). Warning that detrimental effects could result from the fact that schools were not keeping up with the changes of society and the economy, the publication prompted an increase in education reform policies, corporation interest in education and legislature action (Hunt & Staton, 1996). What the report found was that the content, expectations, time, and teaching in schools needed to change. Task forces and commissions were established to provide educational improvement recommendations that found that a balanced curriculum was needed and that the use of any one
method alone would prove ineffective. In 1994, faced with fewer skilled labor jobs, President Clinton proposed *Goals 2000* to develop standards and assessments. Although politics took its toll on Goals 2000, standards and assessment remain on the forefront as we entered a new century.

Proof that standards are in place and reform efforts are making a positive impact on student achievement has caused standardized tests to be implemented across the United States. Not only have standardized tests become the benchmark for measuring student achievement, but they have also been used to measure teacher and school success. Gratz (2000) explained, “Mandatory tests are the main mechanism for implementing state standards,” (p. 684) but admitted “improvements should not be judged solely by standardized test scores” (p. 684).

The call for *greater accountability* is the backbone of reform efforts. Lashway (2000) recognized that “today accountability demands results in the form of student achievement. The current slogan of ‘high standards for all students’ usually translates into ‘higher test scores for all students’” (p. 9).

Some states, like Indiana, now require students to pass standardized tests to earn a diploma. These tests do not consider socioeconomic factors or learning disabilities even though, as Lewis (2000) noted, “national data obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that disadvantaged children generally perform at less than proficient levels when compared to other students” (p. 67).

For students who fail, the process of taking the test, failing, and retaking can be a self-destructive experience. Instead of simply calling for reform, school leaders must be encouraged to ask specific and directed questions that look in depth at the children and the school. John Goodlad, co-director of the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington and
president of the Institute for Educational Inquiry, called this a process of renewal (as cited in Goldberg, 2000). Goodlad called for schools to answer questions like

Why is the child failing? What is the school trying to do? How can the school build an agenda that the staff can get behind to fulfill the school’s mission and to provide meaningful help to every student? What sort of training do teachers and administrators need to renew the school and make it effective? What resources will the school need to be successful? (as cited in Goldberg, 2000, p. 83)

Schools that successfully address these questions have effective leaders. The Educational Research Service (2000) found that “building-wide, unified effort depends on the exercise of leadership—most often identified in the research as the building principal—was found to be key to promoting higher levels of student learning” (p. 5). A 1999 report issued by the National Association of State Boards of Education identified the principal as the key to “implementation and sustainability of reforms focused on student achievement” (p. 5). Richard Riley stated, “A good principal can create a climate that can foster excellence in teaching and learning, while an ineffective one can quickly thwart the progress of the most dedicated reformers” (Educational Research Service, 2000, p. 13).

Characteristics of an effective administrator are clear. According to Robinson’s review of effective school research, principals of effective schools

1. Were assertive in their instructional role,

2. Were goal and task oriented (while principals in less effective schools often appeared overburdened by administrative tasks),

3. Were well organized and demonstrated skill in delegating responsibility to others, achieving a balance between strong leadership role and maximum autonomy for
teachers,

4. Conveyed high expectations for students and staff,

5. Had policies that were well-defined and well-communicated,

6. Made frequent classroom visits,

7. Were highly visible and available to students and staff,

8. Provided strong support to the teaching staff, and

9. Were adept at parent and community relations. (as cited in Educational Research Service, 2000, pp. 5-6)

More recent research on effective principals further supports Robinson’s (1985) findings. Harris (1997) found six components necessary for effective leaders. Successful administrators have a vision for and understanding of the organization, create a trusting and respectful climate conducive to risk taking, and serve as the ultimate decision maker while simultaneously encouraging shared leadership. They also oversee instruction and curriculum, act as the initiator for change, and ensure all students have an equal opportunity to learn.

In the past, leaders could use a directive leadership style to accomplish the managerial tasks. As the call for accountability increases, Lashway (2000) noted that “a different style of leadership [is needed], one that is facilitative rather than directive and focused on creating the conditions under which student performance can thrive” (p. 13). He further noted that “accountability, by definition, is about a school’s obligation to society, so it will never be just an internal matter” (p. 13).

The role of the principal has been redefined and redeveloped as the demands on schools have evolved. Doud and Keller (1998) recognized “instructional leadership clearly emerges as the major role of the K-8 principal” (p. 9). With an added focus on teaching and reflection, it is
necessary for principals to utilize more of a distributed leadership practice. Specific behaviors necessary for an instructional leader have been identified. In 1984, Sergiovanni was one of the first to specify five characteristics: (a) technical—management and organization, (b) human—communication and interpersonal, (c) educational—curriculum and instruction, (d) symbolic—role model, and (e) cultural—long-standing traditions and beliefs.

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) used the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) to identify specific instructional leadership behaviors. These behaviors were conceptualized into 10 subcategories: (a) framing the school goals, (b) communicating the school goals, (c) supervising and evaluating the school goals, (d) coordinating the curriculum, (e) monitoring student progress, (f) protecting instructional time, (g) maintaining high visibility, (h) providing incentives for teachers, (i) promoting professional development, and (j) providing incentives for learning. This instrument measures both teachers’ and principals’ perceptions of the principals’ instructional leadership behaviors. Studies utilizing the PIMRS found there to be no difference between principal and teacher perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors (Hallinger, 2000).

McEwan (1998) more clearly explained and defined instructional leadership characteristics. She addressed seven areas:

- Establish clear instructional goals,
- Be there for your staff,
- Create a school culture and climate conducive to learning,
- Communicate the vision and mission of your school,
- Set high expectations for your staff,
- Develop teacher leaders, and
Maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents. (McEwan, 1998, p. 13)

There have been a multitude of studies on instructional leadership. Hallinger and Heck (1996) reviewed 40 studies that examined school effectiveness and the principal’s role as an instructional leader. They found that in three-fourths of the studies, the principal’s role in school effectiveness could be defined as instructional leadership. Correlations have also been made between principals’ instructional leadership behaviors and the teachers’ participation in professional development, creativity, and dedication (Sheppard, 1996).

Despite current research, “thus far, empirical studies have generated only scant descriptions for the behaviors of effective instructional leaders and their impact on teachers and classroom instruction” (Blasé & Blasé, 1999a, p.354). Furthermore, Short’s (1995) review of the first 10 volumes of the Journal of Curriculum and Instruction found that in the 82 articles addressing instructional leadership, the practice of instructional leadership had been insufficiently researched. When discussing instructional leadership with principals, Gordon (1997) noted that most principals’ perceptions do not reflect current research. Most principals see instructional leadership as inspecting and judging classroom environments (Gordon, 1997).

The characteristics of an instructional leader have been identified, and several instruments, most notably the PIMRS, have been developed to assess instructional leadership. Studies thus far have failed to provide concrete examples as to what an instructional leader does to improve instruction in the classroom so that students are more likely to succeed academically. As cited in Blasé and Blasé (1999a), “indeed, a number of scholars have recognized that although some progress has been made in understanding the relationships among instructional leadership, teaching, and even student achievement, most aspects of this complex phenomenon have not been adequately studied” (p. 352).
**Statement of the Problem**

There is an established relationship between effective schools and the role of the principal and the use of instructional leadership behaviors by effective principals. Through the study of effective and ineffective principals, characteristics of effective principals and instructional leadership behaviors have emerged. What has been inconclusive is the impact effective principals have on student achievement. Furthermore, although there is also extensive research determining characteristics of effective schools, the specific strategies employed by principals that have increased student achievement as measured by standardized test scores are virtually non-existent (Blasé & Blasé, 1999a; Duke, 1982). These research findings support the need for further investigation into the specific instructional improvement efforts that occur in schools that increase student achievement as measured by standardized test scores.

**Purpose of the Study**

This mixed-method study examined what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The purposes of this study were to (a) examine the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; (b) examine the differences among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; and (c) investigate what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement within their schools.

**Research Questions**

The quantitative portion of the study sought to answer four research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership and principals’ own views of their instructional leadership abilities?

2. Are there differences between more effective and less effective leaders as measured by
the Principal Leadership Inventory and the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ instructional leadership?

3. Is there a difference in student achievement between schools according to the teachers’ perceptions of more and effective principals overall leadership?

4. Do teachers’ perceptions of instructional effectiveness when combined with other antecedent variables (principals’ gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status, and student ethnicity) predict student achievement.

Research questions for the qualitative portion of this study were driven by data collected in the quantitative phase and guided by the overall purpose of the qualitative phase, which used on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

**Personal Statement**

Life sometimes takes us on unexpected detours. For me it was a move to a new city, job changes, births of children, and deaths of immediate family members. When these detours occur, we have to adjust our own personal timelines. I started this study over 10 years ago, and I have left the first three chapters as they were originally written to underline the need for this study and the fact that I should not have been surprised when I presented my study at the 2003 ASCD conference and over 1,000 people filled a room to hear my findings on this topic.

As you will see in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, much more research surrounding this topic now exists, but an exact duplicate of my study does not. What you will find in this study, and not others, is the importance of not just overall leadership but specifically instructional leadership followed with a qualitative look at more and less effective principals to better understand why some are more successful than others.
The following definitions, delimitations and limitations remain as originally written because they are the true foundation from which this study was built. Although the citations that formed the original premise for this study are now dated, evidence produced in the final chapters will validate the study’s continued relevance.

**Definition of Terms**

*Administrator* or *principal*, for the purposes of this study, are terms used synonymously in this study to refer to the person in the leading, managing, and supervising position in an elementary school.

*Criterion-referenced test* refers to “a test that reports students’ scores relative to a body of information thought to be important to learn” (Indiana Department of Education & California Testing Bureau [CTB]/McGraw-Hill, 2000, p. 59). The Indiana Academic Standards are a criterion-referenced test on the ISTEP+.

*Elementary school*, for the purposes of this study, refers to a public pre-kindergarten or kindergarten through fifth grade institution.

*Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+)*, according to the Indiana Department of Education (2000) is Indiana’s state testing program. ISTEP+ consists of four parts: a criterion-referenced test that aligns to Indiana’s standards in English/language arts and mathematics; a norm-referenced test that allows the test results of a student or a group of students to be compared to a statistically representative national sample of students; a test of cognitive skills that is used for accreditation purposes and local-decision making; a pilot test item for future administrations of ISTEP+. ISTEP+ is given in the fall to students in Grades 3, 6, 8, and 10. (p. 10)
Instructional leadership is defined as those instructional leaders who “promote a vision for, establish a tone for, and create an atmosphere that encourages excellent teaching and successful learning” (Farrace, 1999, p. 4).

Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) is a 50-item instrument developed by Dr. Phillip Hallinger that measures 10 instructional leadership behaviors: framing the school goals, communicating the school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning.

Principal Leadership Inventory is a 66-item instrument developed by Dr. Barbara Downey to measure teachers’ perceptions of principal effectiveness in five categories: creates a learning-oriented climate, provides personal and professional leadership to forward the school community, fosters team building and morale, provides instructional leadership to promote student achievement, and utilizes organizational management.

Staff, for the purpose of this study, refers to all school employees, including classified members, certified teachers, and school administrators.

Student achievement refers to a child’s ability to show mastery of grade-level standards. For the quantitative portion of the study, the building’s mean scale score on the English/language arts and mathematics ISTEP+ measured student achievement. Individual buildings, during the qualitative phase of the study, may introduce other forms of documentation.

Teacher, for the purpose of this study, refers to a certified professional employee of an elementary school.
Delimitations of the Study

Participation in the quantitative portion of this study was delimited to schools (a) in Indiana, (b) that serve Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten through Grade 5 and (c) are public. For the purposes of this study, teachers’ perception of principal effectiveness was measured using a nine-point Likert scale on the Principal Leadership Inventory and teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership were measured using a five-point Likert scale on the PIMRS. Thus, generalizability of this study is delimited to public elementary buildings serving populations with similar demographics who use a standardized test to measure student achievement.

For the qualitative portion of this study, delimiters included principals (a) whose buildings returned all instruments, (b) who had been principal of that building for more than two years, (c) who fell one standard deviation above or below the mean on the Principal Leadership Inventory (PLI) or the PIMRS and (d) whose buildings scored above predicted and above the state average on Indiana’s statewide standardized tests (ISTEP). Those principals meeting the above delimiters were then considered for site visits based on geographic location, socioeconomic status, and the tenure of the principal. This study sought to represent a cross-section of Indiana. The questions asked were delimitied to examine what the effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Thus, findings can be generalized to principals whose tenure is greater than two years and who have buildings with similar demographic and geographic populations.

Limitations of the Study

Assuming that all instruments used to investigate what an effective principal does to increase student achievement are reliable and valid, the study is limited by the fact that student
achievement in the quantitative portion of this study is solely defined by student achievement on the ISTEP. Furthermore, in a literature review, there are varied instruments available to measure principal effectiveness and instructional leadership. The instruments chosen for this study solely rely upon the teachers’ and principals’ perceptions of the principals’ effectiveness and instructional leadership abilities. Realizing that perceptions can vary greatly depending upon job and life satisfaction, these factors may limit the participants’ ability to answer the questions in an unbiased manner. Additionally in this study, the principals were asked to complete a self-reflection. Knowing how one performs at a job and admitting how one performs at a job are not always synonymous; therefore, self-reflection could be a limitation of this study. Instrument distribution occurred by an administrative assistant. The randomness of the sampling depended on the assistant’s ability to disperse the surveys in an unbiased manner.

The qualitative portion of this study hoped to address the limitation of defining student achievement as participants were able to share and express their own definitions. Definitions were still limited by the experiences of the participants. The sites chosen for the interviews were selected from only those buildings that responded to the survey instruments. Some principals within the population may have been more or less effective than the ones chosen for site visits, but because they did not return the instruments, they were not considered for this portion of the study. Although an effort was made to choose the most and least effective principals within the sample, the desire to represent the entire population of Indiana may have served as a limitation when finding the most and least effective. In the same vein, principals had the ability to decline to participate in the qualitative portion of the study also limiting the ability of this study to truly represent the most and least effective principals. Again, job satisfaction may have biased participants’ responses during the interview portion of this study. Additionally, my presence and
prior knowledge of effective leaders and instructional leadership may have biased the responses and analysis. Finally, as with any qualitative study, my findings may be subject to other interpretations.

**Summary and Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction for the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, definitions of related terms, delimitations, and limitations. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to principal effectiveness, instructional leadership, and student achievement. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and design. Presented are information about the population sample, instruments used, sample sites, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents findings to answer the quantitative research questions posed in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 shares the findings from principal and staff answers to the qualitative interview questions. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and a discussion of the implications of the study.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature examined prior research conducted on variables important to this study. The research is divided into three sections. In the first section, entitled Principal Effectiveness, the role of the principal in establishing successful schools is discussed, and the characteristics of an effective principal are identified. The second section, Principal as an Instructional Leader, gives a brief history of instructional leadership, and defines and identifies instructional leader characteristics. Within the third section, entitled Student Achievement, options available for evaluating student achievement and research related to the principal’s role in increasing student achievement are discussed.

Principal Effectiveness

The Principal’s Role in Successful Schools

Education, just like any other industry, is continually reexamining itself to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Researchers study all aspects of the educational system, including grouping of students, instructional scheduling, teacher planning, parental involvement, professional development opportunities, principal leadership, and the school setting. One consistent finding is that principal is the key to implementing and achieving comprehensive school reform (Carter, 1999; Goldberg, 2000).

When Teske and Schneider (1999) interviewed principals from high-performing schools
in New York City, they found

one essential ingredient common to successful schools that is easily overlooked in pursuit of the educational “reform du jour”—and that is focused, consistent leadership by principals over time. We believe that such leadership is essential to high-performing schools, especially in central cities, because a strong principal defines the culture of schools and integrates the concern for high performance into the mission of the school.

(p. 7)

Commonalities found among these principals were that they had autonomy and control. Principals in turn gave their teachers much autonomy and supported them through staff development. These principals realized the importance of building relationships with staff, parents, and community but ultimately held themselves accountable for all aspects of the school. Teske and Schneider (1999) further recognized that

there is no secret to the success of the effective school principal, no magic formulas, and no hidden models. Rather, the schools succeeded to a large degree because of the alert, consistent, resourceful, and sustaining energy of the school principal. (p. 26)

In 1999, the Heritage Foundation recognized the critical role of the principal when it awarded the Salvatori Prize for American Citizenship to seven principals of high-achieving, high-poverty schools. This annual award is given to “American citizens who are helping their communities solve problems that the government has been unable to solve” (Carter, 1999, p. 1). Like Teske and Schneider, Carter (1999) found seven common elements in these schools that all related to the principal’s roles. In these buildings, the principals had the ultimate ability to make all decisions regarding their schools; set high goals for which all teachers are held accountable; hired the most qualified teachers and relied on teachers to help other teachers; supported, assisted
in preparation for, and took personal responsibility for national exams; created an environment that models and promotes self-discipline; worked with the parents to eliminate barriers that kept them from assisting their children or promoting pride in school; and utilized extended learning opportunities to eliminate social promotion.

Since the 1970s, Keller (1998) explained, research has focused on the principal’s role in school change and school success. Consistent findings report the importance of the principal’s leadership role in creating and maintaining effective schools. In particular, Keller noted the importance of the principal serving as leader of curriculum and instruction.

The importance of the principal and principal’s leadership style has been consistently emphasized in the literature (Barth, 1990; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1995). Dimmock and Lee (2000) distinguished between leadership and management:

Leadership refers to higher-level practices, such as setting visions and goals, motivating staff to achieve them, and building culture and climate. Management, on the other hand, refers to lower-level practices such as monitoring and maintaining performance, allocating resources to achieve agreed-upon goals, and organizing the curriculum and the class schedule. (p. 339)

In the past, the principal’s role has been reviewed under the classic organizational theory, human relations approach, and behavioral science approach (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). Although Lunenburg and Ornstein’s (1996) terminology may not be consistently used when reviewing the principal’s role in literature, the elements included remain the same. The differences in how the principal approaches leadership, organization, production, process, authority, administration, reward, and structure define in which administrative thought the principal operates. Current research discourages the use of the classic organizational theory
where the principal relies upon a top-to-bottom approach, coercive authority, rules, and a formal organizational structure. Instead, research supports more of a behavioral science approach where schools are learning organizations, developing a culture of excellence and employing a collaborative leadership style (Liontos, 1992; Senge, 1990).

Butterworth and Weinstein (1996) offered further support for a move away from the *managerial* view of principal leadership. They believed these views have not offered the desired impact on student achievement. To do so, Butterworth and Weinstein encouraged the use of a model that emphasizes instruction, community, culture, and a shared governance.

In his historical explanation of the principals’ role, Hallinger (1983) found the managerial function to be predominant during the 1960s and 1970s before an emphasis was placed on instructional leadership in the 1980s. During the 1990s, instructional leadership evolved into transformational leadership. Instruction is an equally important component of the principalship in both leadership styles. Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990) explained that the difference between transformational leaders and instructional leaders is in how they lead. Instructional leaders lead “from the front or middle of the band,” whereas transformational leaders lead “from the back of the band” (as cited in Hallinger, 1992, p. 41). Leithwood (1994) further explained that past models of instructional leadership focused strictly on the leaders’ direct impact on the classroom, whereas the transformational leaders’ focus is broader and encompasses areas of influence that may indirectly impact student achievement like staff morale.

Having to act as both a formal and informal leader depending upon the situation requires the leader to call upon varied leadership styles. Callison and McAllister (1999) acknowledged that “leadership is a way of influencing others through communication” (p. 6). To help leaders better meet leadership demands, they shared six leadership styles that researchers have identified
for school administrators.

1. **Teller:** The leader shares what has been decided.
2. **Seller:** The leader shares the decision the leader decided on.
3. **Tester:** The leader shares a tentative decision to see the reaction.
4. **Consulter:** The leader seeks input prior to the decision.
5. **Joint efforter:** The leader gets equal participation from members.
6. **Abdicator:** The leader delegates the decision to others. (Callison & McAllister, 1999, p. 5)

Principals must move between leadership styles depending upon the situation and individuals involved.

A panel convened by the Institute for Educational Leadership to study school leadership shared its perspective on the role of a principal. Published results asked the principal to focus on student learning by remaining abreast of instruction, utilizing and understanding the community, and keeping a clear vision for the school (Richard, 2000). Calls for shared accountability and greater autonomy were also echoed in this report.

On a day-to-day basis, the person who establishes high standards and expectations and ensures they are met is the principal. Realizing the role and responsibilities of the principal may vary depending upon the school setting and characteristics, researchers agree that the principal is the critical component in effective schools (Cawelti, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; McEwan, 1998).

**Characteristics of Effective Principals**

Recognizing the importance of an effective leader, characteristics that distinguish effective principals from ineffective principals have been identified. Callison and McAllister (1999) shared the 12 dimensions considered for principal leadership by the National Association
Elementary School Principals’ (NAESP) assessment center.

1. **Instructional leadership and supervision:** The leader must understand the instructional process and is well versed in a variety of instructional techniques; evaluates classroom instruction relative to teacher objectives and student performance.

2. **Human relations:** The leader perceives the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; recognizes conflicts; deals tactfully with people from varying backgrounds.

3. **Judgment:** The leader reaches logical conclusions and makes quality decisions based on available and acquired information; exercises skills in identifying educational needs and setting priorities.

4. **Organizational ability:** The leader organizes prior to an event and plans and schedules the work of others using resources optimally as well as considering societal and governmental constraints.

5. **Educational values:** The leader possesses a well-reasoned educational philosophy; places high priority on needs and the welfare of students; is receptive to new ideas and change, but understands the need for stability.

6. **Oral communication:** The leader clearly presents facts and ideas orally to individuals and groups using language that is precise and appropriate for the audience.

7. **Written communication:** The leader expresses ideas concisely and precisely in writing.

8. **Problem analysis:** The leader seeks and analyzes relevant information to determine important elements of a problem using information to distinguish problem significance.
9. Creativity: The leader generates and recognizes innovative solutions in work-related situations and exhibits an openness to new ideas, demonstrating originality in developing policies and procedures.

10. Decisiveness: The leader recognizes the need for a decision and is willing to act quickly; to make decisions; to render judgment; to take action; and to accept responsibility for consequences.

11. Group leadership: The leader possesses and projects a sense of vision; exhibits confidence in self; involves others in accomplishing goals and solving problems; and recognizes when a group requires direction.

12. Resourcefulness: The leader actively attempts to influence events to achieve goals and considers work important to personal satisfaction. The leader also evaluates his or her own work; initiates activities; and takes action beyond the minimal requirements. (Callison & McAllister, 1999, pp. 3-4)

These same characteristics can be rearranged to fit into the National Commission for Principalship’s framework for preparing teachers (Sybouts & Wendel, 1994). The first area, function domains, incorporates the basic characteristics of leadership where the leader makes sound decisions based on data gathered and then develops a plan with measurable goals and a realistic timeline. A good leader includes the staff in this process.

The second domain is the programmatic domain. When functioning under this domain, the principal focuses on the educational program. The instruction, curriculum, assessment tools, and student support is all evaluated. This information then guides the principal in setting staff development priorities and allocating resources.
Interpersonal domain is the third domain. In this domain, the principal’s oral and written communication skills are identified as critical elements to develop. The principal’s ability to handle issues sensitively when supervising and evaluating others is incorporated into this domain. Another interpersonal skill the principal must exemplify is the ability to motivate others.

In the last domain, contextual domain, the principal’s intellectual and ethical abilities to function within the cultural and political demands of the school community are explored. Again, the principal is called upon to incorporate public relation skills especially when developing or influencing policy. A strong understanding of local policies, rules, and procedures ensures the principal works within the legal constraints of the school.

After extensively reviewing educational leadership research, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC, 1996), an association of 32 educational agencies and education administrative associations, developed standards for educational leaders. Each standard is further defined by explaining the knowledge—basic understandings the administrator should possess, the dispositions—values and beliefs the administrator should embody; and the performances—the processes and activities in which the administrator should engage. The six standards are

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conductive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (ISLLC, 1996, pp. 1-8)

Following the ISLLC standards, the Indiana Professional Standards Board (IPSB) adopted Standards for Building Level Administrators (IPSB, 1998). The IPSB, established by the Indiana state legislature in 1992 to develop the highest standards for teaching and learning, made only minor adaptations to the ISLLC standards. Similarly, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) aligned their guidelines for educational leadership with ISLLC in July of 1996 (NCATE, 1996).

Blasé and Kirby (1992) conducted a qualitative study that examined the strategies used by both effective and ineffective principals to influence their staff. In contrast to the previously mentioned studies, Blasé and Kirby identified specific strategies as opposed to characteristics. Teachers involved in the study were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire. Analysis of the answers revealed detailed descriptors of the strategies effective principals employ to affect
the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the teacher’s work. They found effective principals

1. Praise teachers’ efforts;
2. Convey high expectations for teacher and student performance;
3. Actively involve teachers in decision making;
4. Provide teachers the autonomy (freedom) to try creative approaches;
5. Support teachers by providing materials, training opportunities, and backing in student discipline matters;
6. Nudge teachers to consider alternative solutions to instruction and discipline problems;
7. Judiciously evoke the power of authority; and
8. Consistently model effective practice. (Blasé & Kirby, 1992, p. 113)

Whitaker, Whitaker, and Lumpa (2000) also shared specific strategies used by effective leaders. Leaders build a shared vision for their buildings and serve as visible role models. They identify and rely upon informal teacher leaders. These leaders recognize, praise, and develop staff strengths, and include staff in decision making often through the use of committees, teams, or groups. Evaluation and supervision of staff is a continual process, and professional development is viewed as a tool for growth. Staff value meetings conducted by the leader because they are productive, well planned, and meaningful. Communication is strong because leaders develop their written, verbal, and non-verbal abilities. Effective leaders create a positive staff and student climate by establishing and valuing individual relationships. The principals’ buildings are homey and inviting.
Kotter (1999) concluded after conducting 14 formal studies that included interviews, observations, and surveys, that effective organizations need both leadership and management; however, leadership is the quality most often missing. Leadership is defined as “coping with change” (Kotter, 1999, p. 54), but management is “coping with complexity.” These concepts are further contrasted by “setting a direction vs. planning and budgeting” (Kotter, 1999, p. 62), “aligning people vs. organizing and staffing,” (Kotter, 1999, p. 62) and “motivating people vs. controlling and problem solving (Kotter, 1999, p. 62).

With hundreds of characteristics listed in numerous reports (Daresh, 1999; Drake & Roe, 1994; Findley & Findley, 1992; Harris, 1997; Joekel, Wendel, & Hoke, 1994; McKenzie, 1992; Pankake & Burnett, 1990), Valentine and Bowman (1984) and Downey (1999) separately created instruments to assist in identifying effective leaders. The Audit of Principal Effectiveness, developed by Valentine and Bowman (1984), contains 80 items that provide data for three domains and nine factors of principal effectiveness. Each of the factors fit into one of the three domains:

Domain 1: Organizational Development Factors: Organizational direction (developing goals and expectations), Organizational linkage (promoting school, home and community relationships), and Organizational procedures (employing decision making and problem solving);

Domain 2: Organization Environment Factors: Teacher relations (working and communicating with staff), Student relations (working and communicating with students), Interactive processes (managing tasks and personnel), and Affective processes (encouraging expression of feelings and opinions) and;
Domain 3: Educational Program Factors: Instructional improvement (supervising and encouraging quality instruction), and Curriculum improvement (reviewing curriculum and student progress). (as cited in Valentine & Bowman, 1991, pp. 3-5)

After an extensive review of the literature, Downey (1999) developed the Principal Leadership Inventory. On this 61-item survey, certified staff rate their perceptions of their administrator on a nine-point scale. The 61 items are then clustered into five factors: creates a learning oriented climate, provides personal and professional leadership to forward the school community, fosters team building and morale, provides instructional leadership to promote student achievement, and utilizes organizational management.

Both instruments reveal that effective administrator characteristics have been identified and commonalities exist across studies. These instruments have consolidated the effective administrator characteristics into a format that allows for a distinction to be made between effective and ineffective administrators.

**Principal as an Instructional Leader**

**Dimensions of Instructional Leadership**

Effective principal research consistently identifies instructional leadership as one of the primary functions of the leader. It is Edmonds’ 1979 article that is one of the first credited with placing the principal at the center of instructionally strong schools (as cited in Hallinger, 1992). In the early 1980s, the principal’s role took on an increased emphasis on “effective instruction, rigorous curricula, and successful learning by all students” (Blome & James, 1985, p. 51). Furthermore, principals were called on to ensure the curriculum was cohesive and coordinated across all subject areas.

This attitude was again reflected in Rodman’s 1988 article where he summarized the
American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education report that recommended “administrator-training programs place more emphasis on curriculum and instruction, learning, teaching, evaluation assessment, philosophy and other educational-leadership issues” (p. 1). The report also recognized that “teachers would assume a greater role in school decision making, . . . [and] “school leadership will become much more connected with managing results and less tied to the management of programs and processes” (Rodman, 1988, p. 1).

A 1982 review of the literature by Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee revealed that successful schools have similar characteristics:

- A school climate conducive to learning—one free of disciplinary problems and vandalism;
- A school-wide emphasis on basic skill instruction;
- The expectation among teachers that all students can achieve; and
- A system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing students’ performances.

Moreover, the studies indicate that the principals in these successful schools are perceived to be strong programmatic leaders who know the learning problems in their classrooms and allocate resources effectively. (p. 35)

Smith and Andrews (1989) defined the multi-faceted role of the instructional leader as being one who was visibly involved, a strong communicator, and a provider of instructional and material resources, but Glanz and Neville (1997) saw the instructional leadership role as one of a coach who shares leadership with teachers. Snyder (1985) shared an instructional leader model that “outlines the tasks of the principal and assumes that collaboration is the norm, with role isolation diminishing” (p. 32). She also used the coach analogy when describing the
principalship and acknowledged school goals revolve around the curriculum and school improvement initiatives.

The practice of instructional leadership is also continually being redefined. Pajak (1993) recognized that instructional leadership had moved beyond “reinforcing specific prescribed teacher behaviors and skills” (p. 318). Now, an instructional leader is also expected to assist teachers in developing professional knowledge and skills through staff development, sound curriculum, and instructional strategies.

DuFour (1999) explained that to be an effective instructional leader, principals are leaders of and learners within professional learning communities. To develop professional learning communities, in which all stakeholders participate, DuFour shared five essential principal qualities. First, principals develop a sense of shared beliefs and goals as opposed to just mandating policies. Through a consensus process, principals engage the staff in identifying common expectations that everyone will support.

Also important is the principals’ ability to involve staff in the decision-making process (DuFour, 1999). Avenues for staff to share their ideas in both small group and whole faculty meetings need to be explored. Through team-teaching initiatives, teachers are empowered to solve their own problems (DuFour, 1999).

Principals of learning communities are continually providing their staff with current research and training opportunities that allow them to grow (DuFour, 1999). Realizing learning is a participatory process, instructional leaders provide time for reflection and collaboration. They also monitor progress and offer feedback to teams and individuals (DuFour, 1999).

The fourth quality DuFour (1999) identified is the fact that principals use student achievement as the ultimate indicator of success. Together with their staff, they express clear,
measurable goals, and collect meaningful data to monitor progress. The celebration of success is also important.

Lastly, DuFour (1999) explained that principals of professional learning communities pose questions rather than impose solutions. These questions develop consensus and allow staff to solve their own problems.

In order to establish these communities, the instructional leader must create a climate conducive to learning. The relationships that the principal establishes with all stakeholders involved in the school community are an essential element of a positive school climate (Lashway, 1995). Once relationships are established, open communication occurs more freely, resulting in a culture where opinions and feedback are valued.

Instructional leaders are those individuals who view teaching and learning as a collaborative and reflective process (Glickman, 1992; Reitzug & Cross, 1993; Schon, 1988). Glickman (1985) recognized that instructional leadership is the integration of assisting teachers, developing collaborative skills, creating curriculum, providing staff development, and monitoring action research.

De Bevoise (1984) noted that “we broadly interpret the concept of instructional leadership to encompass those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning” (p. 15). Keefe and Jenkins (1984) gave a more detailed description of an instructional leader as “the principal’s role in providing direction, resources, and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school” (p. 7). They further explained that instructional leaders operate within four broad domains: (a) formative—developing and expanding their knowledge base of curriculum and instruction, (b) planning—assisting teachers to set goals and objectives, (c) implementation—setting high expectations for
all teachers and securing the necessary resources, and (d) evaluation—monitoring teacher implementation of new programs and student achievement.

As Kaplan and Owings (1999) recognized, “new instructional leadership responsibilities continue to be added to other administrative duties, but none are removed” (p. 83). With the growing emphasis on increasing student achievement and accountability, there is an increased need to understand the instructional leader’s role.

**Instructional Leader Characteristics**

Over 800 teachers completed an open-ended questionnaire for Blasé and Blasé (1999b) describing the characteristics of effective instructional leaders. They found that effective instructional leaders work to develop a culture of collaboration, quality, and the lifelong study of teaching and learning through talk, growth, and reflection. Moreover, effective principals help to frame and support classroom teaching and student learning through the integrated use of action research, peer coaching, the study of teaching and learning models, and conscientious development of the group. (Blasé & Blasé, 1999b, p. 20)

Instructional leaders do vary their leadership styles to fit the building and situation. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) conducted a study that reviewed data collected from schools participating in Tennessee’s School Incentives Improvement Program to see if principals made a difference in student achievement on the reading portion of the Tennessee criterion-referenced test. They found that the principal’s leadership varied depending upon the socioeconomic status of the students.

Not all leaders have the ability to improve a school. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) came to this conclusion after conducting eight case studies. They found that all principals
seemed to be able to manage a building, but not all principals could truly move an organization. Effective instructional leaders were described as innovators because they were continually striving for ways to improve classroom instruction and student learning.

Instructional leaders are those who act proactively. Daresh (1991) identified six characteristics present in proactive instructional leaders. These leaders have strong, clear beliefs and morals that guide their decisions and discussions. Principals model the behaviors that are consistent with their beliefs. At the same time, they value other perspectives and encourage collaboration. Parts of instructional leaders’ successes come from their ability to communicate with and understand people. Above all, instructional leaders realize learning is an endless process, and they are continually searching for ways to self-improve.

According to Duke (1982), instructionally effective principals are described in the literature as having capable teachers, ample time allotted for direct instruction, well-organized learning environments, sufficient instructional resources, the ability to convey high expectations, and a process for continually monitoring progress. Principals can take specific actions to implement these factors into their schools. Duke further identified direct and indirect functions principals can employ to achieve instructional effectiveness. Direct behaviors include staff development—obtaining and continuing to build the best teachers; instructional support—protecting teachers’ instructional time and establishing an orderly environment; resource acquisition and allocation—providing necessary personnel, materials, and supplies; and quality control—evaluating and supervising teacher and student progress. The two indirect behaviors are coordination—allowing for collaboration among staff to eliminate duplication and ensure smooth transitions and troubleshooting—anticipating and addressing unexpected problems as they occur (Duke, 1982).
When comparing effective instructional leadership behaviors identified by the NAESP, U.S. Department of Education, and National Association of Secondary School Principals, Ornstein (1983) found that “principals who provide good instructional and curriculum leadership are well-informed and perform well in many technical roles related to supervision, instruction, teaching, learning, and evaluation” (p. 28). These instructional leaders also demonstrated strong communication skills including the ability to relate to varied personalities. New instructional initiatives were identified by the staff and adapted to manageably meet the building’s needs. The principal’s management style varied from a top-down to a bottom-up approach, but in both circumstances, the teachers had a commitment toward the shared goal. Principals assured that teachers had the structures, time, training, and resources to make the needed changes. Many schools developed partnerships with local businesses.

Hallinger and McCary (1990) found that effective leaders were strategic planners who attempted to anticipate problems, yet were open to new possibilities and solutions. Research by Dwyer et al. (as cited in Hallinger & McCary, 1990) confirmed “the success of principals as instructional managers hinge . . . on their capacity to connect their routine activities to their instructional systems” (p. 92). Effective principals create conditions for successful schools by creating consistent instructional programs, framing goals around instruction, setting high expectations, keeping abreast of potential problems and new policies, frequently observing in classrooms, offering learning incentives, and preserving school order (Bossert et al., 1982).

All six of the functions of the principals outlined by Larsen (as cited in Wright, 1991) require a focus on instruction: goal setting, coordination, supervision and evaluation, staff development, school climate, and school/community relations. There are 10 behaviors in which the principal engages to perform the functions. The principal (a) aligns school goals with district
policies, (b) clearly communicates goals to all stakeholders, (c) expresses high expectations for student achievement, (d) actively engages in dialogue surrounding instructional practices and student achievement, (e) implements consistent measures for monitoring student progress, (f) secures needed resources and materials, (g) regularly observes in classrooms, (h) establishes program evaluations, (i) encourages and seeks curricular innovations, and (j) maintains a safe and orderly school through consistent disciplinary procedures (as cited in Wright, 1991).

Krug (1992) identified five areas and descriptors of instructional leaders. Instructional leaders ensure they are

1. Defining Mission. An effective leader must be able to communicate the school’s purpose to teachers, students, and parents.
2. Managing Curriculum and Instruction. Effective leaders provide information that teachers need to plan their classes effectively and they actively support curriculum development.
3. Supervising Teaching. The focus of the effective instructional leader is more broadly oriented to staff development than to performance evaluation.
4. Monitoring Student Progress. Good instructional leaders need to be aware of the variety of ways in which student progress can and should be addressed.
5. Promoting Instructional Climate. Effective school leaders understand that their primary objective is to motivate people by creating the conditions under which people want to do what needs to be done. (Krug, 1992, pp. 432-433)

Other instructional leadership characteristics emerged from the literature. In 1982, Leithwood and Montgomery conducted an extensive literature review to identify principal behaviors that research had proven to positively affect student learning. They categorized their
findings into three broad areas: goals, factors, and strategies. Principals’ goals were focused upon the students, teachers, and school system, but their primary goal was to ensure student achievement. Factors were defined as areas that could be influenced by the principals. These areas, when positively influenced by the principals, had direct effects on the students. Factors were divided into two areas:

1. Factors affecting student classroom experiences

   The teacher

   Program objectives and emphasis

   Instructional behaviors of the teacher

   Materials and resources

   Assessment, recording, and reporting procedures

   Time/classroom management

   Content

   Physical environment

   Interpersonal relationships in the classroom

   Integration

2. Factors affecting student school-wide experiences

   Human resources

   Material and physical resources

   Relationships with community

   Extracurricular and intramural activities

   Relationships among staff

   Relationships with out-of-school staff, and

   Student behavior while at school (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, p. 312)
The last area Leithwood and Montgomery identified was strategies. Strategies were defined as “the actions principals engaged in to influence factors” (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, p. 325). Thirteen strategies emerged from the literature:

1. Building/maintaining interpersonal relationships and motivating staff
   1.1 Involving staff
   1.2 Doing things with staff
   1.3 Being positive, cheerful, and encouraging
   1.4 Being with/available or accessible to staff
   1.5 Being honest, direct, and sincere
   1.6 Getting staff to express/set their own goals

2. Providing staff with knowledge and skill

3. Collecting information

4. Using vested authority

5. Providing direct service to students

6. Assisting with and supporting teachers’ regular tasks

7. Facilitating within-school communication

8. Providing information to staff

9. Focusing attention on the special needs of students

10. Facilitating communication between the school and the community

11. Using goal and priority-setting and planning

12. Finding non-teaching time for staff

De Bevoise (1984) explained that an instructional leader usually focuses on “setting schoolwide goals, defining the purpose of schooling, providing the resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers” (p. 15). Similarly, Sheppard (1996) compiled existing studies and identified effective instructional leadership behaviors exhibited by principals that positively influenced teacher actions. All the characteristics that De Bevoise identified were present in Sheppard’s study. Additionally, Sheppard found instructional leaders were active in curriculum coordination, stayed abreast of student progress, protected instructional time, remained highly visible, and offered incentives for teachers and students.

Some administrators call upon outstanding teachers to assist in the instructional leadership role. Odden and Wohlstetter (1995) recognized that in successful school reform efforts, the principals “were more than instructional leaders: they promoted an organization and climate where the teachers were leaders in instruction and curriculum” (p. 36). In later research, Odden (2000) found many models recommended in the current comprehensive school reform included instructional facilitators. These positions are being created as a result of growing research that supports the importance of an instructional leader role and the need to share the responsibility with the staff.

With standards, curriculum alignment, and system reform remaining on the forefront of this century, empowering teachers through shared decision-making and site-based management becomes an even more important component (Lemahieu, Roy, & Floss, 1997). Teschke (1996) addressed this concern by noting “effective principals have become ‘leaders of leaders’ who empower their staff members to show leadership in themselves” (p. 10). These principals lead schools that are “collegial communities of learners and leaders” (Teschke, 1996, p.10). It is the
principal’s ability to articulate a vision and elicit support that keeps the building growing strong.

Principals are still ultimately responsible for instructional leadership, whether through their own actions or by identifying others who can assist in the process. As noted in her research, Whitaker (1997) stressed the importance of instructional leaders being visible to model their beliefs. By visiting the classrooms, interacting with students, and providing feedback, principals are better able to share their expectations and ensure student success remains the overarching goal.

In a review of 10 supervision textbooks published between 1985 and 1995, Reitzug (1997) agreed that as long as principals’ roles are viewed as supervisors, principals are expected to be instructional authorities. However, he went on to note that principals of successful schools create an atmosphere of collegiality and do not rely on their formal power to create a learning community within their schools.

Doud and Keller (1998) compiled the results of a study commissioned by the NAESP. From the 1,323 responses, “instructional leadership clearly emerged as the major role of the K-8 principal” (Doud & Keller, 1998, p. 10). To meet these needs, Doud and Keller believed principals needed “better preparation, visionary insight into what schools can and should become, the ability to influence others to share that vision, and realistic expectations of what he or she is able to accomplish” (p. 10).

In order to plan and implement effective instruction, Callison and McAllister (1999) offered eight concepts that principals should consider. These key concepts include

- developing school unit goals and objectives
- allocating staff
- allocating of time and space
- using materials, equipment, and facilities
• coordinating supporting non-instructional services
• developing positive school-community relations
• developing appropriate inservice training
• assessing the needs of the school. (Callison & McAllister, 1999, p. 101)

Student Achievement

Evaluating Student Achievement

Reform efforts surrounding assessment and accountability can be historically recounted. Standardized tests made their way into public schools in the form of intelligence testing to identify students who were eligible for gifted programs or higher education opportunities. Difference in student achievement brought about federal assistance to schools servicing lower socioeconomic populations. The normal curve equivalent was introduced into public schools to compare student progress and ensure federal dollars were well spent. Today’s use of standardized test scores for accountability grew out of the 1970s and 1980s minimum-competency testing reforms. Standardized tests began to be linked to state standards after the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Behind this act also came the expectation for all students to meet these common high standards (Linn, 2000).

Student achievement has been examined in many ways. Many factors have been identified that have a direct effect on achievement. As early as 1963, Carroll (as cited in Smith, 2000) “conceptualized achievement as a combined outcome of the time spent involved in a task and an individual’s learning rate” (p. 654). Riggs and Serafin (1998) recognized that school culture, particularly the quality and rigor of the teachers, also impact student achievement.

Lewis (2000) acknowledged the fact that contradicting schools of thought exist surrounding disadvantaged students’ performance on standardized tests. She noted “some low-income areas are showing that they can move the academic performance of poor children off the
bottom” (Lewis, 2000, p. 67) but also admitted “disadvantaged children generally perform at less than proficient levels when compared to other students” (p. 67). Other factors also potentially influence test scores such as gender or race/ethnicity (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1997). To address these needs, schools are being called upon to build school–community links with the idea that both school and community factors influence student achievement (Sergiovanni, 1999).

Kohn (2000) took a strong stand against the use of standardized tests citing that a study of math results on the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress found that four such variables (number of parents living at home, parents’ educational background, type of community, and poverty rate) accounted for 89% of differences in state scores. (p. 14)

He also reiterated the importance of using varied assessment options for important academic decisions.

Even though the reliability and validity of standardized tests are clear benefits, standardized tests should not be the only form of assessment used (Linn, 2000). Callison and McAllister (1999) encouraged the use of portfolios to collect authentic samples of student progress. Some items that may be included in a portfolio are anecdotal notes, journal entries, learning logs, rubric-scored samples, self-reflections, and video- or audiotapes.

**Principal’s Role in Improving Student Achievement**

Setting the instructional tone and emphasis is a critical role of the instructional leader. With increased accountability being placed upon the individual schools for improving student achievement on standardized test scores, the principal’s role becomes even more important. Instructional leaders set high expectations for their staff. In turn, research conducted by
Rosenthal (1994) found that students lived up to teacher expectations. Students scored higher when teachers placed high academic expectations upon them.

When reviewing student achievement, a positive relationship between the amount of instructional time and instructional time usage is consistently found. A rigorous curriculum and high expectations also impact student achievement positively (Smith, 2000). Additional studies have found that the more opportunity students are given to learn, the higher their achievement (Murphy & Hallinger, 1989; Oakes, 1989). These findings confirm the importance of instructional leadership characteristics identified in the research of principals who protect instructional time and set high expectations for students (Hughes & Ubben, 1994).

Early instructional effectiveness research reviewed by Bossert et al. (1982) looked at the factors present in the classroom that affected instructional learning. The amount of time the students spent on task was the first factor. Smaller, heterogeneously grouped classes also produced higher achievement. A spiraling curriculum that was appropriately paced and offered regular feedback to students on their individual progress was identified as an important component of an effective classroom. Instructional tasks needed to be clear and require students to engage in higher-order thinking. When looking at the overall structure of a building, principals needed to ensure they protected and monitored classrooms for effective use of instructional time, kept classroom compositions well balanced and a manageable size, and gave teachers and students opportunities to work in teams.

A study of effective and ineffective elementary and high school principals by Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) confirmed the results found by Bossert et al. (1982) that “through frequency and effectiveness of implementing instructional leadership behaviors identified, principals can have direct effects on the achievement levels of their schools” (Heck et
al., 1990, p. 120). Some of these behaviors can be directly linked to the classroom, like classroom observation and providing feedback on instruction, but many of them informally impact the classroom environment like school climate and goal setting.

Krug (1992) found that a strong instructional climate can indirectly impact student achievement. The principal has the ability to develop a positive, motivating school culture that impacts student-learning gains. In a study of at-risk public elementary schools in Chicago, Race and Powell (2000) found that students who viewed their school and classroom environment positively scored higher on standardized tests. Other studies have also shown that the leaders can impact student achievement by raising teachers’ expectations (Murphy & Hallinger, 1989; Oakes, 1989).

It is the principal’s leadership that is critical to the success of educational programs. Not all of the principal’s effects may be direct; some may indirectly affect student achievement (Hallinger et al., 1996). When reviewing principal effectiveness research conducted from 1980 to 1995, Hallinger and Heck (1996) found an indirect link between instructional leader behaviors and student achievement was more likely to be found than a direct link. Furthermore, the more statistically rigorous the studies, the more likely the studies would “support the notion that principal leadership can make a difference in student learning” (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, p. 37).

Many studies have shown an indirect connection between principal and student achievement (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger et al., 1996; Leithwood, 1994). Fewer studies have shown a direct relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. After surveying 14,000 elementary schools, Eberts and Stone (1988) concluded that principal leadership does improve student achievement. The two factors that most impacted student achievement were the principal’s ability in instructional leadership and conflict resolution.
Results from a similar study conducted by Brewer (as cited in Teske & Schneider, 1999) found “a positive correlation between the high academic standards set by the principal and student performance and test scores” (p. 10).

Cooperman (1994) explained that there were three basic things principals must do to improve learning. First, principals were encouraged to enforce discipline in order to set an academic climate. Overseeing curriculum and explaining specifically what to teach was the next function of principals if buildings were to realize improved student achievement. Last, Cooperman explained that principals must regularly observe in classrooms to ensure students are receiving the highest quality instruction.

Schools that have seen improvement in literacy recognize the need for leadership. However, according to Rolheiser (as cited in Booth, 2002), this leadership is in a shared format and the success of the students often depends on the strength of the relationship between the principal and a building literacy coach. The literacy coach position must be filled by a person with a strong literacy foundation but also interpersonal skills, passion for continued professional development, and the ability to help others identify areas of personal growth. With a literacy coach in place, the principal then must ensure a culture for collaboration exists so that coherence occurs between classrooms and grade levels. This requires a commitment from the principal to encourage and welcome questions and provide time and resources for professional and literacy-rich classroom development.

To address the needs of today’s schools, the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) compiled a task force to review the principalship. They found the schools of the 21st century will require a new kind of principal, one whose role will be defined in terms of:
• Instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability;

• Community leadership manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school’s role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources; and

• Visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and convictions that all children will earn at high levels, as well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside the school building.

All three are important. But in a crucial sense, leadership for student learning is the priority that connects and encompasses all three major roles. The bottom line of schooling, after all, is student learning. Everything principals do—establishing a vision, setting goals, managing staff, rallying the community, creating effective learning environments, building support systems for students, guiding instruction and so on—must be in service of learning. (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000, p. 4)

Haycock (1999) explained that it takes the leadership of the principal and the commitment of the staff to improve student learning.

When there is strong research base pointing to improved academic achievement…the effort is especially worthwhile and pays results. Exemplary principals play key roles in the implementation of change and those same behaviors are critical factors in the development of collaboration, leadership, and information literacy, the combination of which enables students and teachers to be effective users of information and ideas and to improve academic results. (Haycock, 1999, p. 87)
Overall Conclusions That Support This Study

After reviewing the literature, several reasons arose that support the need for further study into what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase test scores. According to De Bevoise (1984), there is a need to not only study effective principals, but also compare them to ineffective principals. Without this comparison, the difficulty of identifying specific characteristics that effective principals embody and ineffective principals do not is noted. In a study conducted by Heck et al. (1990), they found that effective and ineffective leaders both attempted to influence the same behaviors but did find that effective and ineffective principals differed on which behaviors they believed to be of the most importance. The qualitative portion of this study provides a better understanding of the differences between effective and ineffective instructional leaders.

The lack of research on the role of context or situational factors in the leadership style of the principal is evident (De Bevoise, 1984; Hallinger & McCary, 1990; Ornstein, 1993). If situational factors have been included, they have been limited to urban elementary schools (Heck et al., 1990). Situational factors are addressed in this study by including urban, suburban, and rural schools as well as buildings that serve students of varied socioeconomic status. The qualitative portion provides the best opportunity to address situational differences.

Although much research has been conducted on instructional leadership, the role continues to evolve. Olson (2000) noted that “surprisingly, little is understood about how principals manage this leadership for instruction, or whether they lead differently depending on the subject” (p. 1). Several studies concur that there is a need for additional research that will provide a better understanding of the new role of an instructional leader (Bierema, 1999; DuFour, 1999; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Wheatley, 1992).
Student achievement studies have primarily used standardized test to determine student success (Ornstein, 1993). However, Dimmock and Lee (2000) recognized that standardized tests allow schools to identify trends and make comparisons between schools. For that reason, standardized tests provide the most reliable and valid measure of student achievement. This study used standardized test scores in the quantitative portion and allowed for the introduction of other measures of student achievement in the qualitative portion of the study.

Rowan (as cited in Dimmock & Lee, 2000) concluded that “research in educational administration gives insufficient attention to issues of learning and teaching in schools” (pp. 332-333). In a review of the first 10 volumes of the Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, Short (1995) concluded that research on the practice of instructional leadership was still needed. The need for additional studies that further develop an understanding of the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement have also been acknowledged (Hallinger et al., 1996; Leithwood et al., 1990). The qualitative portion of this study fills a dearth in specific strategies employed by an effective principal that improve instruction and increase student achievement.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses research methodology including the purpose and research questions, the design of the study, and the methods to be used. There are two phases in this study; therefore, the methods section is divided in two parts. First, the quantitative population and sample, instrumentation, analysis, and variables are described. The second, qualitative phase of the study contains a description of the sample and sites, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This mixed method study examined what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The purposes of this study were to (a) Examine the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; (b) examine the differences among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; and (c) investigate what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement within their schools.

Research Questions

The quantitative portion of the study sought to answer four research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership and principals’ own views of their instructional leadership abilities?
2. Are there differences between more effective and less effective leaders as measured by the Principal Leadership Inventory and the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ instructional leadership?

3. Is there a difference in student achievement between schools according to the teachers’ perceptions of more and effective principals overall leadership?

4. Do teachers’ perceptions of instructional effectiveness when combined with other antecedent variables (principals’ gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status, and student ethnicity) predict student achievement.

Research questions for the qualitative portion of this study were driven by data collected in the quantitative phase and guided by the overall purpose of the qualitative phase, which was to use on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

**Design**

A two-phase mixed method design was used in this study. The first phase of the study was quantitative and included approximately 580 pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 or kindergarten through Grade 5 Indiana schools. Principal and teacher perceptions of the principals’ instructional leadership behaviors were collected through survey data using the PIMRS developed by Hallinger (1985). Two separate forms of the PIMRS were used in this study. A principals’ form (Appendix A) was used to acquire the degree to which principals perceive they perform a particular leadership behavior, and a teachers’ form (Appendix B) was used to acquire the degree to which they perceive their principals’ behaviors. The author’s permission was granted to use these instruments (Appendix C). The Principal Leadership Inventory developed by Downey (1999) is a survey instrument that was used to collect teacher
perceptions of principal effectiveness (Appendix D). Permission was granted to use this survey instrument (Appendix E). Building mean scale scores on the ISTEP+ criterion-referenced portion of the test were collected to determine student achievement in English/language arts and mathematics for schools returning the PIMRS and PLI surveys.

In the qualitative phase, I conducted on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups. The exact number and selection of sites visited were driven by data collected in the quantitative phase and guided by the overall purpose of the qualitative phase, which was to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Additional factors that determined site visits included (a) achievement on the ISTEP+, (b) socio-economic status, (c) demographic classification of the community (urban, suburban, small town/rural), (d) length of the principal’s tenure, and (e) principal’s gender.

The findings from the initial phase of the study were used to develop a semi-structured protocol with open-ended questions for the principal interview and separate teacher focus groups. An open-ended question format was employed to maximize the voices within the room. Participants also provided anecdotal and/or artifact data to further explain instructional improvement and student achievement.

When examining literature on instructional improvement and student achievement, methods and results are varied, inconclusive, and lack specificity. Therefore, the phenomenon being studied, results of the quantitative portion of the study, and overall study purposes guided the qualitative portion of this study.

Phase 1 of this study involved the quantitative paradigm to investigate the relationship among principal perceptions of instructional leadership, teacher perceptions of instructional leadership, teacher perceptions of principal effectiveness, and student achievement. The
qualitative phase added specificity and explored what in the nature of the phenomenon helps to explain what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

A single methodology is often recommended for its practicality, limited scope of study, time constraints, and necessary expertise (Creswell, 1994). However, Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (as cited in Creswell, 1994) also acknowledged there are occasions to employ a mixed-method design:

- triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results; complimentary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge (e.g., peeling the layers of an onion); developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method; initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge; and expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study. (p. 175)

This study embodies the purposes for combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The primary purpose of using a combined design in this study was to use the qualitative phase to add specificity and further explore the phenomenon of what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Thus, the qualitative principal interviews and separate teacher focus group questions were developed out of the data obtained in the quantitative phase. Numerous quantitative studies examining the impact of principals’ instructional behaviors on student achievement were identified in the literature review; fewer qualitative studies arose and a very limited number of mixed-method studies were noted. Using a mixed-method design added scope and depth to this study so that fresh perspectives on specifically what principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement arose.
The primary purpose of triangulation was to develop a rich and thick description of the phenomenon. Triangulation also addresses the bias that may be present when one data source, researcher, or method is used (Creswell, 1994; Lancy, 1993). When the research combines the use of printed materials, artifacts, observations, and interviews, triangulation occurs. As Rossman and Wilson (1984) explained, “different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question” (p. 633). Multiple data sources in this study allowed me to reduce bias, strengthen the description, and avoid gaps that may otherwise occur.

Patton (1990) explained that qualitative research is essentially the “natural history” of a quantitative study. A qualitative study is employed to “focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what ‘real life’ is like” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). The qualitative phase of this study allowed me to further identify behaviors in everyday settings and investigate the phenomenon of instructional improvement.

**Methodology: Quantitative Phase**

**Population and Sample**

The original sample included 585 elementary schools in Indiana. All public schools with grade configurations of pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 or kindergarten through Grade 5 in the state of Indiana were included. The schools within Indiana represented urban, suburban, small town, and rural communities.

Principals included in the sample were sent a letter explaining the study (Appendix F) along with the PIMRS, a PIMRS for teachers, and the Principal Leadership Inventory. The principals’ PIMRS asked them to indicate the degree to which they perceived they perform on instructional leadership behaviors, and the teachers’ PIMRS asked them to indicate the degree to which they perceived their principals perform on instructional leadership behaviors. Principals
returned their completed PIMRS and signed consent (Appendix G) for their buildings to participate in the study to the building secretary in a sealed envelope provided by me.

Ten copies of each of the teacher instruments were sent along with a letter to the secretary (Appendix H) that provided the process for distribution and data collection. The secretary’s letter instructed him or her to use an alphabetical listing of teachers and, starting with the first teacher, give alternating instruments to each teacher until all 20 were distributed. In this way, each of the first 20 staff members were given either the teacher PIMRS or the PLI. If the school had fewer than 20 staff members, the secretary was asked to follow the same procedure for distribution until all staff members received an instrument. A letter explaining the study to the staff was also attached to the instruments (Appendix I) along with an envelope in which staff members sealed their surveys and protected their confidentiality. The secretary was then asked to collect and return the instruments to me in the postage-paid envelope provided. Staff members also had the option of returning the surveys directly to me. Two weeks following the initial mailing, a follow-up mailing was made to those not responding. Telephone calls to individual principals were also made in order to prompt responses.

Results from each of the schools on both instruments were tabulated. Schools that returned both surveys were ranked on the basis of teacher perception of the principal’s instructional leadership (PIMRS) and on the teacher perception of principal effectiveness (PLI). These results were then used to determine which schools had stronger instructional leaders and more effective principals and which schools had weaker instructional leaders and less effective principals.
Instrumentation

The PIMRS was developed by Hallinger (1983) to provide a profile of principals’ performances on 10 instructional leadership job functions associated with principal leadership in effective schools. The job functions arose from a review of research on effective principals and by using education expert opinions to identify critical behaviors for each of the job functions. These 10 job functions were operationalized in terms of 50 specific job behaviors. The behaviors were then constructed into a questionnaire instrument following procedures for developing behaviorally anchored rating scales.

Three forms of the PIMRS exist: one for the principal, one for the teachers, and one for supervisors. Only the principal and teacher form were used in this study. Questions designed to obtain demographic information about the respondent comprised the first part of the survey. The second part of the study contained the 50 statements regarding principals’ perceptions or teachers’ perceptions of critical instructional leadership behaviors. On the principals’ form (Appendix A), principals are asked to indicate the degree to which they perceive they perform a particular leadership behavior. On a separate form of the PIMRS for teachers (Appendix B), teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which they perceived their principals’ behaviors. Identical questions were used on both forms. The PIMRS for principals and teachers utilized a five-point Likert scale: 5 = almost always, 4 = frequently, 3 = sometimes, 2 = seldom, and 1 = almost never. Scores on the subscales were determined by summing the item responses within the subscale.

These behaviors were conceptualized into 10 subcategories: frame the school goals, communicate the school goals, supervise and evaluate instruction, coordinate the curriculum,
monitor student progress, protect instructional time, maintain high visibility, provide incentives for teachers, promote professional development, and provide incentives for learning.

The PIMRS was originally administered to a sample of 104 teachers, 10 principals, and three district office supervisors. Hallinger (1983) tested the adequacy of the instrument using five criteria:

1. Context validity—items making up each subscale of the instrument must be relevant to the critical requirements of the job; each item assigned to a subscale achieved a minimum average agreement of .80 among a group of raters;

2. Reliability—subscales achieved a reliability coefficient of at least .80 as a test of the instrument’s internal consistency;

3. Discriminant validity—the subscales should discriminate among principals; that is, the variance in principal ratings within schools was less than the variance in ratings of principals between schools;

4. Construct validity (subscale intercorrelation)—groups of items within a subscale correlated more strongly with each other than with other subscales;

5. Construct validity (documentary support)—an analysis of school documents related to the instructional management behavior of principals generally yielded instructional management instructional management profiles similar to those obtained from teachers with the questionnaire. (Hallinger, 1983, p 15)

**Principal Leadership Inventory**

Downey (1999) developed the PLI after reviewing current literature, collecting practitioners’ views, and field-testing the instrument. Instrument items or indicators were identified, and commonalities among the items were used to determine categories or theoretical
constructs. Next, two panels of experts reviewed the instrument before being field-tested on a sample of 769 randomly selected Indiana schools. Certified staff members at each school rated the importance of each item according to their perceptions of the significance of each item to a hypothetical, highly effective principal. Exploratory factor analysis was then used to determine the final subsets used in the instrument. The criterion for retention of an indicator/item was as follows: the item had to have a factor loading of .40 or greater and the difference between the highest factor loading of an item had to be .15 or greater (Downey, 1999, p. 128).

In order to establish internal consistency for the Principal Leadership Inventory, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were calculated for each factor. All results were above .75, thus, it was concluded that the PLI has high degrees of reliability.

The Principal Leadership Inventory was designed to be completed by a principal’s certified staff so that feedback can be provided on the effectiveness of the principal. The final form of the instrument contains 66 items identified within five theoretical constructs/factors. It asks certified staff members to respond to individual items on a nine-point Likert scale based on their perceptions of their own principal. The nine-point scale used descriptors of not effective for the lower end of the scale, moderately effective for the middle section, and highly effective for the upper portion.

The following is a description of the instruments’ final factors and related items: Factor 1—creates a learning oriented climate. There are 18 items in this factor that examine the principal’s interpersonal skills, opportunities for staff involvement in decision making, and the principal’s ability to create a safe school environment. Factor 2—provides personal and professional leadership to forward the school community. The 19 items in this factor investigate the principal’s lifelong learning habits and how those habits relate to being involved in the
community and having the community involved in the school. Factor 3–fosters team building and morale. These 10 items look at the principal’s ability to share responsibility, develop a community within the school, tolerate failure, and create a risk free environment. Factor 4–provides instructional leadership to promote student achievement. There are 15 items within this factor that examine the principal’s ability to plan and evaluate programs, provide opportunities for students to be involved in learning, hold students accountable for their own learning, supervise and evaluate teaching strategies, and provide school-wide professional development. Factor 5–utilizes organizational management. There are four items in this factor that asks questions about the principal’s time management skills and use of resources.

**Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+)**

According to the Indiana Department of Education (2000), ISTEP+ is Indiana’s state testing program. ISTEP+ consists of four parts: a criterion-referenced test that aligns to Indiana’s standards in English/language arts and mathematics; a norm-referenced test that allows the test results of a student or a group of students to be compared to a statistically representative national sample of students; a test of cognitive skills that is used for accreditation purposes and local-decision making; a pilot test item for future administrations of ISTEP+. ISTEP+ is given in the fall to students in Grades 3, 6, 8, and 10. (p. 10)

The third grade mean criterion-referenced scale scores on the English/language arts and mathematics sections for each building were used. Individual school scores are public domain and, therefore, available by contacting the Indiana Department of Education. Third grade 2000 English/language arts ISTEP+ had a 475 score at standard, a 300 low score, and a 790 high
score. On the third grade 2000 mathematics, 479 was the score at standard, 300 was the low score, and 720 was the high score.

Analysis and Variables

**Research Question 1.** Is there a correlation between the teachers’ perception of principal instructional leadership and principals’ own views of their instructional leadership abilities? A Pearson product moment correlation at the .05 level of significance was used to test this question. Three separate correlations were run: (a) a correlation between the teachers’ perception of overall principal leadership of instruction (PLI–Category 4) and the teachers’ perception of principal instructional leadership (PIMRS–teacher form overall total), (b) a one-to-one correlation on each of the 10 factors and an overall total for the teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIMRS–teacher form) to the principals’ perception of instructional leadership (PIMRS–principal form), and (c) correlation between the teachers’ perception of overall principal leadership of instruction (Principal Leadership Inventory–Category 4) and the principals’ perception of principal instructional leadership (PIMRS–principal form overall total). This correlation was done to see if the sub-measure of instructional leadership as measured by the Principal Leadership Inventory reflects the role of instructional leadership as measured on the teachers’ and principals’ form of the PIRMS.

**Research Question 2.** Are there differences between the more effective and less effective leaders as measured by the PLI and the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ instructional leadership? A one-way independent measures ANOVA using an alpha level of .05 was conducted to ascertain differences in teachers’ perception of their principals’ overall leadership and the teachers’ perception of their principals’ instructional leadership. Principals categorized in the top fourth on the PLI were considered more effective; comparatively,
principals rated in the bottom fourth which were considered less effective. Principal
effectiveness (PLI) was the independent variable and the combined factors of instructional
leadership (PIMRS) was the dependent variable.

**Research Question 3.** Is there a difference in student achievement between schools
according to the teachers’ perceptions of more and less effective principals’ overall leadership?
Two separate one-way independent measures ANOVA were conducted using an alpha level of
.05. Principal effectiveness (PLI) categorized into fourths was the independent variable and
student achievement, mean English/language arts scale score, and mean mathematics scale score,
respectively, were the dependent variables. Principals categorized in the top fourth were
considered more effective; comparatively, principals rated in the bottom fourth were considered
less effective.

**Research Question 4.** Do a teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership when
combined with other antecedent variables (principal’s gender, school size, demographic
classification of the community, socio-economic status and student ethnicity) predict student
achievement? Two separate standard multiple regressions were conducted using an alpha level
of .05. Teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS) and antecedent variables
(principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic
status and student ethnicity) were the independent variables and student achievement, mean
English/language arts scale score, and mean mathematics scale score, respectively, served as the
dependent variables.
Qualitative Phase

The second phase added specificity and further explored the phenomenon of what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. This portion of the study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. Marshall and Rossman (1995) explained that the most compelling reason to use qualitative research is to “stress the unique strengths of this paradigm for research that is exploratory or descriptive, that assumes the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon” (p. 39). Research questions (Appendix J) for the qualitative portion of this study were driven by data collected in the quantitative phase and guided by the overall purpose of the qualitative phase, which was to use on-site, semi-structured principal interviews, and separate teacher focus groups to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

Sample and Sites

Buildings for principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups were derived from data obtained in the quantitative phase. Results from each of the schools on all three instruments were tabulated and analyzed. One area of analysis considered when choosing sites to visit was the comparison of more effective principals with less effective principals. Likewise, principals’ ratings on instructional leadership qualities (PIMRS and PLI) were also taken into consideration. The mean was determined for each survey item on these two instruments. Buildings where principals had multiple items where the mean was one standard deviation below the average on the PIMRS or PLI were considered for less effective principal site visits. Conversely, buildings where principals had multiple items where the mean was one standard deviation above the average on the PIMRS or PLI were considered for more effective principal site visits. Using
these criteria as the first elimination for site visits, 10 less effective buildings and 11 more effective buildings remained. First year principals were eliminated because they had minimal impact on ISTEP+ tests administrated in September. Next, ISTEP scores were examined. In the schools with less effective principals, those schools that scored below predicted performance were considered, but conversely, schools with more effective principals who scored at or above predicted performance were considered. Last, to ensure a representative sample of Indiana was chosen, the demographic classification of the community (urban, suburban, small town, rural) was considered.

This process identified three principals with less effective schools and five more effective principals’ schools for site visits. All of the more effective principals’ schools agreed to participate and two of the less effective principals’ schools agreed to participate. An alternate was chosen from the less effective principals’ school list allowing visitation to three less effective principals’ schools and five more effective principals’ schools.

Data Collection

Qualitative research is intended to allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of a particular role, social situation, group, event, or interaction. In the second phase of this study, sites identified in Phase 1 were explored in greater detail and depth. The qualitative paradigm was used to explore the instructional environment in its natural setting and gather the perspectives and words of the teachers and principals.

Once site-visit locations were identified, the building principals were contacted by phone to explain the qualitative portion of the study and invited to participate. Those principals who indicated interest were sent a letter explaining the process and were asked to complete a Consent to Participate (Appendix F). Once the letter was returned, a date for a site visit was determined.
Teacher participation was also solicited through a letter asking them to indicate consent to participate by selecting a desired focus group time and returning the letter to the principal (Appendix G). By inviting all teachers to participate, it was hoped that a representative teacher sample from each building would emerge for the focus groups. Both the principal and teacher letter explained that participation was voluntary and all information received during the site visits was kept confidential.

The primary data source was in-depth individual principal and separate teacher focus group interviews. However, site observations occurred and building documents were also examined. Site observations and building documents helped set the parameters in which to frame the interviews. Through observation, I was able to see instructional strategies employed and principal and teacher interactions. Building documents also provided samples of principal and teacher communications surrounding instruction and/or student achievement as well as authentic examples of student achievement and/or instructional strategies.

**The Researcher’s Role**

Merriam (1988) explained that the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Therefore, biases, values, and judgments that the researcher may hold must be identified. I am a previous elementary teacher from a kindergarten through Grade 5 setting and have served as an instructional leader. In my position, I extensively studied and utilized best practices identified in current research and literature. I have also completed an internship in the principalship and served as a facilitator for the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy. Both of these experiences provided me with expectations for effective principal behaviors. These experiences may have shaped my understanding and interpretation of the data.
Every effort was made to ensure objectivity by relying upon a research partner, current research, and literature to guide my conclusions.

It is important that the qualitative research respects the participants’ legal rights, values, and wishes. To ensure the participants’ rights were preserved (a) written permission to proceed with the study was received from the participants, (b) I provided participants with the objectives verbally and in writing, (c) human subjects procedures specified by the Bayh College of Education and Indiana State University were followed, (d) all data collection measures were shared with participants, and (e) the final decision regarding informant anonymity rested with the participants.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Data was collected in the spring semester of the 2000-2001 school year through on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups. Visitation dates and times were established by contacting the principals from each of the selected schools. Teacher focus groups were selected based upon their accessibility at a specified time of day and the participant’s indication of preferred focus group meeting time. Though not a random process, this method of selection made the use of the interview methodology feasible for this study. Each principal was interviewed individually.

Prior to the visit, the requested was made for a comfortable, private room to be made available at the site in which to conduct separate focus groups and principal interviews. Tentative open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were developed to ensure some consistency in the information gathered (Appendix H). Principals and teachers were asked the same questions. These questions were designed to ascertain what the principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement.
There are inherent advantages to focus groups. First, the questions are asked in a socially oriented setting that is more representative of real life than one-to-one interviews, thus reducing participant anxiety and enabling more in-depth discussions. The ability to include more participants in an efficient manner is another advantage. The semi-structured interview questions helped eliminate irrelevant discussions that could potentially be a disadvantage of focus groups (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Prior to beginning the focus groups, the importance of confidentiality was discussed and participants were reminded that some issues discussed may be sensitive; therefore, it was requested that opinions that arose during the focus group be respected and not repeated outside the focus group.

Because I was a novice qualitative researcher and to guard against false generalizations or assumptions that could occur as a result of the short focus group time periods, I employed the assistance of a more experienced research partner when conducting the principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups. After the consent to participate was signed, open-ended, semi structured interview questions (Appendix H) were used to ascertain what the principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Principals and teachers were asked the same questions. My research partner and I recorded participants’ answers, and the interviews were audio-taped. Ten minutes prior to the end of the focus group, the participants were asked to summarize the major findings. In return, my research partner and I shared the overarching themes that arose during the focus group. This member-checking step developed soundness in the study.

For each building visited, on-site structured interviews were conducted with the building principal. Separately, on-site structured interviews occurred with teacher focus groups. Each principal gave my research partner and me a tour of the building. Time was spent observing the
principal, teachers, and school environment. This provided the opportunity for field observations and the collection of artifacts. After each site visit, my research partner and I recorded descriptive notes that identified the physical setting, activities, and portraits of the participants. Furthermore, we recorded reflective notes detailing initial ideas and impressions as to what the principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Corbin and Strauss (2008) stressed the importance of doing analytic work alongside of data collection. After the conclusion of the last site visit, my research partner typed his notes from the site visits and sent them to me, and all interviews were transcribed.

Each site was assigned a random letter to protect participants’ anonymity. All consents to participate and any documentation from the individual schools were filed under these letters and stored securely in the researcher’s house. All transcripts and notes were coded with the letters. Upon completion and publication of the study, any remaining documentation containing specific participant or school names was shredded.

**Data Analysis**

Final data analysis occurred by reviewing initial interview transcripts, observations, and our notes, as well as the focus group summaries, while simultaneously using open coding. Analysis of qualitative data required the use of descriptive wording to identify and interpret patterns, categories, or themes that arose. As data were collected, analysis and coding were conducted concurrently. Next, axial coding was used to identify connecting categories and codes between and across open coding. Questions were asked during the coding process to uncover the interrelationship between these principals. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and Miles and Huberman (1994) served as guides to develop coding. Finally, selective coding was used to develop the core or essential concepts, categories, and themes that were shared in data analysis.
Through this inductive interpretative process, it was sought to determine specifically what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

**Soundness of the Study**

When examining the soundness of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided four basic assumptions in regard to qualitative study. They explained that the researcher establishes trustworthiness by providing evidence that the study credibly portrays the participants’ opinions.

Transferability, or the accuracy of information and its ability to match reality, was ensured through the use of triangulation. Data collected in this phase was compared to the findings of the quantitative phase of this study. The dissertation committee, two former principals, two professors in the educational leadership department, and one professor in the elementary education department, all of whom have qualitative research experience, reviewed key decisions. Additionally, a research partner assisted during the principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups ensuring participants’ viewpoints were accurately recorded. At the conclusion of the principal interview and separate teacher focus groups, participants were asked to share the main findings they felt arose during the interview or focus group. In turn, the major themes that they felt appeared were shared.

This study addressed the replication or dependability of the study by detailing data collection and analysis procedures. Detailing the researcher’s role, biases, and prior experiences, as well as data collection and analysis procedures, ensured replication of the study would be possible. By thoroughly examining the notes and transcripts, and by continually questioning the data, the occurrence of bias was reduced. Because several sites were visited, it was the patterns and themes that emerged across all sites that were reported allowing triangulation to occur. All phases of this project were subject to the dissertation committee’s scrutiny.
Summary

In this chapter, the design components were presented and described for the research methods for both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study. The quantitative phase detailed the identification of the population and sampling procedures. Next, the development, reliability, and validity of the instruments were explored. Last, the independent and dependent variables as well as analysis procedures for each study question were explained.

The qualitative phase also detailed the procedures involved for identifying schools receiving on-site structured interviews. Data collection procedures and analysis considerations were explained including the researcher’s role, reliability, and validity assurances.

This mixed-method study examined what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The purposes of this study were to (a) examine the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; (b) examine the differences among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; and (c) investigate what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement within their schools.
CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSES

This chapter presents the findings from the quantitative phase of the study that examined the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement. These analyses determined if there was a relationship among principal perceptions of instructional leadership, teacher perception of instructional leadership, and teacher perception of principal effectiveness. Once a relationship was determined, differences between how more effective and less effective principals lead instruction were analyzed. More effective and less effective principal groups were then examined to determine if there were differences in student achievement. Finally, teacher perception of instructional leadership and other antecedent factors that relate to student achievement were identified.

Overall, the design involved the following basic procedures: (a) All 585 public elementary schools in Indiana with grade configurations of pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 or kindergarten through Grade 5 were surveyed and (b) Principals were asked to complete the PIMRS. A secretary was asked to use an alphabetical listing of teachers to alternate distributing the PIMRS for teachers and the Principal Leadership Inventory until all 20 instruments were distributed or the entire faculty received an instrument, whichever occurred first.

Teachers sealed their surveys in an envelope and returned them directly to me or to the secretary who forwarded them to me. Results from the 232 schools that returned all instruments
were tabulated. Schools that return all instruments were ranked on the basis of teachers’
perception of the principal’s instructional leadership (PIMRS) and on the teachers’ perception of
principal effectiveness (Principal Leadership Inventory) and divided into fourths.

Statistical analysis of the data included descriptive statistics regarding the mean, standard
deviation, frequency, and standard error. Pearson product-moment correlation, one-way
independent measures ANOVA, one-way between subjects ANOVA, and standard multiple
regression were used to test the study questions at a .05 level of significance. All statistical
procedures were performed using the computer program SPSS.

Research Question Testing

Research Question 1 asked, “Is there a correlation between the teachers’ perception of
principal instructional leadership and principals’ own views of their instructional leadership
abilities?” When examining the magnitude of correlation coefficient, Cohen’s (1988)
interpretation was used with large above .5, medium ranging from .3 to .49, and low below .3.
The first Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted addressing the relationship
between the overall total for teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIMRS–teacher
form) to the principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership (PIMRS–principal form) in
addition to a one-to-one correlation to each of the 10 factors. Descriptive statistics can be found
in Table 1 and correlations in Table 2. A low positive correlation was found between the overall
teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIMRS–teacher form) and the principals’
perceptions of instructional leadership (PIMRS–principal form), $r = .15, p < .05$, two-tailed. Nine
of the 10 individual factors had low positive correlations between the teachers’ perception and
the principal’s perception of instructional leadership. These relationships are considered low
because even the strongest correlation on Factor 7–Maintains High Visibility, $r = .29, p < .01$, is
considered low by Cohen’s interpretation. The only factor that was not statistically significant was Factor 8–Provide Incentives for Teachers, \( r = .13, p = .07 \). Thus, the principal’s perception of providing incentives for teachers does not relate to the teachers’ perspective.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Overall and Individual Factors of Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership (PIMRS–Principal and Teacher Forms)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIMRS</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions average</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions average</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 1</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 2</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 3</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 4</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 6</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 7</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 8</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 9</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perceptions Factor 10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 1</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 2</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 3</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 4</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIMRS</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 6</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 7</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 8</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 9</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions Factor 10</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Correlations Between Overall Average and Individual Factors of Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership (PIMRS–Principal and Teacher Forms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Correlation Coefficient – PIRMS Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Frame the School Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Communicate the School Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supervise and Evaluate Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coordinate the Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Monitor Student Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Protect Instructional Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Maintain High Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provide Incentives for Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Promote Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Provide Incentives for Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Next, the first study question examined the correlation between the teachers’ perception of overall principal leadership of instruction (PLI–Factor 4) and the principals’ and teachers’ perception of principal instructional leadership (PIRMS–Principal overall average). This correlation was performed to determine if the submeasure of instructional leadership as measured by the Principal Leadership Inventory reflects the role of instructional leadership as measured on the teachers’ and principals’ form of the PIRMS. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 3.
and correlations in Table 4. A medium positive significant correlation was found between the PLI–Factor 4, Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement, and the teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS), $r = .47, p < .01$, two-tailed. A small positive significant correlation was also found between the PLI Factor 4, Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement, and the principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership (PIRMS), $r = .185, p < .05$, two-tailed. This relationship between the PLI–Factor 4, Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement, and both the teachers’ and principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership (PIRMS) indicates the instruments measure the instructional leadership role similarly.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Overall Average of Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership (PIMRS–Principal and Teacher Forms) and PLI–Factor 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$n$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ perception average (PIRMS)</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ perception average (PIRMS)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLI–Factor 4, Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Correlations Between Overall Average of Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership (PIMRS–Principal and Teacher Forms) and PLI–Factor 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIRMS Averages</th>
<th>PLI Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Perceptions of Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>.47**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Research Question 2 stated, “Are there differences between the more effective and less effective leaders as measured by the Principal Leadership Inventory and the teachers’ perception of their principals’ instructional leadership?” A one-way independent measures ANOVA was conducted with the PLI categorized into fourths as the independent variable and the teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS) as the dependent variable. Principals categorized in the top fourth were considered more effective; comparatively, principals rated in the bottom fourth were considered less effective. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 5 and an ANOVA summary can be found in Table 6. There was a statistical difference between the more effective and less effective principals, $F(3, 199) = 17.46, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$. A Tukey’s HSD post hoc test showed the top fourth of effective principals had a significant mean difference on instructional leadership from bottom fourth or less effective, principals. The post hoc also showed the next two levels of effective principals also had a significant mean difference on instructional leadership compared to the less effective principals.
Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for More Effective and Less Effective Leaders As Measured by the PLI on the Teachers’ Perception of Their Principals’ Instructional Leadership (PIMRS)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLI Category</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Fourth (Most Effective)</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Fourth</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Fourth</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Fourth (Least Effective)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*ANOVA Summary for More Effective and Less Effective Leaders as Measured by the PLI on the Teachers’ Perception of Their Principals’ Instructional Leadership (PIMRS)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLI category</td>
<td>20.316</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>77.170</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3 stated, “Is there a difference in student achievement between schools according to the teachers’ perception of more and less effective principals’ overall leadership?” Two separate one-way independent measures ANOVA were conducted with the PLI categorized into fourths as the independent variable and student achievement, mean English/language arts scale score, and mean mathematics scale score, respectively, as the
dependent variables. Principals categorized in the top fourth were considered more effective; comparatively, principals rated in the bottom fourth were considered less effective. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 7. Tables 8 and 9 further display the data from the English/Language arts ANOVA and Mathematics ANOVA. There was no statistical difference between the more effective and less effective principals on English/language arts scale ISTEP scores, $F(3, 210) = 2.21, p < .09, \eta^2 = .03$. Likewise, the difference between the more effective and less effective principals on mathematics scale ISTEP+ scores was not significant, $F(3, 210) = 1.93, p < .13, \eta^2 = .03$.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for More Effective and Less Effective Leaders As Measured by the PLI on Mean English/Language Arts and Mathematics ISTEP Scale Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLI Category</th>
<th>English LA $M$</th>
<th>Math $M$</th>
<th>English LA $SD$</th>
<th>Math $SD$</th>
<th>$n$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Fourth (Most Effective)</td>
<td>498.76</td>
<td>510.59</td>
<td>23.50</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Fourth</td>
<td>495.26</td>
<td>506.64</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>22.89</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Fourth</td>
<td>498.28</td>
<td>509.96</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>23.70</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Fourth (Least Effective)</td>
<td>488.26</td>
<td>501.15</td>
<td>26.70</td>
<td>21.42</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>495.13</td>
<td>507.07</td>
<td>24.10</td>
<td>22.98</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

ANOVA Summary for More Effective and Less Effective Leaders As Measured by the PLI on the English/Language Arts ISTEP Scale Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLI category</td>
<td>3788.30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1262.77</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>119875.30</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>570.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

ANOVA Summary for More Effective and Less Effective Leaders As Measured by the PLI on the Mathematics ISTEP Scale Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLI category</td>
<td>3016.84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1005.61</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>109425.97</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>521.08</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4 stated, “Do teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership when combined with other antecedent variables (principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status, and student ethnicity) predict student achievement?” Two separate standard multiple regressions were conducted with teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS) and antecedent variables (principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status, and student ethnicity) as independent variables and student achievement, mean English/language arts scale score, and mean mathematics scale score, respectively, served as the dependent variables.
Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 10 and intercorrelations among variables can be found in Table 11 for English/Language arts ISTEP scale scores and Table 12 for mathematics ISTEP scale scores. The model using the mean English/language arts ISTEP scale score as the dependent variable was significant with $R^2$ value of .55, $F(6, 211) = 42.58, p < .001$. Furthermore, the model using the mean mathematics ISTEP scale score as the dependent variable was also significant with $R^2$ value of .38, $F(6, 211) = 21.36, p < .001$. This meant 55% of the variance for English/language arts ISTEP scale scores and 38% of the variance for mathematics ISTEP scale scores were accounted for by the linear combination of the predictor variables of the principal’s instructional leadership, principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status and student ethnicity. Instructional leadership as measured on the PIRMS ($\beta = .10, p = .03$) for English/language arts and ($\beta = .13, p = .02$) for mathematics as well as socioeconomic status as measured by percent of students on free or reduced lunch ($\beta = -.702, p = .001$) for English/language arts and ($\beta = -.572, p = .001$) for mathematics were significant predictors for ISTEP scale scores, whereas principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community and student ethnicity were not. The standardized Beta coefficients indicate that in both models socioeconomic status carries more weight than the English/language arts or mathematics. However, because the t value in both models is above 2.0, instructional leadership is considered a positive predictor for both English/language arts and mathematics, just not as strong of a predictor as socioeconomic status. Regression statistics are detailed in Table 13 for English/language arts and Table 14 for mathematics.
Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics for Teachers’ Perception of Instructional Leadership as Measured by the PIMRS Combined with Principals’ Gender, School Size, Demographic Classification of the Community, Socioeconomic Status, and Student Ethnicity on Student Achievement for English/language Arts and Mathematics ISTEP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean English/language arts</td>
<td>494.25</td>
<td>24.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Mathematics</td>
<td>506.28</td>
<td>23.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Minority Percentage</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>26.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Gender</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>414.00</td>
<td>161.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Location</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Free or Reduced Lunch Percentage</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>21.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership–PIMRS average</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 218*
Table 11

*Intercorrelations Between Student Achievement Factors and English/Language Arts ISTEP Scale Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mean English/language arts score</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-.79</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student Population Minority Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Principal Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Student Population Free or Reduced Lunch Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Instructional Leadership (PIRMS average)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

*Intercorrelations Between Student Achievement Factors and Mathematics ISTEP Scale Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mean Mathematics score</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Population Minority Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Student Population Free or Reduced Lunch Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Instructional Leadership (PIRMS average)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

*Summary of Standard Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting English/Language Arts Student Achievement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Minority Percentage</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Gender</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Location</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Free or Reduced Lunch Percentage</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
<td>-10.17</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership (PIRMS average)</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>504.90</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>50.44</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 217*
Table 14

Summary of Standard Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Mathematics Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Achievement Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Minority Percentage</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>-.84</td>
<td>.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Gender</td>
<td>-1.086</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>-.90</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Location</td>
<td>-.640</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>-.75</td>
<td>.450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population Free or Reduced Lunch Percentage</td>
<td>-.620</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.580</td>
<td>-7.10</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership (PIRMS average)</td>
<td>4.200</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>519.630</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.91</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .38$

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

Is there a correlation between the teachers’ perception of principals’ instructional leadership and principals’ own views of their instructional leadership abilities? To answer Research Question 1, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted addressing the relationship between the overall total for teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIMRS—teacher form) to the principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership (PIMRS—principal form) in addition to a one-to-one correlation to each of the 10 factors. The results showed a low positive correlation between the overall teachers’ perceptions of instructional
leadership (PIMRS—teacher form) and the principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership (PIMRS—principal form). Additionally, nine of the 10 factors had low positive correlations between the teacher’s perceptions and the principals’ perception of instructional leadership. Thus, the principals’ and teacher’s perceptions of instructional leadership are the same in every category except for Factor 8—Provide Incentives for Teachers. The principal and teacher perceived the use of incentives differently.

The next portion of the analysis for this question ensured that instructional leadership, a submeasure of the PLI, reflected the role of instructional leadership as measured on the teachers’ and principal’s form of the PIRMS. A medium positive significant correlation was found between the Principal Leadership Inventory Factor 4—Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement—and the teachers’ perception of Instructional Leadership. A small positive significant correlation was also found between the PLI Factor 4—Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement, and the principals’ perceptions of instructional leadership. These findings indicated that the separate instruments do indeed measure the role of instructional leadership similarly.

**Research Question 2**

Are there differences between the more effective and less effective leaders as measured by the PLI and the teachers’ perception of their principals’ instructional leadership? To answer Research Question 2, a one-way independent measures ANOVA was conducted with the PLI categorized into fourths as the independent variable and the teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS) as the dependent variable. Classifying the top fourth as more effective and the bottom fourth as less effective principals, statistical differences were established at the < .001 level.
Research Question 3

Is there a difference in student achievement between schools according to the teachers’ perception of more and less effective principals’ overall leadership? To answer Research Question 3, two separate one-way independent measures ANOVA were conducted with the PLI categorized into fourths as the independent variable and student achievement, mean English/Language arts scale score, and mean mathematics scale score, respectively, as the dependent variables. Again defining the top fourth as the more effective and the bottom fourth as the less effective principals, no statistical differences were found.

Research Question 4

Does a teachers’ perception of instructional leadership when combined with other antecedent variables (principals’ gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status and student ethnicity) predict student achievement? To answer Research Question 4, two separate standard multiple regressions were conducted with teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS) and antecedent variables (principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status and student ethnicity) as independent variables and student achievement, mean English/language arts scale score and mean mathematics scale score, respectively, served as the dependent variables. Results showed that students’ English/language arts and mathematics standardized test results can be slightly predicted by the teacher’s perception of instructional leadership as measured by the PIRMS. Added importance is placed on finding any significance when using instructional leadership as measured by the PIMRS as a predictor of student achievement on standardized tests because the author of the PIMRS, Dr. Philip Hallinger, indicated no significance to date had been found. The only other factor that also predicted students’ English/Language arts and
mathematics standardized test results was socioeconomic status as measured by percent of students on free or reduced lunch. This factor was a much stronger predictor.

**Comparing Research Questions 3 and 4**

On Research Question 3, the PLI measures a principal’s overall leadership ability. When comparing how principals who were viewed as the more effective principals because their teachers scored them in the top fourth to the principals who were viewed as less effective principals because their teachers scored them in the bottom fourth to student achievement data for mathematics and English/Language arts, respectively, no differences were found between the more and less effective principals. Thus, whether the principal was viewed as the most or the least overall effective leader had no significant impact on standardized test scores. Statistically, there were no differences between the groups.

Research Question 4 solely looked at the principal’s instructional leadership abilities as measured by the teacher’s ratings of their principals on the PIMRS. Instead of difference, this question looked at the ability of all the variables including the instructional leadership abilities to predict student achievement on mathematics and language arts respectively. The PLI was not included because Research Question 3 showed no difference between the top and bottom quartiles in student achievement data. Results for Research Question 4 indicated that a teacher’s perception of the principal’s instructional leadership abilities positively predict student achievement scores on mathematics and English/Language arts. In summary, a teacher’s perception of the principal’s overall leadership ability makes no difference in student achievement data, but the teacher’s perception of the principal’s instructional leadership abilities does positively predict student achievement on standardized mathematics and English/Language
arts tests. However, the model does indicate that students’ socioeconomic status is a much more significant predictor.
CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 presented the data demonstrating significant differences between less and more effective principals. Furthermore, the quantitative data supported the premise that a teacher’s view of the principal’s instructional leadership abilities as measured by the PIMRS does positively predict student achievement, and the teacher’s view of overall principal leadership as measured by the PLI does not predict student achievement. As stated in Chapter 4, finding any positive significance, even if weak, is notable as the author of the PIMRS indicated significance had yet to be found.

The purpose of the qualitative phase was to use on-site, semi-structured principal interviews and separate teacher focus groups to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Specific questions (Appendix J) were derived from the quantitative analysis to ensure clarity and focus during the interview, written in a noncausal manner and purposefully kept broad to offer an inductive approach to the qualitative portion of the study. Four questions served as the focus when interviewing more and less effective principals and their teachers:

1. How would you describe instruction in your school?
2. When instructional change occurs in your building, how does it happen?
3. What role does student achievement play in determining instructional practices in
your building?

4. When changes occurred in relation to increased student achievement, how did they happen?

To add clarity and specificity, more questions were then asked (Appendix J). To best understand this portion of the study, an explanation of sites and participants is included. Then, the study’s findings are grouped by themes within three categories: characteristics in schools of both more and less effective principals, characteristics in schools of more effective principals, and characteristics of schools of less effective principals. Under each category themes arose. Themes present in buildings with both more and less effective schools were implemented best practices, provided professional development, justified decisions in terms of children’s best interest, collected data, and relied on a supportive central office.

Keeping the focus group and interviewing questions in mind, themes for more and less effective principals could be grouped into four categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics, (b) instructional expectations, (c) procedures for change, and (d) measures of student achievement. The findings for more effective principals emerged into 17 themes grouped under those four categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics: relationship-based, self-efficacy, high interpersonal skills, visionary, and choreographer; (b) instructional expectations: informal instructional presence in classroom, value informal observations over formal, common procedures/management system, consistent instructional belief across building and accountability to self as well as principal; (c) procedures for change: risk takers, internal impetus, power remains with principal and empowers instructional leaders, and (d) measures of student achievement: standardized test seen as tool: not ultimate measure of success, student achievement defined as whole child, change is research and data driven, and high expectations
for all. When analyzing the qualitative data for less effective principals, the same four categories arose. Fifteen themes appear under the four categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics: team building, low self-efficacy, addresses the group rather than the individual, reactive principal and managerial role; (b) instructional expectations: instructional and classroom presence limited, instructional approaches varied and teachers feel accountable to self and others before the principal; (c) procedures for change: faculty resistant to change, external impetus for change, power given to faculty, and teacher leaders drive instruction; and (d) measures of student achievement: state standardized tests ultimate measure of success, decisions driven by emotional assumptions opposed to data, and belief some students not capable of passing state standardized tests. To conclude the qualitative analysis, comparisons were drawn between more and less effective principals across the four main categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics, (b) instructional expectations, (c) procedures for change, and (d) measures for student achievement.

**School Descriptive Data**

Five more effective principals’ schools and three less effective principals’ schools were identified for site visits. All of the more effective principals’ schools agreed to participate and two of the less effective principals’ schools agreed to participate. An alternate was chosen to from the less effective principals’ school list allowing us to visit three less effective principals’ schools and five more effective principals’ schools.

Descriptive statistics are available in Table 15. It is worth noting that when analyzing ISTEP scores to determine which sites to visit, all schools with more effective principals scored above their predicted performance level as well as above the state average. Conversely, all schools with less effective principals scored below their predicted performance level as well as below the state average. Also notable is the fact that the 10 factors identified as one standard
deviation from the mean on the PIMRS or PLI for the less effective principals were all the 10 categories included in the PIMRS, which was the tool that measured teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership. The less effective principals did not score one standard deviation below on any of the principal leadership characteristics as measured on the PLI.

Table 15

Descriptive Data For More and Less Effective Principals and Their Respective Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Years Principal</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Locale</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th># Categories 1 SD from mean on PIMRS or PLI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Less effective</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>400-450</td>
<td>10 below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Less effective</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>451-500</td>
<td>10 below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less effective</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Large Town</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>10 below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. More effective</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mid-size Central City</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>300-350</td>
<td>8 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. More effective</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of Mid-size City</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>200-250</td>
<td>8 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. More effective</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>300-350</td>
<td>5 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. More effective</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of Mid-size City</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>501-550</td>
<td>6 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. More effective</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>451-500</td>
<td>4 above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Interviews

To begin triangulating data, participants were asked at the conclusion of each interview if they had anything to add. Then my research partner and I shared the major findings as they saw them. Upon leaving the building, the research partner and I debriefed by listing all the key findings from that building. As additional buildings were visited, the previous findings were reviewed for patterns and inconsistencies between buildings were eliminated. Finally, both the research partner and I kept detailed notes of the visits. After all interviews were completed, the audiotapes were transcribed. The research began by reading all the transcripts using open coding, noting important words, themes, or categories that began to arise. These codes were then continued when reviewing the research and researcher personal notes as well as the combined findings listed when leaving buildings.

Next, I tried to create axial coding by using the qualitative questions as categories. This step proved unsuccessful as categories and themes identified during open coding fit under multiple questions. The axial codes that did work were both effective and less effective principals, more effective principals and less effective principals. Grouping the themes and categories identified during open coding under the new axial codes followed this step. I then returned to the open coding done on the transcripts and notes to type supporting quotes under the appropriate open coding category. By placing the quotes in the categories, it was easy to determine which categories had ample supporting evidence and which categories needed to be eliminated.

I then revisited the categories to look for appropriate word choice. The literature review was reviewed to determine if better word choices for the codes were available. Last, to determine the final selective codes, all the open codes that had been kept were cut apart and
sorted by hand looking for redundancies and similarities. At this point, some categories were combined and others served as the main categories and subcategories were listed to better describe the categories. Finally, a logical flow was created and the selective codes were rearranged into the categories included in the first part of this chapter.

In the summary of this chapter, the axial categories of both more and less effective principals, more effective principals, and less effective principals were eliminated and the selective codes—principal leadership characteristics, instructional expectations, procedures for change, and measures of student achievement—became the selective codes under which all other themes were placed. Last, in Chapter 6, the selective codes included in the summary of this chapter were compared against the items in the quantitative portion of this study where teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership correlated with principals’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership at $p < .01$. Eight essential instructional leadership categories and characteristics of more effective principals are included there.

To retain confidentiality of the participating schools and educators, all participants were referred to in the female gender unless talking about a specific principal whose gender was already made available in Table 15. Quotations were only altered for readability by employing punctuation.

Both More and Less Effective Principals

There were common trends in practices by both more and less effective principals. Differences did still occur within the themes, but overall intent was the same in all buildings.

Implemented best practices. All eight schools were using best practices. Schools were in varying degrees of implementation, but all schools had chosen programs or practices that were research based to have a positive impact on student achievement. Programs and practices were
chosen after analyzing data to determine the schools’ greatest needs; therefore, the programs differed between buildings. The following comment from a participant at School G who had a more effective principal explained that in her school, “we have all kinds of good stuff. We’ve had several new things this year, with New Hands on Science and then we’ve started our 6+1 Traits writing. We are focusing more on standards in terms of accountability.”

Conversely, a participant in School A with a less effective principal, illustrated an attempt at executing best practice:

As far as instruction in this building, the teachers have gone from years of instruction especially if you are talking about teaching language arts that you had to have the little groups. Then we went from that into the idea that tracking of children was wrong, and we had to make them all alike, and look alike. We went into whole language, and now we’re leaving whole language and we’re going back into Four Blocks.

These quotes demonstrate the efforts that all the schools visited were making to ensure teachers were addressing the unique needs identified in their respective buildings as well as the demands identified by researchers. It is worth noting, all schools were in varying phases of implementing the best practices. Most of the schools with more effective principals were further in the implementation process. The schools with less effective principals were all in the first or second year of making the curricular changes as a result of an external impetus.

**Provided professional development.** All principals made a commitment to ensure the faculty had professional development opportunities to increase their confidence and competence in teaching new initiatives. The professional development structures were also tailored to meet the needs of individual buildings. Some buildings brought in experts, hired building coaches, and used peers as experts. Others sent teachers to workshops, had study groups, did site visits,
and conducted their own action research. Most buildings used more than one structure for professional development. Keeping in mind that Schools A to C were identified as having the principals who were less effective and Schools D to G had the principals who were more effective, participants from each school explained the multiple approaches the schools used to conduct professional development. Teacher A responded, “I would say the most beneficial training is the modeling that the coach is giving. And we’re going to have a Four Block training. Then we’ll have a training for the new textbook.” Teacher B added,

   It’s a pretty scary thing to say that every child in this school is going to write every single day next year, but we have people going to Four Blocks. We have people going to All Write, which is based on Dancing with the Pen. We’ve got people going to the DOE’s writing process training this summer. We have our local staff development this summer. So lots of things are going on because we said kids need to write and we know kids need to write, but at this point, most of us don’t know how kids write. . . . Now, if we go to a workshop, we are to share at our staff meetings.

Principal C had this to say.

   We have a lot of layers of professional development going on. We have our bank days and our staff meetings when we focus on a whole school goal and how each level can take it to their level. Then, we have you know, just a teacher leader thing going on. And then we have coordination provided through Title I where grade-level teachers can meet once a week, and bi-monthly grade levels meet for half a day. Once a week, every teacher in the building is peer coached. And we had a consultant who encouraged further study. People go to a learning network conference.

Principal D added with:
We’ve had lots of staff development both ours and that sponsored by the central office. Most teachers have willingly participated and done a good job. We’ve done school visits, gone to workshops, had staff development, and Title One funding that we used to invite people to come and present. There are several books that Title One made available, bought for each teacher in the building.

Teacher E stated,

We have three days a week that we have when our students go out to PE or library. We really appreciate that time. Four times a year, we have corporation-wide grade level meetings. We have in-service. That’s great because we can kind of suggest what we’d like. One year for in-service, we visited other schools, which was unique. We started that last year. Everybody got to visit the school of their choice.

Teacher F said,

We have staff meetings, staff development time, and a site-based team that talks about problems. There are some in-service days where we hear a speaker or something. I know that when we were interested in doing Four Block, I know Mrs. F got a team together, submitted the application, she (Mrs. F) agreed to be part of the team meeting as the administrator and we were formally trained by the grant group from the state.

Teacher G was the last to share. Her comments were:

Last year, we went through the school-wide Title I process and went to Indianapolis probably about six times total. The two components of the action plan were Four Blocks and Intervention at the early level. So that’s really our focus for this year. We, with the Four Blocks, had a grant. Two teachers from each grade level, the Title Coach, and the Principal all went to Indianapolis seven times. And then we came back and would share
it within our grade level. We’ve put it in our evaluation that people who have been trained need to come back and share that with everyone.

No two schools instituted their professional development in the same manner.

**Justified decisions in terms of children’s best interest.** Regardless of the principal leadership characteristics, instructional demands, change process, or student achievement data and beliefs, all participants and principals cared about children and thought they were always keeping the children’s best interest in mind. As illustrated by a participant from School B who had a less effective principal, “We made a choice to have a big change because we want what’s best for kids.” Another participant discussed her less effective principal from School A when she said, “He’s seen a lot and realizes a lot to know that we’re after an ultimate goal that would be for the children and not for his credentials or his accolades.” Yet another participant added, “The faculty are very caring, very compassionate, very concerned about their children.” The same level of commitment can be seen at School H, which has a more effective principal, where a participant summed up the feeling of the staff: “We’re here for one reason and that’s the children.”

**Collected data.** Both the schools with more effective and less effective principals collected and used data to varying degrees. In School F, a teacher with a more effective principal clarified that we’re constantly monitoring it [data] . . . to see how our programs are working. We are constantly looking at the essential skills data to see if we are teaching those skills effectively. I taught [a lesson], honestly, last week where over half did not do well, and I thought I did not teach that well. I need to go back and look at how I’m going to reteach that in a more hands on way. They did much better.
The last school demonstrated that data was used at the individual level, but the next school is an example of how data was collected building-wide. A participant in School H explained that they had a checkpoint schedule where they did an analytical reading inventory, Grades 2-5, scholastic reading inventory, computer reading assessment Grades 3-5, observation survey K-1 and language arts audit and peer hallway walk. Finally, we did surveys and collected data from parents. And of course we analyzed ISTEP because it all comes down to ISTEP scores right now.

Another approach to collecting data is to monitor the instructional practices occurring in a building. At School B, which had a less effective principal, a participant discussed how instructional practices were documented.

The collaboration meetings, which are basically team meetings, are going to have their focus shifted a bit. There is an actual form we have to record on. And part of that is the lesson plans for the next two weeks, and what standards we are looking at for those two weeks, and how we are meeting those standards. What units we are planning during that time, and what are our objectives, how we are going to achieve that. So it’s no more will it be just oh these are my lesson plan book and it’s kind of sort of written out there, but it’s going to actually be down in black and white. And, we have built enough of a relationship in this building with one another to be able to feel comfortable enough to say, “Hold me to this and make sure I get it done.”

Some schools were creating their own tools for monitoring student progress. A School C participant detailed all the data they are collecting, including running records and rubrics for mathematics, science, and social studies. She then explained how they were assessing the instruments they used.
For the math this year, some of us felt that our materials weren’t following our standards exactly the way we had hoped. So we’re going to be looking into that a little bit more next year. So, we’re building. Eventually we want to aim for having proficient levels in everything.

At School H, a participant with a more effective principal portrayed how their building used student achievement data to make decisions regarding program implementation. She described that at another building “they were always trying something different and didn’t just stick to something and keep at it. And that’s what I like about being here, we don’t think you can do that.” The use of data was also demonstrated in School D where a participant shared her feelings:

And what’s really special about this staff that I’ve noticed in the seven years I’ve been here is no matter what we do, we’re always evaluating ourselves and re-evaluating and constantly making changes. It’s never set in stone as we are our own hardest critics. . . . A lot of the time to make the analysis happen is thanks to our principal. She is always saying, here’s what we’ve got, let’s see what we can do to make it better. And that’s just the attitude we have. And with that attitude, we make changes when needed.

These quotes demonstrate the varied types of data collected and the level of use. Again, most of the buildings with more effective principals were further along in the process as illustrated by this final quote, where the principal in School D described their use of data as critical. Principal D said,

It drives everything. It drives absolutely everything. And that was really our focus long before we heard about it. We did that in 1988. That is what we focus on because that is
what we’re here for. Our belief was that children will believe they’re wonderful and know they are when they succeed and see that in themselves.

Many of the schools with less effective principals were collecting data, just not using or analyzing it.

**Relied on a supportive central office.** Central office staff were overall seen as supportive as they often had positive or no influence on the buildings. When asked where all the money comes from to support new initiatives, a participant from School E, which has a more effective principal, illustrated this conclusion:

That will be hard to say because over the course of time, the school board members and the superintendent and the staff members that were very eager to go to work, and they have the support of the school board. I think it is more of an effort of several individuals versus one or two that initiated this thing.

Another participant continued, “Our current Superintendent is very open minded.”

Another participant at School G, who had a more effective principal, discussed that even if changes were mandated from the central office,

the implementation comes from the building. I think we do a lot of things in our part of the district that other schools don’t necessarily do. Maybe we have more intensity or different levels, but they’re run differently. Which is good that we have the flexibility to do it (programs and change) the way we see we need to.

Many of the schools with less effective principals had change pushed upon them by central office. When asked about the role of central office in change, the teacher leader of School C, which had a less effective principal, expressed,
I know I have look at the positive side. I think that our Title I Director, Coordinator, and Elementary Director help. Then basically we get some professional days to release. I think it’s good compared to other systems. I just think they are supportive.

Central office is recognized as playing a role in the schools’ curricula and at times leadership, but overall those leadership roles are not credited for impacting student achievement.

**More Effective Principals**

When describing instruction in the building, it is no surprise that the principal’s role was dominant in the schools where the principal was viewed as more effective. As the coding began, it was also easy to identify that many of the behaviors these principals portrayed were also identified in one of the 10 subcategories of the PIMRS: (a) frame the school goals, (b) communicate the school goals, (c) supervise and evaluate instruction, (d) coordinate the curriculum, (e) monitor student progress, (f) protect instructional time, (g) maintain high visibility, (h) provide incentives for teachers, (i) promote professional development, and (j) provide incentives for learning. However, when examining the subcategories closer against the themes that arose from the schools, the intricacies of some aspects of the principals’ behaviors were more clearly defined through the site visits. Those nuances have been captured below.

**Principal leadership characteristics.** The first set of characteristics that emerged all related to overall leadership style of the principal.

**Relationship-based.** Working to improve instruction as a building principal cannot be done in a vacuum. The leader must work closely with every person involved in the building. Perhaps the most telling descriptor that was used in multiple buildings was the idea that in these schools they had a family atmosphere.
Family atmosphere. A strong theme that emerged in all the schools with a principal perceived as effective was that of having a feeling of family. Participants described their buildings as being a “safe” environment to take risks while also describing social aspects to the staff both inside and outside of the school day. A participant from School E explained,

I’m just finishing my third year here, but it’s such a family setting here. It’s just so friendly, we’re kind of encouraged to go about and find things that would apply and really fit to our school . . . family is not just the staff, the cafeteria works, janitors, everybody comes together.

Demonstrating the same feeling in another building, the participants in School F explained that they, “planned social activities outside of school. Like we’ll go on a boat ride the last day of school.” Another added, “If someone gets ill in our building, right away people sign up to bring food for the whole week or however long that person’s going to be ill.”

This family atmosphere led to a more cohesive staff. After explaining that they had 100% support of the staff for a new initiative, a participant in School F attributed it to being one unique thing about School F, is that everyone is so supportive of each other, and you don’t have someone sticking out here going, “No I’m not doing that. I don’t want to be a part of it.” You can go to the staff, and say we want to do this and everybody’s like yes, and supportive of it. And follow through . . . this staff is so wonderful. When I came in three years ago, I couldn’t believe how wonderful everybody here was. I felt like I was in a family. And everybody is just a unit here.

A participant in School H portrayed the role that the principal plays in setting that family atmosphere.
This is the most congenial staff. I mean, you know usually you end up with somebody
where you have a clique over here, they work real well, and they don’t usually cross or
communicate with each other. But, I think in general everybody communicates well with
each other, but yet it’s a commitment. It’s almost like it’s part of our job that you feel
like you really need it. I think the leader makes the difference.

When specifically looking at the efforts made by the principal, the principal at School H
discussed having monthly breakfasts and described encouraging as a personality trait.

I build enthusiasm by having staff meetings with some kind of quirky theme, bizarre
glasses, or music. We play games or I read aloud. If I need something tearful, I can do
that, or if I need a laugh, I can do that as well. Sometimes I put notes in mailboxes just to
tell people they are appreciated. I kind of set an atmosphere that we won’t let you fail.

School G also credited their principal for “healing our building. There was a lot, before
she came, there was a lot of strife and she brought us all together.” Furthermore, the participant
expounded,

Her personality is taking an initiative, but not sides. She treats people as professionals
with very high expectations. I think that the expectations in our building includes
everybody. In every aspect, not just in teaching children, but also in communicating with
each other and working through any issue there might have been. She didn’t expect us to
do it on your own, she guided us through that.

One participant continued, “She’s in tune with me by asking how my family and the kids are
doing. She not only in tune with what’s going on here, but what’s at home too because she
knows I have a life there too.” Another participant discussed a retirement dinner and how
we had everybody at the retirement dinner for one person and there were buildings that had hardly anybody there. When people go out of their way to be kind and caring, that comes from the principal. She sets the standards for the building and she is a very caring person.

More than one school also detailed how having a family atmosphere aided in problem solving between staff members. School F participants went on to describe that if they have a problem, they met and just talked about it and even people that disagreed were open about it. It really helped. I think that really got us closer. And nobody had any hard feelings about differences of opinion. And we did come to a conclusion about the problem.

In school D, the principal discussed that the staff is good at sharing their ideas formally and informally. A big part of that is that we don’t always have to agree, but when we attend a meeting, we come to a consensus of some kind. Even though staff members may not be on the side that passed, when the vote occurs, if that’s what a majority votes for, they jump on the wagon and go with it. If that’s what we voted to do, then everybody does it.

Finally, sharing that people overall enjoy working in these buildings, the principal at School D said, “I just don’t get turnover.” The principals viewed as more effective build and value relationships among the staff. They realize the importance relationships play in decision-making and compromise. As a result, staff felt valued and committed.

Families valued. All schools visited with more effective principals had varied socio-economic demographics, but they all believed in the importance of making families feel valued. A participant from School F explained, “I think you have to get the parents involved. . . . A
parent component has to be brought in somehow. I think here at School F, we have good parent support.”

Describing how the school helped shape the role of parents of incoming kindergarteners, one participant at School H expressed that some students have no experience at all, in any kind of organized setting. So there’s a lot of front loading that has to be done before we can expect for children to know how to read. We work with the families a lot and help them see how they can help their children. They’re given ten books through grant money a year. They are given lots and lots of materials and activities they can do at home. Monthly we have opportunities for them to come and participate with their children to take things home. We do home visits that kind of help follow up on those things at home. And I’ve noticed a trend. The younger siblings then come to kindergarten better prepared than the older ones were.

The importance of families’ wellbeing goes beyond academics. Recognizing Maslow’s, (1943) hierarchy of needs, School D addressed how they recognize that physiological needs must be met for a student to succeed in school. A participant from School D shared,

We bring food in for families that are in a crisis at the moment. We have wonderful parent visitors who go to the home and say for the school, “You are an important part of this school. You need to come in for your child’s grade conference. What can we do to make that happen? I will come and pick you up and bring you to this function.” This demonstrates our commitment to the whole package. . . . Children can’t achieve academically unless all these other parts of their lives are pretty much on key too. We try to take care of that.
Also demonstrating the role a principal has in establishing a rapport and guidelines for working with families, the principal from School D went on to describe how her predecessor was viewed and how that impacted her initial interactions with parents.

We still had some parents who thought I was my predecessor and came in ready for a fight. It’s interesting, once we worked through those things, nine out of ten times, they came back and said I’m sorry I used the “F” word at you. Part of that was that, although I was never unkind to them, I also said I will never speak to you that way and you need to leave. It’s a neat place. It really is. We’ve changed the lives of lots of families. Some of them become involved in the school and that has changed their attitude about themselves. That’s a real affirming thing for me is to help grown-ups as well as kids to find something in themselves that they didn’t know was there.

*Relationships with students.* In schools where principals were viewed as more effective, they realized the value of establishing relationships with the students and how it impacts the overall management of student behaviors. A participant shared that the principal in School E demonstrates this behavior because he “greets students coming from the bus and in the cafeteria, every morning.” Principal E added,

I try to be proactive. And so, I do enjoy meeting with students every morning when they get off the bus. I sit down with some of them. We have a breakfast program here and then all students meet in the gymnasium. I like to walk around, just chat with them.

Tease with them a little bit.

When explaining how Principal D guides the building, a participant described,
She knows the kids, and if she’s out here on door duty, she’ll say, “Ryan, I see you only need two more books and you can get your shirt.” She knows those kinds of things about the kids. They relate to her. She’s a cheerleader not only with us, but also with kids.

*Community school.* Staff in these schools all feel connected not only within the school, but also within the community. Staff in School E really wanted to get the community to take part in improving their school, so they put a bulletin board up in the entrance and worked to create a community leader board. Principal E expressed the importance of community and how their outreach attempted to involve community members.

We’re going to meet with them and ask them their ideas. I understand that I have a very strong PTA board next year. So, that’s exciting. We have a large community and a lot of parents and grandparents eat lunch here. A lot of people sit around our lobby, so we added some benches out there. Some people just like to sit when it is nice. We just wanted this to be a community school that people feel comfortable with. We added security cameras in the building. That made some parents feel comfortable. We want them to know their suggestions are important. And we try to follow up immediately, so they know what they have to say is important to us.

Demonstrating how a positive relationship with the community can also strengthen the reputation and demand of a school, a participant from School G shared, “We have a lot of parents who specifically request to come look at our school before they buy a home.”

Principals recognize that positive relationships within the community develop opportunities for collaboration as well as financial support. Again, the principal is crucial in developing the outreach opportunities. The principal at School H was described as
having a lot of respect from the community. And I think that when you respect someone you are willing to listen to her ideas. And, you know, into her vision and buy into it. I have a great deal of admiration for her and her knowledge.

_Self-efficacy._ The principals feel a great deal of control when operating the building. Conversely, they work hard to pass that self-efficacy onto their faculty. One example demonstrated how Principal E helped a teacher gain the courage to deal with a problem. The participant explained that “[Principal E] gave me an idea of how to handle a student and I felt so much better. We listen to one another and we take one another’s ideas on discipline as well as academics.”

This feeling of self-efficacy also allowed teachers to feel as though they could control the outcomes in their own classrooms. To demonstrate the change that has occurred in School D, a teacher described,

I have found that with our spelling and writing this year, it is unreal the difference it [the curriculum changes] is making. It used to be, I felt like kids slopped something down on paper or some silly worksheet, turned it in and that was their writing assignment. Now I feel like it’s [writing] really instructed and builds upon itself as the week goes by. And by the end of the week, they have something really cool, that they are proud to turn in. Whereas I used to think they didn’t even care, and I didn’t know what to do about it. I feel like it’s totally changed.

_High interpersonal skills._ Closely related to the relationship building are interpersonal skills. Once these relationships are established, the principal must nurture them and use the relationships to assist in improving classroom instruction and student achievement. The
principals identified as more effective, communicate and interact with all stakeholders effectively. The principal at School D summed up her role well. Her job is knowing your people, (having) good people skills, and being about to crawl into their heads. One of the things that I tell young principals who are starting out is never forget what it is like to be a student. You need to be able to crawl into that little head and figure out what they’re feeling, and what they’re thinking. And don’t forget what it’s like to be a teacher. If you can’t empathize with what teachers are going through and let them know that you understand that, and validate that their job is the most important job in this building, you’re not going to be able to get change.

Another perspective came from the principal at School G who expressed that if anyone were to ask me what my strength is, I believe it is my interpersonal skills. You can take my budget, and it makes me crazy. And you can have my schedule, and it makes me crazy. That’s why I have good people around to do that stuff form me. So I think it’s my interpersonal skills. The biggest thing I did when I came in was not come in and attempt to change anything. But I did listen to them, to respect their diversity, to respect their uniqueness, to respect their intelligence, and to respect them as professionals. I think that some of them had a feeling that hadn’t been done in the past. Now again, perception is reality. But, I think that is one of the biggest things I did. I brought them into my office individually and asked, “What do you need from me? What do you want from me as your principal?” So I gave them all that one on one time initially when I came in and they met with me. I just began slowly to do some social things with them. Provided them with some community time where they could just discuss and talk about things. And so we started.
Many of the characteristics that participants credited their principals with having fall as subcategories under the theme of interpersonal skills. These principals high interpersonal skills also mean they are approachable, communicative, collaborative, supportive, visible, motivating, respectful, and positive.

**Approachable.** One resounding theme that ran across all the principals is that the faculty felt comfortable talking to them about anything. Principal E described himself as having an “open door policy. My door is very seldom ever shut. And usually it’s because a parent is in there. But the staff members know they can come by and talk, and they all like that.” Similarly, in School D, the principal is described as being “always available.” The participant continued sharing she “never feels uncomfortable. I just go to Principal D and ask, ‘May I?’ I just go in and say I need to talk to you or I catch her in the hall.” Participants from School G also described their principal as having an open door for faculty and students.

She says her door is always open and very seldom do you see her shut her door. It’s always open to students, the hallway door is open for students and the inside door is open for faculty. It’s always open. She is also always going to listen, which was not always true in the past. She’ll listen to whatever you have to say with an open mind.

These principals recognize that faculty and students need to feel their ideas are important and validate that they are considered.

**Communicator.** Communication takes on many forms from what is happening across the school, district, or community to sharing test score results.

The following two examples demonstrate how the principals are deliberate about how they share information. The participants in School H credited their principal with keeping them
informed as to the school events: “Every Friday we know that there’s a newsletter in our box telling what’s happening the next week.”

When discussing how to make teachers feel the importance of student achievement without feeling the pressure, Principal E felt he couldn’t do that.

There are too many outside sources. I just want them to know, and keep telling them, that we have to consider the quality of the student in the room, and take that student as far as you can. Our teachers don’t teach to the test. We just do the best that we can, and deal with the results.

**Collaborator.** Principals viewed as more effective realize that teachers working together create better opportunities for students and learning. One way the principals collaborate is to solicit opinions from the staff. The principal in School F is viewed as “always asking for feedback and then trying to work out ways to support the requests.”

A more effective principal’s ability to create an environment where collaboration is encouraged and expected is demonstrated in the following example from School F.

We meet with the grade before and grade after so we can talk about what skills are being tested, and more importantly how they are tested. That seemed to be our problem. It wasn’t the skills. It was how they were testing those (skills) because they were offering it in a different way than we evaluated. We tried to change things and we believe that made a big difference. Another participant continued that they have a lot of common planning time in small groups.

Using teams to analyze data was a common theme among the more effective schools. School H found that after analyzing ISTEP and other data, they really needed to focus on writing.
So we set up study groups, and we started inquiring. And one of the first books we chose to read as a whole group, as a whole staff was Ruby Payne’s, *Framework for Understanding Poverty*. And then from there, we branched off and we focused on all different areas, as far as language arts and writing, and then we came back together and came to a general consensus that Four Blocks was possibly the best way for us to go because it provides an uninterrupted amount of time during the day that was consistent. It was pretty much something that we all thought we could do here and could fit all the needs of our children. So, we investigated that and studied that for the rest of the year. And then we wrote for and received a grant.

This collaboration is also voluntary at times as further demonstrated by a participant at School H where teachers voluntarily come back to meet in the summer for study groups. One participant noted, “We do a lot of that. I even asked if I could come back for it. I’d like to come back for the study group again.”

*Supportive.* Another common characteristic that the more effective principals employ is making the faculty and students feel as though they are there to actively assist with and recognize ideas and hard work. A participant from School E explained,

> Basically, we say to Principal E, I saw this and I think it’s really neat. He asks a couple of questions, and we agree to see what we can find out about it. I mean it’s just, everything is very supportive, and his administration style really is that if it comes from the teachers, it will be a lot more successful. I think that’s probably our strongest point here because we’ve had so much support.

Another example offered from a participant at School H described her principal as a “cheerleader or encourager. She plays lots of roles. Her plate is pretty full and she kind of
guides us and what we do.” Similarly to the previous example, participants at School H went on to share,

We’re supported. All you have to do is talk to [Principal H] about it. I really think that I need to try and want to be able to do something and she’s like OK try it. And I’ll support you in whatever you need. And she has. It has been a wonderful year for me and I can give feedback based on that to the rest of the staff.

Addressing a different type of support yet, another participant from School H explained,

I think this job is a missionary kind of job in some ways. It’s so challenging emotionally. You really have to have very firm support to help deal with some of the problems children have here. And I think [Principal H] does. I think she does support us.

Noting the support they receive for professional development, another participant from School H shared,

She [Principal H] really believes in professional growth and in kids. I think those opportunities in this building, that’s one reason I wouldn’t want to leave, unless of course, maybe she left. This building really believes that you need to continue your education and provides those opportunities. It’s not just expected, but an outlet for that by having support groups after school and encouraging you to use funding from our school.

The participants in School G expounded, “I think she [the principal] encourages us to try anything we would like to try. And she does it with a confidence. She believes in everyone’s professional capabilities in this building.” Having the assurance that their hard work is valued and supported pushes staff to work harder than they might otherwise as exemplified by a faculty member, who expressed,
Politics don’t get in the way of doing our jobs. Everybody is very proud of our school and I think that when you’re proud you’re going to work hard to keep it that way. And I can attest that everybody here works very hard. If you come by here on the weekend, there will be a lot of teachers’ cars out there. There are teachers that will not work here because they know that unless they are willing to work as hard as everybody else, it’s not going to go.

Motivator. Especially when it comes to encouraging students to excel academically, these principals have extensive reward systems in place to recognize and inspire students to try their best. When asked if the teachers wanted to add anything more in relation to student achievement, a teacher from School E described some of the ways the school recognizes and rewards student achievement; “We have an awards night program for students every grading period. We also acknowledge the most improved student, best attitude, perfect attendance, and student council. They also get their name in the newspaper. Sports, though, is not included.”

Principal E further clarified his commitment to helping students understand the value of hard work.

I want kids to be excited about school. I don’t want to keep using that word self-esteem because there has to be touch of reality when the kids are not doing a good job, and making bad choices. I don’t want to just give a pat on the back and say you’re trying to build a false sense of acceptable.

Another approach to motivating students occurs in School G where a participant shared how the principal is part of the behavior plans.

She’s part of the behavior plan for responsibility to give a reward or have lunch with someone if that’s what you want. She will also take a student before they participate in
something big like Spelling Bowl, pull them out of class, and give them a pep talk or pat on the back.

Added another participant, “I think we celebrate and talk about good examples of work. We also recognize even those that have a hard time by pointing out even little things like pushing in your chair or helping pass out papers.”

Visible. Highly effective principals realize that being seen is part of interpersonal relations. A participant in Building F summed up her principal: “I think she’s very visible.” Additionally, a participant in Building E described her principal, sharing, “He comes around. He’s always walking in the building. He’ll drop in every morning. But that’s something we want in a principal. Visibility and knowing what is happening in the building.”

Seeing the students and staff, allows the principals to keep a pulse on the building and know when teachers or students need extra support as depicted by participant discussing Principal G.

I don’t think of her only as a facilitator for her professional responsibilities, she is visible with kids and in the classroom. For example, she came to my room before parent–teacher conferences, and things were a little high stressed. She was stuffing report cards while I was getting kids ready to go. I mean she asked if I could use any help, then she came back. She’s making applesauce and stuffing report cards if you need it, but she’s also attending meetings and coming back and teaching us and giving us time to format these new program.

Respectful. All participants in schools with more effective principals discussed the importance of developing that respect between the principal and staff as well as between and among the staff, parents, and students. A participant in School E explained, “We all trust our
staff members. If a staff member came up and said she had witnessed something worked, the other staff members would be very, very open and respect her opinion.”

When discussing the role of the principal as far as improving instruction, building members in School H noted, “She reads a lot. She adds a lot of professional development. She’s very knowledgeable.” Another participant added that we have to build that community of learners and establish the respect instead of rules, procedures, and letting them know this is just the way it is. And I’m not saying that happens all the time, because it certainly doesn’t happen all the time.

When discussing just the staff, the participant went on to say, “I feel like we are respected as professionals by Principal H. And not only do we respect her, the community respects her, and children respect her, but in return we are respected as professionals.”

At School D, the principal shared how she set the tone with parents for what respect looked and sounded like.

I would get parents all the time when they would come and say, “That Black kid, you’ve got to do something about those Black kids.” And I simply wouldn’t tolerate it. And I’d say, “Every child here has a name. You ask your child what that young man’s name is, then we’ll deal with it.”

Staff members at School G felt that their principal “treats us as professionals. She empowers us.” In her own words, Principal G explained,

Respect for the individual is absolutely key with me. We respect one another as adults, and we respect every child in this building as an individual. If I ever do take anybody to task, it’s over that. Not being respectful to children. That’s absolutely key to me.
Positive. An element that all principals agreed that must be part of the building is a “we can” attitude. The Principal from School F best captured this when describing her school as a place where you won’t see people bad-mouthing children in the teacher’s lounge. That just doesn’t happen. It’s not what we do. And we had a little negative, and it’s leaving this year. It [removing a faculty member] is probably, the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do. It had to happen. But, most of the people are just very positive people that like to come to work every day. And don’t let negative stuff happen. They challenge each other on it.

At School E, a participant depicted how she keeps her enthusiasm:

If I turn on the news sometimes or read the newspaper, I just get real defensive about education. I’ll say to my husband, that’s not true; that’s not what’s happening. And you know that people are writing the news, they have probably not been to our school. They haven’t been in public schools. Because, I have been in public schools with my children and grandchildren and I feel it is hard. We all keep a positive attitude to do this job. We don’t let the negative get to us.

Another example occurred in School D where the principal explained,

This isn’t a staff, not that we don’t gripe and whine, there’s a little of that. But it’s not a negative kind of thing. Okay this is the way I feel about this, but how are we going to solve the problem. It’s not a, “let’s pretend it doesn’t exist” kind of thing.

All of these characteristics are critical in having a principal who is strong in interpersonal skills.

Visionary. Another strength for effective principals is that they are able to establish and share a vision for where the building is heading. When discussing how the last five years had become more focused in her building, a participant described curriculum as “focused, and sort of
streamlined and tightened up in a way as far as communicating with each other.” She went on to credit the change to leadership and vision has led the way for all of that to occur. She [Principal H] has really made a climate for us to learn and grow. I think her vision was to raise student achievement and she would come to each of us and say, “What do you think?” And try to get us involved. I think we’ve always had the desire to raise student achievement, but I think [Principal H] has enabled us to put some things in place so that we can actually raise student achievement with her leadership.

At School D, a participant described her principal as “having high expectations and presenting her ideas well. We know where we’re going and which path we need to take.”

Concluding our visit, Principal G explained that her school was looking at a model that “addresses instruction, planning and preparation.” She continued that she would ask the teachers to “focus on one area that they would benefit from most if they really focused on it.” Each of these administrators realized that they must have a vision and be able to help the staff see and realize expectations.

**Choreographer.** By definition, a choreographer is a person who “arranges or directs the movements, progress, or details of, for example, a carefully choreographed meeting” (“Choreographer, 2013). Principals viewed as more effective continually raise awareness, strategize, and generate support for things they would like to see happen. The principals are very well aware of their behaviors. However, on some level the faculty and staff are as well. One participant from School F explained that the decision to make changes in their building came about because Principal F “had mentioned it in her presentations a couple of times.” When asking the same principal about how she made instruction change, Principal F explained:
I never used to believe this, people who used to supervise me would probably laugh or turn over in their grave if they heard me saying this, but I think you have to show there’s a need. If you do it in a valid way, say with data then it isn’t the administrator saying, we need to do this.

In School E, the principal expressed, “There needs to be an initiator through a staff member. I need to somehow sell the person on the idea where she is buying it and not knowing it.”

This behavior was most often noted by the principals, but in School H, a participant shared that she

thinks if it’s (a new initiative) a pre-determined goal for us, Principal H even makes us feel like it was our decision, whether or not it was going that direction. She’s probably just really good at manipulating. She guides our thinking and our decisions.

When talking with Principal H, she discussed how

looking at data was the key to getting them to buy in. I am kind of a nudge or pusher. A couple of people have to really be pushed into change. I framed it as “I know you can do this; we’ll make it work.” Kind of an encourager. I’m out there looking for the research that will support the kind of work we want to do. I make sure the staff gets the knowledge and I participate in study groups just as a member. I’m just there going through everything they go through. I put articles in mailboxes, share a book, suggest a friend for a site visit, those kinds of things. For some, I’m direct like, “I’ll be back and I know you’ll have this in place by then.”

At School D, when the principal described how she initiated change, she portrayed,

I’m a manipulator. I’m just going to say a good principal is a manipulator. I’ll get some literature, pass it around at lunch and get a conversation going. I’ll put books around in
here, take people with me to a conference and visit some places where things are happening. If anywhere along, I sense that staff isn’t going to buy in, I don’t go there. It’s not going to be any good if it comes from me; it will cause resentment. I have to become the manipulator. I have a pretty good handle on the staff and students. If I have a feeling there’s an issue out there or a concern, I try to talk to a few people and I try not to always go to the same people. Like when we change things, I try to get a handle on what is going on.

These same behaviors can also be seen in School G where the principal is viewed as an indispensable component of the school, as illustrated by a participant:

I would say she’s an integral part of this school because she touches everything, everything. She has been a part of it, and she is always listening to the teachers, willing to help and if there is frustration, she’s there to help ease that frustration level. She also gives us a lot of professional literature to read.

When talking with Principal G, she described her role when making a change that was right for kids as someone who plants the seed and let it go. I’d let it rest and then it might have come up for conversation. I know I won’t get anything started right away, so I start to lay the groundwork. I’m great about giving articles and having them keep reading binders. When they’re on the beach, read this over spring break or whatever. When I wanted to make a change, there was one teacher who was really resisting. I called her in and she said she knew I was going to come see her. I gave her the option of a grade change or told her early enough that she could request a transfer out of the building. I gave her options and she came on board nicely.
All effective principals are mindful of the role they must play to elicit support for ideas and initiatives.

**Instructional expectations.** This study sought to understand better what effective administrators do to improve instruction and increase student achievement. As noted in the Both More and Less Effective section, all schools regardless of effective or ineffective principals were engaged in a variety of best practices. If it is not the actual curriculum that is impacting the instruction, the following themes emerged as a base for helping understand what structures are in place that allow faculty to maximize instructional opportunities.

**Informal instructional presence in classroom.** Principals viewed as more effective are consistently in rooms. This is the way the teachers see them. For example a participant from School F said Principal F is “in my classroom many times a week. She walks through many times a week. She was climbing over my students as we were working on the floor. She’s not a threat when she walks in.” The occurrence is so regular, the teacher elaborated,

> Well there is no stress when she walks in, you just continue with the lesson and there’s just no problem. She often jumps in and helps the children. I think if she saw something that might be a weak area, she would bring it up. She really hasn’t had a need to.

However, when asking the principals who are viewed as more effective how much time they spend on instruction, they all resoundingly stated, “not enough time.” Principal E explained,

> As far as classrooms, I try to get around. Since we are small, I can get inside, but not like I want to. There is no Assistant Principal. I handle all of the discipline, the parent concerns. But, maybe I get in the classroom more than some other principals because they have a bigger building. So, I guess overall, I’m satisfied.
In School H, a participant expressed, “Every year one of her (Principal H) main goals is to be in classrooms, and I know that she tries very, very hard to meet that goal.” Principal D is also viewed as popping in and out. But if it’s your evaluation year, she spends more time in your room. If she does formal observations; it’s relatively a painless procedure because of her manner. If you are doing your job and doing your work, the observation is just part of what you do every day.

When asked how much time Principal D was able to focus on instruction, she responded, “Not nearly as much as I should. If I had a weak teaching staff, we’d be in trouble. Real trouble. I try to get in every classroom every day to keep up a strong teaching staff.” She went on to expound upon her belief, “Part of the reason they [the staff] meet my expectations is because they know I’m always watching and they know I’ll write a note, ‘That was a neat lesson, or have you tried.’”

A first year teacher at School G described her principal as always present in the building. Whenever she’s here, she walks the building. I can tell you this is my first year here and she has probably been in my classroom at least 30 times. It may be two minutes and may be fifteen minutes. She’ll sit down with a child and find an opportunity to point out something good that I’m doing.

Added another participant,

She gives constructive criticism without making it seem like you did anything wrong. She’s real. ‘Have you thought about this or I saw so and so doing this in her class, maybe you could try it, or if you have any questions about something.

Principal G shared her ideas of instruction as
being in the classroom with the teacher, working with the teachers, listening with the teachers, listening to the children read, working side by side with them. I try to set a block of time in the morning or afternoon where I can just go into a classroom and spend time. And if I see children working independently, I move on to somebody else that is doing something where I can help. So it’s very, very important to me. It’s critical to me. It’s probably though, to me, one of the most pressing parts of my job because I don’t do it enough. But, I also have come to realization that the teachers are my classroom. And while, I need to be in the classroom instructionally with the children, the teachers are also my classroom. And I need to spend time in a leadership role, guiding them along too. So I try to meet a balance with that.

**Value informal observations over formal.** Because effective principals spend more time informally in classroom, they also place more value on the informal observations than the formal evaluation process. Principal F explained that the formal observations are not, “the most effective—especially when a first year teacher is using the same form as a sixth year teacher.” She continued, “If I recognize that a teacher is not effective, I need to address it.”

When discussing the impact of observations, Principal E also saw the merits of informal observations over formal:

I help the staff a great deal. I go in and spend a little time in the classroom. I may not say anything, just sit down in the room and watch a few things. The teacher will come to me, and ask, “What did you think about this? I think I should have done something a little bit differently. Is there anything I could add on to that? Is there anybody I could go visit?” So they are happy to sit back, chat and share. I’m not impressed with our evaluation tool. I’d rather see the teachers put together a portfolio of activities and
pictures of their activities during the year. I would basically make the evaluation on their own abilities. I would then put the portfolios in our lobby. I like to use that when people visit our building; use part of the teachers’ portfolios to see what is happening.

A participant in School H explained that, “She [Principal H] is real positive with observations. She points out usually what you’re doing well and so you try to do more. Just like the kids!”

The principals used the informal evaluations to put pressure on ineffective teachers.

Principal D discussed a problem teacher, explaining,

I have one teacher who I know is nervous here. And he needs to be. It was a bad staffing decision on my part. Eventually I’ll get him out of here. That’s how I know he’s looking because I bird dog. I write notes saying, ‘I need that back. I’ve asked you before.’

Another teacher who was considering coming back, changed her mind after I met with her and the parents said, “Thank you. Thank you.”

Principal D went on to summarize, “Whether they are five or 50, it’s all the same. It’s amazing how when a real, real problem leaves all of the sudden no one follows.”

*Common procedures/management system.* Effective administrators recognize that in order for instruction to occur, they must put procedures in place that prohibits the occurrence of problems and cuts down on the external distractors. A participant in School F explained how their school sets up that structure.

The children have participated in that calm, no put down, trust language that is spoken every day throughout the whole building. And we can tell the difference when children come from school that are not from our school. It’s really obvious.

Another participant illustrated the benefits for the teachers and the children:
Everybody hearing the same life-skills we need and the same procedures basically for discipline whether they are a traditional classroom or multiage classroom really adds continuity in the grades everywhere. That helps me as an inclusion teacher. I go into the different grade levels. When I go into a fourth grade classroom, it’s no different than if I’ve been in a second grade classroom as far as procedures.

Other schools also work to achieve that consistency as well. In School E, a participant described, “We have rules. We have the same rules in the whole building. There’s a poster in every room. We all have to be consistent with, all the way from kindergarten to fifth grade.” The principal of School E clarified the importance of involving the faculty in creating the rules. You can have all the rules you want, but unless the kids buy into them, the staff members buy into them, and they are consistent, you can just throw them out into the street. So, we’ve got rules, and a little pledge we say every morning. Students come in and announce the pledge over the intercom, and we’re hoping that they will buy into that. But, it is a process over the years. We refine, and change. We’re doing that right now.

When discussing how the school all came to the same set of procedures, a participant from School H explained that the entire school read Harry Wong’s *First Days of School* and then talked about how we can get the students to know the procedures, and take responsibility, whether it’s honesty, trust, or politeness, and how we show at school that we model and offer opportunities for students to embody those words.

Another participant described the benefits of a building-wide system as helping when students move because “whether they are going down to PE or whatever, the same thing is expected.
They don’t have a new set of procedures each place. They have the same procedures and cuts down on time away from instruction.”

At Building D, they have “written protocol and procedures for the children. And then it’s understood that as adults, we’re the examples of that. If those are in place for the children, they are in place for us.” Illustrating the impact procedures have on instruction a participant shared a building belief:

Everything we do from who’s in the hallway, to greeting the kids in the morning, to how the bus line goes all plays into the effect on student achievement. And you can’t have good achievement or be successful if you’re suspended from school because you aren’t here to learn. So success as an individual is following your rules, and feeling good about yourself. Low self-esteem goes along with not being emotionally successful with your peers and with people in the building. I think the discipline here in our building, I’ve hear our principal say several times, how their home may be inconsistent, and their consistency is here at school.

Discipline was also a nonissue in School G who discussed how “our lifelong guidelines and life skills kind of drive our day to day interaction.” All of these schools demonstrate the great lengths they go to ensure students have every opportunity to learn.

**Consistent instructional belief across the building.** Classroom configurations may vary within a school setting, but the curriculum does not. Additionally, students are offered varied opportunities to learn and be engaged in learning.

In School H, a participant illustrated this by discussing the “consistency through the grades. I think that is why we came up with Four Blocks. It’s a way to bring the building some consistency through the grade level. I know everyone is trying to follow that plan.” At School
G, a participant described that after reviewing scores and identifying a focus, “we work on it consistently and evenly across the building.”

**Accountability to self as well as the principal.** Faculty who work at these buildings have an internal work ethic. However, through the relationships that they have built, they also feel they are accountable to their peers, the students and the principal. A participant from School E elucidated,

I think that if we make it fresh for the kids, it’s going to be fresh for us. And I think that, it might sound a little bit silly, but when you know that your support is there, I think you’re going to push yourself a little bit harder as a teacher.

At School H, a participant discussed how the principal had asked them all to document what and how they were addressing the standards. The participant explained that she thought I can’t do that. So I sat down and got out the lesson plan book and just started jotting things down. I found that it focused me and helped me. I could see why I was teaching and where I needed to go in terms of curriculum. It made me much more aware of meeting needs, and it was a big help.

When describing the environment in School H, a participant said, “It’s encouraging and not threatening. It’s almost like there’s an internal expectation. And it’s expected of ourselves as much as it’s expected from someone else.”

At School F a participant explained that she met her principal prior to knowing she would work in her building.

She’s always been supportive of me and caring. In fact, if I’m ill and I need to call for a substitute teacher, I’ve always called her to let her know that I’m not going to be in the
building that day. And I’ve never felt that way with a principal before, that I needed to call my boss and tell her I’m not going to be there.

Whether it is the approach to learning or the structures under which children learn best, the more effective principals recognize the importance of their roles in ensuring all children have the opportunity to learn.

**Procedures for change.** Questions surrounding how changes occurred surrounding both instruction and student achievement were asked in the principal and focus group interviews. Many of the participants shared when and how to make changes. The themes that arose in this category were risk takers, internal impetus, power remains with principal, and empowered teacher instructional leaders. Principal and participant responses under each theme illustrate how the more effective school addressed change.

**Risk takers.** Both the principal and the staff entertain new ideas. Participants from School E shared how they are encouraged to address change from the individual, principal, and school system levels. “In our system, it’s a small system. I don’t know if that is why, but we’re always really encouraged to look at new things. Then, we present it. We look at other school systems using it and talk to different people. Then we pilot it.” Another participant added, “In our whole school system, all the way through high school we’re trying to do the very latest.” The principal framed his role in encouraging teachers to take risks as keep making comparisons. I’d say, I’m really excited that you’re excited about this, but how does this work elsewhere. Do they compare favorable to us? If it works there, let’s take a look at why and compare student population, community. You know the philosophy of our board is that we need to initiate that. So in other words, you’re kind of cradling the idea. You’re not destroying, you’re not drawing the fact that I’ll never come
back and talk to you again. And being that person, I think there would be a feeling that I’m glad you shared that with me.

At School H, once a decision had been made to implement a new program, a participant described the process their school took to operationalize a new initiative:

- It was kind of, if you did not have a lot of background, or you didn’t know a lot about the model itself, it was helpful to gradually have a block at a time and then just continue that block and add a new one the next grading period. Some people had a lot of it a year ago, so they started it all at the beginning of the year.

Later, another participant noted, “people in this building are here, and are willing to change or you don’t stay here very long.” If a change was needed at School H, a participant described the process as

- present it to Principal H and she would ask you to present it at a faculty meeting. Then we read and watch videos or get trained in it and come back and give an in-service to everyone on it. So, if it’s worthwhile and useful for our students, we just do it.

The principal explained that due to the collegiality built that teachers seem to feel comfortable going to a colleague or coming to me and saying, ‘I tried this and it didn’t work and here’s what I’d do differently.’ I guess it’s an atmosphere that is in the building that taking a risk is okay.

The principal at School D explained that having a consistent program from grade to grade makes a big difference. “They’re [the staff] open to new ideas. I just feel blessed to be here.”

**Internal impetus.** When looking at both the effective and ineffective leaders, they all had change occurring. The schools with the more effective leaders initiated change internally. At School D, the principal explained that they were going to be a Title I building, but that they had
already done “a lot of research on the program and integrated parts of the program before
downtown came through the pipeline. So we were already headed that direction and it wasn’t a
change for us. We were halfway there.”

For example, a participant from School F clarified that the principal in her building
“won’t hesitate to say something she notices at a staff meeting and she did when she noticed
that writing was weakness, so that has and will continue to be a school-wide push.” The
participant continued, “Next year, it [writing] is a corporation-wide focus. So when she
[Principal F] sees a weakness, we target it immediately.” In School E, a participant detailed
how Principal E “made sure that we were appropriately staffed so that kids were getting the
services that they were entitled to by law. We were supposed to be receiving less, but principal E
figured out how to make it happen.”

When discussing their experiences doing site visits to other schools, one participant in
School D elucidated,

This is a very egotistical thing to say, but we were going to that school to get ideas.
When we were there, we realized we were already there and had gone beyond. It was
very affirming to know that we had already figured that out. I think we have a darned
good school.

Another participant further discussed that

it’s amazing because I go to different schools and the staffs don’t work together like they
do here. I think that if it came from the top down, things would probably be different
here. If people come here and realize they don’t fit, they voluntarily leave. The staff
feels like they have a stake in things so it’s not from the top down, it’s kind of
collaborative.
Proactive is the word that a participant from School G used to describe her principal.

She is very, very proactive toward, pretty much anything any of us wants to do that’s best for kids. And she will often ask, “How is this going to improve student outcome or how do you see that as being an outcome?”

At the conclusion of a focus group, one participant summed up their building as

I think our test scores show that we work hard, and I think besides test scores, we continuously are analyzing our results from all different levels . . . putting together data, making sure that these kids are where they need to be. And we are finding programs to reach us all.

The principal discussed how she “wouldn’t go into change just for a change.” She would only change on a need basis:

I would certainly do a needs survey within my building to see what the issues were, and if there was a need for change. I don’t believe in changing for change sake. I try to get a feel from the staff. I would take it to my leadership team first. But if there was a need for a change, and it bubbled up internally, and if I could see that happening in our building, that’s probably where I would start. Then I would take it to my staff.

Principal G went on to explain that

I just really believe in teachers as learners. That we are here to learn and that if teachers don’t learn, how can they expect children to learn? So that’s just a focus for me with the staff. It’s just learning together, and building a community together, and working for children. That has to be the focus.
Waiting for others to tell them what instructional program to try next is not a characteristic of principals viewed as more effective. These principals are always looking forward and operate ahead of the trends.

**Power remains with principal.** Each of the more effective administrators understand the importance of and value staff input when making change, but ultimately, they also realize they are the initial contact and final deciding factor when change does occur. Once an initiative has been instigated, the principal supports it through resources, materials, supplies, and professional development.

Teachers in School F described their process for deciding to try something new as they “usually go to the principal first, and then if they agree, it’s brought up at a staff meeting. Then teams discuss it and it comes back to a staff meeting.” Teachers view their buildings as everybody putting in their part. They see the principal as willing to delegate. When Principal F discussed her role in moving the progress reporting to an electronic format, she explained that she had some people “who were going completely technology driven progress reports, and people who hadn’t turned on a computer for a year.” When she was approached by the site-based team to push digital progress reports, her reply was,

I’m perfectly okay with saying there is no choice, but you’re going to back me on it. I covered classes while people got one on one instruction so they could do this report card. So, I think it is very empowering for the leader of the building to say, You know more about this than I do. I’ll teach. I know how to teach. You go teach this person how to do their digital report card.

When she went on to describe how she gets people to do what she wants, she acknowledged, “I don’t think I am underestimating the power of just being in the position of the
building leader. It has more importance than I ever realized.” In School E, the principal explained that in his building, he likes to think of things as from the inside, out. You can’t do everything like that, but for example, there was one lady that works here and I found I just had to ask questions. “What do you think? If I could bring some items in your rooms, what would you think? What do you think the kids would think about that? Do you think it would add to the excitement of your class?”

And that would start getting them (the staff) excited.

Furthermore, when asked who is responsible for the school, Principal E responded, “Me.” But, he went on to add that if something is worth a discussion, “I guess we compromise a bit.”

A participant in School H discussed how she viewed the principal’s role in creating change: “She [Principal H] doesn’t mandate. She doesn’t say, ‘Oh you’re doing this.’ It’s always up to us. I mean she stands back and lets us find out own way.” Another participant added

She’s not a top down kind of manager at all. She is very empowering, democratic kind of manager. Very positive, and really seeks our opinions and thoughts about things. So even if the final decision isn’t really something that we all might agree with, at least we had a chance to say. And so, you can’t argue that because you’ve been given a chance to speak up and say something.

When change occurred in School D, one participant viewed it as “a joint thing.” She went on to detail,

You go to [Principal D] and say, “Hey, I saw this. It is really cool and I think it might work here.” She [Principal D] will put it on a staff meeting agenda to see if there is more
interest. You can pursue it if there isn’t. Or possibly have a visit or professional
development days could be used to raise awareness.

A different participant characterized Principal D as “the captain. She guides it all.”

Each school had different ways of addressing change; however, they all had one
component: the principal was the final decision and made expectations known. A participant in
School D illustrated this point: “We started a new program. One person was trained and then a
lot of us were trained. It (the new program) was expected to be part of our curriculum by our
principal.”

**Empowers teacher instructional leaders.** All principals express numerous times that the
impetus for change must come from within the building. In order to facilitate that process, they
create and use instructional leaders, while yet realizing they are ultimately still responsible for
the instruction occurring in the building. Principal F discussed how she had created the
environment for teacher leadership.

I call them my resident experts. I don’t know who I stole that from, I didn’t come up
with it. I have somebody who loves technology, so she stepped up and she’s our
technology guru, and I have a multi-age guru who wanted to do all the research. I have
someone who takes total charge of the CLASS program and she does presentation at staff
meetings. I’m going to make myself sound like I do nothing, aren’t I? I think it’s really
empowering people to take on leadership roles. I can’t do it all. I think treating people a
way that they feel they have something to give. Just empowering them in what they do
well.

At School H, they had a slightly different approach. They had a core team. A participant
described the process of choosing members as
one per grade level and one for each area, parent representative, teaching assistant and a
community member. Our principal kind of looked at it and asked for volunteers. But, it
was one of those, how do I say it, if she asks you to do something, you just do it. We
were all very willing. I think there were 12 of us on the core team that met on a weekly
basis.

The principal separately added,

I tried during the core meetings not to say too much. I could kind of guide the discussion
by asking a question, but I just sat back and watched somebody step forward. And it
happened to be different people stepped forward at different times. So, it was really a
shared leadership. There is not one person who stands out, it just depends on the task at
hand. I sit back a lot because if I sit back and ask the right questions, the people with the
knowledge will ride to the top. And then when it’s a question that needs to be answered
by someone in charge, I can make that decision.

One teacher in particular, Principal H reflected that she

pushed a little. You know I said, you need to talk about this at the faculty meeting. The
teacher said, “Oh can’t you find someone else, I really can’t.” And I replied I’ll be right
there. You’ll be fine. And just laying it in her hand and walking away. She always rises
to the occasion. Now, she’s very outspoken! My job is just encouraging that. Finding
that little something in somebody and then just nurturing it along and giving her the
opportunity to do it.

When discussing how information is shared after teachers are trained, a participant from
School H explained, “That’s one of the things we have put on our evaluation. People that have
been trained need to come back and share that with everyone.”
“I really believe in developing teacher leadership,” the principal in School G expressed. My goal when coming into this building was to move the core team from communicators of information to teacher leaders. So we started that process. We began by reading *Changing the View*. The team then went back to their units and read it with them. They all went about it different ways, and it all worked because there’s no one right way to do it. I tried to move the team into leadership roles, and they’ve all risen to the occasion.

All principals address the change process differently, but they all work from within and empower their teachers to lead and take risks. However, they also are keenly aware of the fact that they are the ultimate decision maker and instructional leader.

**Measures of student achievement.** The last category helps understand the role of student achievement in the success of these buildings. These principals cast a wide net when defining student achievement but have processes in place for monitoring and analyzing the varied forms of data that the schools collect.

**Standardized test seen as tool, not ultimate measure of success.** Principals viewed as more effective fully understand the accountability attached to the state standardized test. They believe that if they emphasize the learning, the end result will be positive.

Emphasizing the importance that is placed on ISTEP scores, a participant from School F particularized how her school approaches the scores.

We get our ISTEP scores, and we go over them in a couple of staff meetings, and look at grade levels as well as what areas we are lower in. And she breaks it down to explain what the statistics mean. It was very interesting and helped us to understand the data better.

The principal added,
I was amazed because we assumed that teachers knew how to interpret testing information. You know, they didn’t. So, we took the tests apart and we looked at it for what it could help. I don’t think they had been doing that. They threw them in drawers and didn’t take a lot of responsibility for what it said or didn’t say. We put the data on an overhead and said look at this. It was in black and white that we needed to write and work on basic addition and subtraction.

However, she went on to add that they also learned that there were “other forms of data like audits and surveys.”

School H also used surveys and audits, but as one participant noted, “This isn’t a cookie cutter business. Just because everybody has it in his or her lesson, doesn’t mean that it’s still impacting student achievement. We have to dig deeper.” Principal H discussed how they assimilated the demands of standardized test with their core beliefs:

The pressure of ISTEP scores, attendance rates, being accountable really goes against the philosophy that the staff has. Retention is a big issue. Where we don’t really in our hearts believe that retaining a child is a benefit. But what do you do as a teacher when your back is against the wall and the kid can’t pass ISTEP? We’ve really had to do a lot of soul searching this year and find a way to make what we believe mesh with what comes down from above.

At School D a participant shared,

Any changes made here are with the hope we’ll improve student achievement. We have quarterly proficiencies that are aligned with standards. We use those as well as ISTEP as an indicator of achievement, but we also use observation. My teachers are more committed to the quarterlies and make better use of the data than most places because we
sit down at collaboration meetings and discuss the results and write up action plans.

Added another participant, “We stick to anything that is really important and give it a chance.” Principal D express concern that

the school system has us get ready for ISTEP. And the practice tests, it just becomes an overkill for those third and sixth graders . . . And it’s worksheets to death. And we don’t believe in teaching that way. So that’s a problem.

Last, a different participant yet explained,

Student achievement is more than test scores. That’s a given. It’s as long as following which of our kids graduates from high school, and go on to post-secondary. Those are all long-range indicators of whether our students are achieving or not. The test scores are kind of a short-range thing that guides us on a yearly basis.

**Student achievement defined as whole child.** Schools where they rated their principal as more effective go beyond the narrow definition of student achievement. Responding to the question of what student achievement means to you, a participant from School F went on to portray a much broader definition.

To me it means where they were before I had them and where I took them. And how they feel about themselves as well. That’s part of the achievement. I think part of achievement that happens out of schools like how far they’ve come working with others, cooperation, and life skills. We must ask, ‘Are these skills carrying through each year?’ Their whole attitude about school, work habits, and social habits are skills they need for life.

When discussing student achievement, a participant from School E defined achievement as “social adjustment. Getting student to get along, and share.” Further explaining the faculty’s
views, another participant included, “By the time they’re going to middle school, we hope that they have in part decided that they are beginning to grow up and they make their own choices.”

Additionally, the principal from School E noted,

We do have about 62% of our children come in with a lot of baggage. And the teachers are so caring. They are staying after school helping the children. And they don’t emphasize this very much, but they are nurturing and loving. We see a lot of hugging in this building . . . They reach out to the kids in more ways than just academics.

A School H participant went on to explain that

there are times we have to understand where our students are coming from. You know, we have kids that have great deals of problems in the school. And so, knowing their background, you know, we try to be sympathetic, but yet at the same time effective in dealing with their problems and working toward getting them to be responsible for their own actions. And taking control of their lives.

Added another participant,

I think student achievement in this building is that we get to teach the whole child. It doesn’t matter what standards say, you know that if you have a child that comes to school and you can tell how sad he is, you have to take him aside and talk with him. I had a little guy this week and his mom was in the hospital and he was really worried. I wasn’t getting anything out of him until I took the time to take him in the hall, sit down, and talk. We agreed that on lunch we’d call Grandma and see what was going on with mom. Then he was a totally different kid. I think people in this building are just that way. If you are really to have any effect on student achievement, you teach the total kid. You have to make them feel safe to take risks and be able to learn.
Last Principal H added, “We look at test scores, standards, and data because it’s the game in town we’ve got to play. But, we’re not forgetting the other kinds of things that are so important. And we also collect data to support those things.”

Similarly, in School D, a participant portrayed student achievement as, not only academic.

I believe that we want our students to achieve in every way possible. We want the best for them, not just academically, but socially, emotionally, and physically. It’s my strong belief that they don’t achieve academically until they have achieved those other things in life. We didn’t realize until we started making a lot of visits to other schools that everybody wasn’t the same as us. We were shocked to realize, that every school wasn’t the same. And I guess it is a very caring, close-knit school to care for all the needs of the families and children. At [School D], test scores are important, but we want these children to be good citizens. And in order to be a good citizen, they have to know how to do all of these things.

Another participant went on to say,

I want the same things for these kids that I wanted for my own. I want them to be all they can be. God didn’t bless them all equally. So that varies from kid to kid. While I have them, I need to maximize what God did give them, and I want the end result of their student achievement for them to be contributing happy adults.

Student achievement was also defined as student success by a participant in School G. The group further clarified their definition as including “self-esteem and maximizing student potential.” Another participant added, “That’s what a teacher is in the classroom to do is to help that child reach his maximum potential, help him find success when he walks in the door, and
help him feel good about what he can accomplish.” The principal also concurred,

I think people think of academia when you talk about student achievement. . . . It’s also
growth and self-esteem. It’s in feeling good about yourself and that’s very, very
important to me. And it’s important to the staff also. So, it’s the whole child. It’s not just
the test scores.

**Change is research and data driven.** Each school had a different approach. A participant
at School D explained,

A lot of changes, I think, have been research driven too. We do rely on that. Also, it’s
kind of what works. We just see what our students need. We get research articles from
downtown. I’ve also been working on my masters so I’ve been really up on the latest
research. I share it at meetings and do copy and share articles in everybody’s mailboxes.
Our Superintendent is research driven. Our staff does not jump on every new thing that
comes along - not at all. Change is very well thought out.

At School G, a participant noted,

Writing was a school weakness on ISTEP and standardized test scores. A committee was
formed to address the need. We did surveys and found we were kind of all over the
palace. We decided we needed to pull everybody together and have some consistency.
Now, we consider, “What does it mean to me? How do I teach it? How do I assess it?”

Another participant from School G discussed Principal G:

I don’t feel like she’s a top down administrator. She very much keeps us in the know as
to what sorts of things are being decided at the district level. And is very much in our
corner when it comes to any new programs that may be talked about and what it’s going
to mean as far as time and money. And she works, I think, very hard at trying to get us what we want.

**High expectations for all.** Written on the board in the meeting room of School G was the phrase, “Don’t lower the vision to reduce the tension.” This phrase seemed to sum up the entire underlying foundation to the schools with more effective principals. They recognized that no two students were the same but did not use that information as an excuse, but instead as a challenge to find solutions so that all children could achieve success.

A participant from School F exemplified this fact by discussing how the faculty scaffolds students who are failing.

We (the faculty and staff of the school) don’t, I have never felt like that is, oh well that explains that. There’s a bad home life. It’s always been we can’t change what is happening at home, but we can do this. And I think that is, instead of putting the blame on, in some cases, well they’ve got a bad home life, we know we can’t change that, so we address what we can.

In School E, a participant noted, “I think our school is really exceptional.” The principal further clarified,

The teachers don’t pre-judge. And they know the kids have a variety of learning styles. So, we try to tap into that. The bottom line is that we want kids to have a good experience. We help the kids regardless of what they do, to have meaning in what they do. And to feel good about that, I want student’s engaged in their work. And teacher’s feeling responsible to discover how to get those kids engaged in their work. You just need to analyze a student and somehow find a way to get him engaged in the classroom.

School F shared that, “We always do our personal best.” While a participant at School H
explained how they pushed children to,

scrutiniz[ed] their own work. We are really getting children to be self-critical. We want
them to be able to say, “I’ve improved. I did so much better than the last time.” We’re
striving to make thing better and I don’t really think that we are lowering our standards.

A different participant continued, “I think if you’ve high expectations for yourself, for your
students, your program or classroom, and you know what should be done, then you work awfully
hard to get there.”

At School D, a staff member demonstrated how high expectations were for everybody:

It doesn’t make any difference if you are students, staff, classified, certified, custodial,
paraprofessional—everybody. They are communicated to everyone. There’s a saying,
“We don’t do that here.” You know if they choose to do something, I could say, “We
don’t do that here.”

The principal summed up the school saying, “We just never quit looking at instruction, never
quit trying to figure out what we can do better. We’re never satisfied.”

To demonstrate a standard of achievement, School G “displays high quality work to set
the level of achievement. Students know what quality work looks like and that’s what they’re
striving for.”

Those principals who are seen as more effective realize that the term student achievement
encompasses many elements. However, they have developed and shared their own set of
guidelines to which everyone is held accountable. Student achievement is at the heart of all
decisions that are made in these schools.
Less Effective Principals

Each of the less effective principals chosen for the site visits all scored at least one standard deviation below the average in every category on the PIMRS. Because this was the scale that showed a positive correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their principals and standardized test scores, these schools were chosen with the hopes of revealing commonalities among the buildings while at the same time discovering differences between this group and the more effective principals. The same three categories guided the analysis: (a) principal leadership characteristics, (b) instructional demands, (c) change process, and (d) student achievement.

Principal leadership characteristics. Some commonalities arose among the principals. It was as if they were aware of what a strong instructional leader should do but were unsure as to how to move their faculty to that goal.

Team building. As noted in the Both More and Less Effective section, all schools discussed loving kids, but the faculty themselves were not all operating as a team. They were either in an endless cycle of doing team-building activities or the principal was not taking control of climate issues. Realizing that relationships are important, Principal B shared, “We’ve worked on being a team, now we’re going to work on how to change instruction.” Principal C discussed the physical aspects of the climate, but did not acknowledge the personnel side of climate:

You set the environment for your teachers to be happy. Therefore, that sets the environment for the highest possibility for your students to be happy. If you aren’t happy teaching, and everything, this is an old building, this is a small building, and it’s not an air-conditioned building. I didn’t bring an air condition in my pocket, but I have made fans available. We’ve paid for every classroom to have their own fan. You set the environment.
Contradicting views arose in School C when asked who was ultimately responsible for the climate. The principal in School C claimed responsibility for school climate, but teachers claimed they were the ones responsible for the climate.

In a different light, demonstrating how the attitude of the faculty was not one looking to participate on a team, a participant from School C explained, “When no one else on your committee will volunteer, that’s how you are chosen to get on the core team. That’s one of those committees that people say, ‘Oh I’m glad you’re doing that.’”

A participant from School A shared, “[Principal A] is always concerned about the feelings of the teachers. He starts and ends his faculty meetings with inspirational quotes. We have also had faculty members attend team building workshops.”

**Low self-efficacy.** Both the principal and teachers come with a negative attitude and believe they have an inability to truly make change. The principal from School B shared her realization that she had little control over a group of negative teachers:

The people that bring about negative change, unfortunately, all teach the same grade. And we have done some changes there, but you know these are all people that were here long before I was. In my opinion, these are people that aren’t real happy with their lives. They let children know about that every day.

Principal B went on to explain her lack of confidence in her instructional knowledge surrounding a new initiative the school was undertaking:

I don’t know how to teach writing. So, next year I’m planning on doing some team teaching with them during writing time, so I get a feel for the whole writing part. At the very least, I have to have the same knowledge that they have so we can at least compare notes that way.
Continuing with her frustrations with her ability to lead the building in instruction, Principal B shared,

I wish that I had a way to have more time to be involved in instruction. But the truth of the matter is, we don’t. But, I do try. I spend more time with the one or two new teachers a year I get. I just always remember the thing that Madeline Hunter said, if you can’t think of two better ways to do it, sitting in the back of the room, don’t you dare tell a teacher standing in the front of 20 kids they could do it better.

A participant from School B illustrated the complacent attitude toward others’ lack of participation, saying, “Some people are going to find excuses why they can’t do it. Then they don’t do it.” Another participant discussed the pressure to change that has come externally and her frustration with implementation.

We have a lot of pressure to change and I always want to do the right thing. And we have binders of forms, and all of a sudden we’re finding out that everybody is submitting things on different forms. And how did these forms get in there? You know, it’s not fun. And because we are a small school, we have such a heavy schedule. All of us work a much longer day.

In School A, a teacher detailed how the faculty had low self-efficacy:

We have a few key teachers that are leaders and they are receiving some training. In the past, even though they had talent, they didn’t have the true knowledge an outsider may have had. People felt that they [key teachers] were pushy, bossy, or loud mouthed, etc. They had the children’s success in mind, but sometimes change didn’t happen because they didn’t have the knowledge to know how that worked and bring it. They’d just say,
“Okay, we’re going to do this, and you have to do it. And if you don’t do it, you’re not with us. You know, you’re either with us or against us.”

A teacher in School C depicted everyone as needing to work on climate:

I think that’s an area we have to work on, but everybody is so busy. We, I shouldn’t say we don’t have time to work on climate because that’s something we do by living. But it’s very difficult when everybody is trying to do their best and work their hardest, and giving 100 percent, and still be loving and nurturing.

Describing how the attitude of the faculty had been one that they could not make change in the children, Principal C discussed the home life for many of the students.

Our children need to hear themselves speak because some of these children come from families of eight and ten children. And so there’s a whole lot of shut ups and sit downs. Or they are in front of a TV looking at something. They don’t dialogue a lot. And we have got to get our rules together and make an understanding. What if a child is writing something, or speaking, do you correct him or not? Now there used to be a big issue going on, we didn’t want to disturb a child’s approach. We didn’t want to step on his toes. Well, we decided we’re “gonna” step on all the feet. It’s the way you speak at home; it’s the way you speak at school, blah, blah, blah. We’ve got to keep these registers moving because no one is going to get a job, or no one is going to get anything, going in, “Hey man ‘whatchya’ got for me?”

Discussing her decision to become a principal, Principal C shared,

I wanted to know where does it really matter for a child? Where does it really lie? I thought it was with the principal. I was wrong. I thought I knew that. So it’s with the teachers. It’s always been with the teachers.
Addresses the group rather than the individual. If there is a problem in the building, the principal tends to address it in front of the whole group even if it does not involve all faculty members. For example, the principal at School C illustrated that when there was a problem, “I don’t pick one teacher. I address things as a group.”

A participant at School A shared how when test scores were returned, the principal “held a staff meeting and he put the scores up on an overhead so for us all to see. He tried to keep things positive by reading an inspirational quote before we left.”

Reactive principal. Rather than having a vision or plan, the school principal is viewed as reacting to information brought rather than being the provider of information. Exemplifying the passive/reactive behavior, a participant in School A described, “He [Principal A] would support us on whatever we would come to him with. He doesn’t come to us with the ideas, but he will support us in anything that we ask to do. We have that support.”

Acknowledging that staff meetings used to be “boring” and now are an avenue for analyzing data, a participant at School C credited the change to, “the group we brought in.”

When asked why the participants in School B did not pay attention to scores prior to the Title I change, a participant shared, “It’s just that immediate gratification. I mean, I’m worrying about what I’m doing tomorrow and not what these kids are doing two years from now.”

Managerial role. When principals and focus groups were asked to discuss the role of the principal in the instructional practices, all of the less effective principals were described as having more of a managerial role than an instructional or transformational leader role. Discussing the principal’s involvement in instruction, a participant from School A disclosed,
He [Principal A] does not function well as a change agent. He is a leader, and an administrator, and a manager. He doesn’t keep change from happening, he’s very open to it, but he not one of those types of leaders that instigates the change.

Demonstrating differing views within a building, a Principal B says, “I am the one who makes it [instructional changes] happen.” Yet, when asking staff members their thoughts about the role the principal plays in improving instruction, a participant replied,

She gives us a lot of direction in our repertoire. This whole task involved with Title I. She gave the school direction in that area, and when we get evaluations. I don’t see it being a critical tool rather more of a critiquing.

When asked the role of the teachers, another participant answered, “They’re the most important person as far as instruction goes. I mean students have to take responsibility for a lot of their own achievement.”

At School C, when talking to the principal, she described her role as “not to coach or anything, but it is the organization, so everything is very structured on my part. And then to collect data. I have a large part of that.” Following up on how decisions are made, the principal at School C added,

I hate to say it, because I was in a classroom for 25 years, and I thought I was a pretty good teacher. I really did. I was a good teacher. But, I no longer work with children. All I do is bring it together for staff to think about, and they come up with the ideas. I make it possible and support it.

**Instructional expectations.** Principals and participants shared what they viewed as the instructional involvement of the principal was with instruction.
Instructional and classroom presence limited. As shared above, much of this group of principal’s time is spent on managerial issues as opposed to instructional issues, and some don’t even see their primary role as leading instruction. Principal B shared her solution for having a greater involvement in instruction:

I’ve told my Superintendent I need an assistant principal for the next two weeks because I have way too much to do. I try to walk through at least once a day. That’s always my goal. To visit their classroom for longer than that, I mean they are, I am just amazed, that last year, it used to be twice a year. I would do a formal evaluation.

Principal C discussed her approach to informal classroom visits, “I like the informal (observations) to be as positive as possible. I consider myself, at that time, a guest in the classroom. I usually will have them come in and we will discuss it. I don’t write anything down.” Later she continued that if she goes in with a consultant, she “might take a little pad or a stick note. If I have a questions or something, it’s always a positive statement, and I usually try to leave a positive statement note on the teacher’s desk.”

In School C, the participants saw the principal’s role as a supporter. “Her support has to be absolute or it would never go.” The principal went on to say,

A majority of my time is spent on paperwork. I would dare say. And I know I’m an excellent instructional leader, but I don’t get to use that part of my expertise. I will do things for teachers when we are having trouble. As good as I think I am, I should be more of an instructional leader.

When discussing how Principal A uses informal visits, a participant clarified, “It depends upon how you say visit. According to our master contract they [the principals] cannot come in
and observe. We have a few teachers who throw tizzies if somebody walks in their room without being invited.

_Instructional approaches varied._ Within these schools, there are many configurations for classrooms as well as curricular materials being employed. In School B, the faculty were confused as to how the classrooms were structured. When asked if grades were self-contained, one participant had to defer to another participant stating, “You kind of have a better idea.” That teacher followed with “first grade keeps their kids all the time, and second grade keeps their kids all the time.” Another teacher piped in to correct: “No, we switch for social studies, science, health.” The teacher continued,

Okay that is where most of them switch is social studies, and science, and health. Third grade is just two and two. They also do for all of their reading because they have achievement. So it’s probably more departmentalized than self-contained.

The principal from School B shared that she came into a building with inconsistent curriculum.

Before I came here, they had outcome-based education, worked with instructional process, and whole language reading. Nobody was learning to read. Scores were very low in reading. There was a hodge-podge of stuff, which as long as it all comes together, and it’s articulated through the grade levels, that’s fine. But it wasn’t.

Demonstrating the frustration with the changes, a participant from School A said,

I’d say a majority of the actual people in the trenches that have watched that pendulum go so much, so often, that they become rather callous about anything new. And I have had to be a cheerleader for many years of programs. Our problem is we keep saying we all
have to jump over here; you have to jump there and here and here. Can we just stay put some place long enough to see if something happens and give it a chance?

Another participant from School A said,

Principal A, he’s always one of these optimistic kinds of people and always sees the good in everything. And, I do too, but reality. The building nears what I would say is happening in society as far as educational practices. We are getting a bit limited.

School C was making an attempt to have a building-wide focus as one participant portrayed the school’s implementation process:

Starting in kindergarten, they’re (all children) are writing. And everybody has the same things, but they make it work for the level that they’re on. And I think that is what is so nice. The kids know that when they go in the second grade now what is being expected of them and how they have to do it. And a little more is going to be added to their workload. So it just builds and builds.”

**Teachers feel accountable to self and others before the principal.** When discussing accountability, the best examples came from School B. The all felt accountable to themselves or others, but the principal was not mentioned once. For example, a participant at School B shared, “I feel very accountable to the people in the building because if I’m not going to do it, and I’m not going to try it, they’re not going to either.” Another participant discussed the implementation of the school-wide Title I process:

This whole task project has been a tool. But, I think that as far as where we are going in instruction, I feel more professionally accountable now than I have ever felt. And, I think that’s going to be a huge motivator, and it’s happened because of Title I, it’s going to continue because of Public Law 221.
Taking full responsibility for instruction, a participant in School B expressed, “The teachers are the most important person as far as instruction goes. I mean, the teacher is a great facilitator of learning.”

Teacher evaluation was brought up as a means to determine accountability: “The teacher evaluation is mainly based on using the instructional process. So we’re accountable and that’s a motivator to use it.”

Procedures for change. All of the buildings with less effective principals were in the process of making change. Each building had an external impetus and outside facilitators for the changes were occurring. The change was not met with acceptance by all members of the staff.

Faculty resistant to change. Not all faculty members were on board for the changes occurring within the three schools with less effective principals. A participant at School B explained, “We have people who hate this, and who say you can find any research you want to back up anything you want. No matter what you would have brought in, God himself, some people would still be arguing.”

In School A, a participant portrayed faculty frustrations and their approach for dealing with resistant faculty: “We have a large number of teachers who have lived through all that [pendulum swings], and are very reluctant to move forward.” The teacher later explained that “they were originally angry, but we kept working and kept trying, and still kept inviting them. We’ll gain a few more. At the least, they’ll become less resistant. You just honor them, and say that’s OK.”

External impetus for change. All three schools were initiating some form of change. When asked what percentage of the changes occurring in your building currently were caused by
Title I, Principal B replied, “85%.” The principal credited the other 15% of the change that occurred to reflect that “we knew our scores had to come up and did some internal reflecting.”

Several participants had varying views of the Title I process. One participant from School B discussed, “It [Title I] has been a huge piece of pulling everything together. I think, pulling loose ends together, and giving a little more direction, a little more guidance, and it’s a very clear plan. It has to be.” Added another participant, “I have been here for seven years, and this has probably the year where I have felt this building has been the most professional as far as instruction.” Depicting a positive view of the Title I changes, a participant shared, “The change being led by Title is different than traditional change because there is much more communication.”

Sharing their role in the change, one School B participant explained,

We choose the research. The people working with the state, on our committee, have gotten direction from the state. A lot of the resources we review basically are those that the committee say, “We’ve got this particular group of resources that we can look at.”

In School A, the superintendent is credited for the change. A participant detailed,

Change occurred very, very, very slowly until this last year when Superintendent A became our superintendent. She totally blows me away with her ability to lead and to know the processes that you have to go through to make change happen. She knows how to lay all that groundwork. And I’m learning so much from her. And because she knows all the things to do prior to change, we are making great change.

The same participant went on to illustrate why she felt change was more successful now:

It’s [change] not going to happen by dictating, but when you can bring the people along by informing them, and training them, and then make the change, and if you have enough
people . . . she [Superintendent A] knows that you cannot have 100 percent agreement, but if you can show that the change looks good. We’ve tried changes in the past, and I believe there were pieces that we did need, that were excellent, but we didn’t approach that change process in the right way.

When asked how changes occur, a participant in School C explained that it normally “occurred at a grade level.” Furthermore, when discussing the big changes in the building, the participant shared that this change came from “the Title I Director and then we had a consultant who also started for this ISTEP.”

**Power given to faculty.** Cultivating leaders in others is one of the five key findings in the Wallace Foundation (2013) report. In that report, it explained that the leader cultivates others but maintains her own power. Principals that were rated less effective left a majority of decisions to the faculty.

Exemplifying the School B staff’s involvement in decision-making, a participant described the scheduling process: “One of the committees changed the schedule. Then they go to the Advisory Council. They had the final say.” Another participant from School B described her principal as

not anyone with an iron fist, saying you will do this or it is not a choice. It’s done in a very gentle, leading process. Our staff is very involved in, okay this how we want to do it, and this is what we think is important. And our principal gives us some direction. But yet we make a lot of the decisions.

At School C, the teachers explained that
everyone has led the faculty meetings. We’ve all led them at one time or another. I think we’ve gone internal instead of external. We’ve saved a lot of money by using ourselves as the experts or at least someone gutsy enough to get up and lead.

Another participant talked about how “the staff is working on staffing. Working with the principal and input from Title I.” Yet another example came from a different participant who explained,

The principal brought up something that we needed to be looking at and just some of thought she had been working on it. And where we need to go with it and how it was perceived and how it really worked out. And we weren’t exactly the happiest with it, so we need to re-review it and revisit some things. And we decided on some things and we are going to get together this summer for day and just start outlining some by brainstorming. So that might be the start of a new type of program. But that’s generally how it starts.

Finally, the principal discussed the process her building uses for making decisions: “We all sit and talk it out. And that’s how decisions are made. I don’t sit on ivory towers in the school office and do hardly anything when it comes to decisions that way.”

When asked what role the teacher has in improving instruction, Principal C once again gave her role away, expressing, “The teacher has every role because that’s where the students are right in the classroom. Everything that takes place for the child. And I will start with the environment in mind. Something like that.”

**Teacher leaders drive instruction.** Similar to giving away the power, teacher leaders are given full power to make instructional decisions. The process for choosing the teacher leaders
varies among buildings. However, one characteristic attributed to these teacher leaders was a strong connection to the union.

School B operated in a team approach. A participant described instructional leadership:

“I think this team (Title I) has been a major part this year in pulling it together . . . , but we’ve definitely been supported by our staff in doing it.” Another participant in the building cited another teacher in the building as the leader of instruction in the building because “she reads everything.” The same teacher went on to expand that “pretty much, we do things in teams. We do a lot of things together and lots of sharing in our team meetings. And I think we kind of share the instruction responsibility together, within our teams.”

When asked about the principal’s role in changing instruction, a participant in School A explained, “He [Principal A] has not been an active leader in this process. I have taken that responsibility this year.”

In School C, the principal explained that, “the two people going into classrooms were chosen by the school improvement committee, in conjunction with me, because they had the personalities that would most likely be received by the teachers.” Principal C went on to describe that

the choice of people who came in were less I’m going to tell you how to do this, than it was to be a sharing between professionals. Very supportive and then reflective too. I think the two people we have here kind of looked at it and knew there would be problems at the beginning. And there were people saying, “I don’t know.” Let’s face it, that’s going to happen anywhere. Even though there were misgivings at the beginning, I think it’s turned out to be a very positive thing.
Measures of student achievement. All three of these schools were scoring below the state average on standardized tests. Most schools also recognized that decisions had not been made using data prior to the current school year.

State standardized test (ISTEP) ultimate measure of success. All discussions as far as student achievement revolved around standardized testing. A teacher in School A explained how when they began looking at data, they realized that

our teachers were talking about the doing part and telling part of the sentence instead of nouns and verbs. And on ISTEP and our test we were calling it the subject part of the sentence and the predicate. Kids had never heard those terms before, and so we’re finding out a whole lot goes into achievement.

When asking how student achievement plays into instructional change, the principal in School B had a slightly different take.

I think we looked at it and said “gee, it stinks that it’s so low,” and we went right back to doing the same thing we’ve been doing for a number of years. So up until this year, I don’t think it ever really played a big part. I don’t think people understood it. I know I didn’t until we sat through it and really wrestled with it, chewed on it, ripped it apart, and put it back together. I’ve seen more scores than I ever care to look at, and I feel more credible saying, well, you know, reflected from our ISTEP scores, this may be an issue. Whereas in the past, once you said our ISTEP scores showed, people would have said, oh that’s one test. Maybe one test, but there’s a whole lot hanging on that one test.

In School C, a participant shared,

I think they can say, building-wide we’re pretty happy with some of the things that are happening. However, standardized test wise, oh no. And so we start digging in deeper
and deeper. And if it doesn’t kill us all, we’re going to someday have scores, ISTEP scores . . . but we have so many other forms of assessment. We know that one assessment does not make a child or a school.”

_Decisions driven by emotional assumptions opposed to data._ Prior to the current school year, participants from these three schools discounted or did not even collect student data. Explained by a participant at School A,

I see too many decisions made on assumptions. We’d start working on Title I and grants, and put plans into place and teacher would say that the reason students aren’t doing well is . . . and I’d say, how do you know?

A teacher in School B discussed how “we take 45 minutes to an hour every two weeks or every month to look at research, and that was not something we were doing two years ago.” Another participant characterized the role of student achievement as “redoing a reading unit.”

The principal discussed how

a number of people that went to reading class had a really, great, fun time, but nobody was learning to read. And scores were very low in reading. Kids weren’t getting phonics. They were just having a really fun time. But nobody was teaching them how to read.

The principal from School B further elaborated,

Prior to this year, they (teachers) did goals every day, but those goals weren’t based on student achievement. You know it was like I’m going to redo my reading unit for those kinds of things. Now, it is definitely based on student achievement and our school instructional focus.
When describing how a change occurred in Building C, a participant shared, “We talk it to death and then change it. Well, it first goes through the gossip mill. Then it gets taken to the school improvement committee.”

**Belief some students not capable of passing state standardized test.** Responsibility for the performance of students was distributed among several factors in the school with less effective principals. School B had the best examples of how blaming external factors first. One participant shared,

What we saw when we disaggregated information was, our second to third graders did pretty well, but when they got to sixth grade, it was like twenty to thirty percentage points lower. So, something, I mean there’s a lot of stuff going on, and we know some of it’s the kids, and some of it’s the parents, but some of it’s got to be us too.

A different participant elaborated,

I mean a student does have to take responsibility for a lot of their own achievement, and the area that we live in, you know, the socioeconomic area here, these kids are dealing with a lot of things that we don’t have much control over and of course that effects their achievement. So, you know, that’s very abstract as to what the teacher can do to manage that.

**Summary**

In summary, the question of what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement will be discussed in the following categories: (a) principal leadership characteristics, (b) instructional expectations, (c) procedures for change, and (d) measures of student achievement. In each category summary statements will compare the findings of the five more and three less effective principals.
Principal Leadership Characteristics

**Relationship-based.** The schools with more effective principals continually discussed how the principal created a family atmosphere among staff, students, families, and community members. Participants described how they supported each other and learned to work through differences. All stakeholders were valued equally. In less effective schools, there were attempts at team building with the faculty, but they were not functioning as a cohesive unit.

**Self-efficacy.** In schools where the principal was rated as more effective, the principal and staff believed in their capabilities and felt they had control over curricular decisions and those decisions positively impacted student achievement. On the other hand, the teachers and principals in schools with less effective administrators were complacent or negative about change as they did not believe they had the ability or resources to truly impact student achievement.

**Interpersonal skills.** Those principals viewed as more effective believed interpersonal skills was one of their strengths. The participants from schools with more effective principals concurred and noted that principals kept an “open door” policy. They were always visible and recognized people who were doing things right. These principals also built a rapport with all stakeholders by maintaining a positive attitude and treating others with respect. As a result, they also encouraged others to collaborate. The principals who were viewed as less effective were seen as supportive if approached, but they were not viewed as the one approaching others. They did not have a large presence in the building outside of the office setting, and rather than addressing problems individually, they tended to address them generally in front of the whole group at a staff meeting.
**Visionary.** Principals viewed as more effective were described by the participants as having a focus and plan for increasing student achievement. At schools where the principal was viewed as less effective, the principal was seen as someone who deals with the day-to-day management of the school more than looking at long-term or strategic planning.

**Choreographer.** The principals rated as more effective were intentional and thoughtful in how they went about making changes and running their buildings. At two different schools, the participants or the principal used the word manipulator. In order to facilitate change, these principals realized that they had to ask the right questions of key stakeholders while sharing articles and data that supported their visions. At schools with less effective principals, the principals took on a more passive role waiting for staff or central office to initiate new ideas.

**Leadership style.** Each of the principals chosen for site visits were selected on the scores they received on the PIMRS, the PLI, and the school’s student achievement data. It was no surprise that those rated more effective were viewed as instructional leaders, but those principals who scored lower on the PIMRS and PLI were seen more as managers of the building. Additionally, the descriptions of the participants were similar to those defined as a distributive leadership style. These principals were seen as people who did not get in the way of progress and would set up the organization needed for instruction or policies as needed.

**Instructional Expectations**

**Best practice.** All schools were using best practices. The difference was that the schools with more effective principals were further along in the implementation process.

**Professional development.** Numerous opportunities for professional development existed in both schools with more and less effective principals. Schools all used a variety of formats including but not limited to study groups, bring in experts to the school, building
coaches, site visits, attending workshops, team meetings, and action research. The process for sharing new information gained also varied.

**Classroom presence.** Both more and less effective principals felt they did not spend enough time in the classrooms. However, the more effective principals valued the opportunity to be in classrooms and tried to schedule time daily to visit classrooms. More effective principals felt this was an opportunity to ensure expectations were being met and offer both positive and constructive feedback. On the other hand, principals who were viewed as less effective cited a variety of reasons for not getting into classrooms such as contractual or building management issues. When they did get in the classroom, they viewed it as an opportunity to be positive. The less effective principals placed more value on their formal observation tools, but the more effective principals placed more value on the informal classroom visits.

**Common procedures.** Those principals viewed as more effective put building-wide procedures and management plans in place. This step was viewed by participants as reducing the opportunities for disruptions and allowing more time to focus on instruction. In the schools where the principal was viewed as less effective, the principals discussed how they could not get out of the office but no real discussion surrounding procedures or management occurred during the site visits. Teachers’ management systems were individualized.

**Building-wide curriculum and classroom design.** Schools with principals that were viewed as more effective had a cohesive approach to instruction and curriculum design. Each staff member understood and could articulate what was going on across the building as well as explain the decision-making process they used to arrive at those decisions. Conversely, schools where the principal was viewed as less effective had either just begun to address curriculum reform or allowed teachers to structure the curriculum and instruction individually.
Accountability. All participants held themselves accountable for the quality of work they produced and the instruction they planned for the classroom. Additionally, all the participants from schools where the principal was viewed as more effective also held themselves accountable for student achievement. These participants also felt accountable to the principal. At the schools where less effective principals were found, the participants offered excuses as to why students did not achieve as predicted on standardized tests. Furthermore, they viewed the principal as supportive, but the principal was not mentioned as a consideration in accountability.

Procedures for Change

Supportive central office. Overall, participants from both schools with more and less effective principals viewed their central offices as positive or having no influence on the change in the school. At the schools with less effective principals and lower tests scores, the central office played a role in initiating change in those buildings. The schools with higher test scores and more effective principals tended to feel they either had complete autonomy at the school or were able to work out the details of district mandates at the building level.

Risk taker. This term pertained only to the schools where the principal was viewed as more effective. Participants felt encouraged and empowered to try new things. All schools did express that they did not change just for change but examined data to determine if the change or risk was needed.

Impetus for change. Buildings that had more effective principals had an internal impetus for change. They used their data to make instructional decisions and were well versed in current literature as well as pedagogy. Participants found site visits to schools doing cutting edge instruction affirming because much of what they saw, the schools with more effective principals already had in place. On the other hand, schools where the principal was viewed as less
effective, change was also occurring in the building, but it had been done by outside consultants or central office staff.

**Power.** Although all the principals we visited would elicit input from staff, parents, and community participants when making decisions, the principals viewed as more effective ultimately felt responsible for and made the final decision. The principals that were viewed as less effective let committees make final decisions.

**Teacher leaders.** Principals viewed as more effective created and used instructional leaders in the building, while still maintaining ultimate responsibility for instructional leadership. Teacher leaders from buildings with more effective principals arose because they demonstrated expertise in a particular curricular area. Principals viewed as less effective relied completely on the teacher leaders to drive instruction. They looked to them to make instructional decisions and guided the teachers when implanting new initiatives. Teacher leaders in these buildings were chosen based on personality and rapport with other teachers.

**Measures of Student Achievement**

**Children’s best interests in mind.** All schools, principals and faculty members really believed whatever decisions they made were done with the children’s best interest in mind. The ultimate intention of all participants was to help children.

**Collecting data.** The schools with more effective principals had been collecting data for multiple years and used it to inform curricular decisions. Conversely, schools with less effective principals were in their first or second year of analyzing the state standardized test (ISTEP). Some had begun collecting other forms of data like classroom audits and parent surveys.

**Standardized tests.** All schools analyzed and used data from standardized tests. The schools with less effective principals were in their first or second year of using the data, and this
was the only data they collected. Standardized tests were viewed as the ultimate and most important piece of data collected.

In addition to the standardized test results, buildings that had more effective principals collected multiple data sources to inform their instruction. Participants from buildings with more effective principals realized the accountability attached to standardized tests but also recognized the limitations of a test given annually. The schools with more effective principals tended to rely more heavily on quarterly data collected within the building and refused to “teach to a test.”

**Whole child.** This theme arose in the schools where the principals were viewed as more effective. Participants in these schools defined student achievement more broadly than solely academic performance. These schools included social, emotional, physical, and life skills in addition to academics in their definition of student achievement. The pervasive belief was that students should have all their needs met in order to be ready to learn academically. Participants from these schools felt it was their responsibility to help children grow in every aspect they defined as student achievement.

**Data driven.** Buildings that had principals viewed as more effective used data and research as the basis for all changes made in the building. Conversely, schools that had principals viewed as less effective were in the beginning stages of analyzing data and relied heavily on emotions to make decisions.

**Expectations.** The principals viewed as more effective led staff that maintained high expectations for all students. The staff and principals believed all children could grow and achieve. Excuses for low achievement were not given; instead staff would analyze why students did not meet expectations and what needed to happen to help the students meet expectations. On
the other hand, in schools where the principal was viewed as less effective, participants were more likely to place blame on the students or home when students scored below expectations.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

This mixed method study examined what an effective principal does to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The purposes of this study were to (a) examine the relationships among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; (b) examine the differences among principal effectiveness, principal instructional leadership, and student achievement; and (c) investigate what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement within their schools.

Overall, the design involved the following basic procedures:

1. All 585 public elementary schools in Indiana with grade configurations of pre-kindergarten through Grade 5 or kindergarten through Grade 5 were surveyed.
2. Principals were asked to complete the PIMRS.
3. A secretary was asked to use an alphabetical listing of teachers to alternate distributing the PIMRS for teachers and the PLI until all 20 instruments were distributed or the entire faculty received an instrument, whichever occurred first.
4. Teachers sealed their surveys in an envelope and returned them directly to the researcher or to the secretary who forwarded them to the researcher.
Results from each of the 232 schools that returned all instruments were tabulated. Schools that return all instruments were ranked on the basis of teachers’ perception of principal instructional leadership (PIMRS) and on the teachers’ perception of principal effectiveness (Principal Leadership Inventory) and divided into fourths.

Statistical analyses of the data included descriptive statistics regarding the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and standard error. A Pearson product-moment correlation, one-way independent measures ANOVA, one-way between subjects ANOVA and standard multiple regression were used to test the study questions at a .05 level of significance. All statistical procedures were performed using the computer program SPSS.

These results were then used to determine which schools had stronger instructional leaders and more effective principals and which schools had weaker instructional leaders and less effective principals.

Five more effective principals’ schools and three less effective principals’ schools were identified for site visits.

1. Specific questions were derived from the quantitative analysis to ensure clarity and focus during the interview, written in a noncausal manner, and purposefully kept broad to offer an inductive approach to the qualitative portion of the study. On-site, semi-structured principal interviews and teacher focus groups were conducted to explore what effective principals do to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

2. Final data analysis occurred using initial interview transcripts, observations, and researcher and research partner notes as well as the focus group summaries while simultaneously using open coding. Analysis of qualitative data required the
researcher to use descriptive wording to identify and interpret patterns, categories, or themes that arose. As data were collected, analysis and coding were conducted concurrently. Next, axial coding was used to identify connecting categories and codes between and across open coding. Questions were asked during the coding process to uncover the interrelationship between these principals. Finally, selective coding was used to develop the core or essential concepts, categories and themes that are shared in data analysis.

**Quantitative Summary and Discussions of Findings**

Research Question 1 asked, “Is there a correlation between the teacher’s perception of principal instructional leadership and principals own views of their instructional abilities?”

Significant relationships existed between the teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership and the principals’ own view of their instructional leadership abilities. A low positive relationship between the overall teachers’ perception and principals’ perception of instructional leadership occurred. Additionally, a low positive relationship was found between nine of the 10 individual factors of the PIMRS developed by Hallinger (1983): (a) frame the school goals, (b) communicate the school goals, (c) supervise and evaluate instruction, (d) coordinate the curriculum, (e) monitor student progress, (f) protect instructional time, (g) provide incentives for teachers, (h) promote professional development, and (i) provide incentives for learning. This meant that individual principals and their teachers viewed a majority of the principals’ behaviors similarly meaning that principals’ had a realistic view of their own abilities to lead instruction. The one factor that was the exception was Factor Eight. According to the descriptors under Provides Incentives for Teachers, teachers and principals have differing views of the frequency in which principals publicly and privately reinforce teachers’ superior performance and create
additional professional growth opportunities for those teachers who make additional contributions to the school. Further analysis of the mean of the principals’ and teachers’ perception of the frequency in which the principals provide positive reinforcement to teachers indicated that principals see themselves as providing these incentives more often than the teachers feel they actually do. It is also worth noting that, according to the means, both groups indicated that the principal does make an effort to recognize and reward teacher behaviors; the difference of opinion occurs surrounding the frequency in which the recognition is given.

Several of the questions on the PIMRS in this category of incentives surrounded professional development. The principals interviewed in the qualitative portion of this study had varying amounts of control over professional development funds. Thus, the amount of money available to support initiatives may influence the abilities of the principals to provide incentives. However, professional development can be offered within a building using existing faculty, so another explanation may be that nontraditional avenues for recognizing and rewarding teacher behaviors have not yet been fully explored.

The next part of question sought to discover if the PLI (Downey, 1999) and the PIMRS developed (Hallinger, 1983) defined instructional leadership in the same manner. A significant medium positive relationship was found between Factor 4, Provides Instructional Leadership to Promote Student Achievement and the teachers’ perception of instructional leadership (PIRMS). The teachers’ perception was used because the Principal Leadership Inventory is only intended for teachers to express their perceptions of the principals. There is not a similar instrument for principals’ self-perceptions. The literature supported these instruments’ definition of instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2005). This can be interpreted to mean these principals must be the visionaries who help their teachers and students set clear, high academic goals, curriculum,
and instructional approaches with means for monitoring success. Furthermore, the principal must be visible to monitor use of instructional time and evaluate teachers to ensure the school’s goals are being met. On-going professional development must be made available to teachers, and students need recognition for their accomplishments and academic growth.

Research Question 2 asked, “Are there differences between the more effective and less effective leaders as measured by the PLI and the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ instructional leadership?” There was a significant difference between the lower fourth and the top fourth. Furthermore, post hoc tests also showed significance difference between the second fourth and bottom fourth as well as the third fourth and bottom fourth. Those principals viewed as overall leaders were also viewed as instructional leaders. When dividing the principals into quarters according to their scores on overall leadership using the PLI, the principals in the bottom quartile were not perceived to be overall leaders as measured by the PLI or instructional leaders as measured by the PIRMS. Those principals scoring in the top three quartiles were perceived as significantly better instructional leaders as well as overall leaders than those scoring in the bottom quartile. Although there were differences between the overall leadership as perceived using the PLI that allowed the principals to be divided into quartiles, the differences were not significant in instructional leadership as measured by the PIMRS between the top, second and third quartiles. These findings indicate that when evaluating principal on overall leadership skills principals can be divided into four equal categories of effectiveness. However, when strictly evaluating principals on instructional leadership abilities differences can be drawn between each of the top three quarters and the bottom; however, differences may not be drawn among the top three quarters. This may indicate that poor principals are consistently poor but those principals in the middle have inconsistent principal leadership skills.
Research Question 3 asked, “Is there a difference in student achievement between schools according to the teachers’ perceptions of more and less effective principals’ overall leadership?” Solely considering overall leadership as measured by the PLI, there were no significant differences in student achievement between schools with more or less effective principals. This means that the PLI cannot serve as a predictor for student achievement scores.

Research Question 4 asked, “Do teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership when combined with other antecedent variables (principals’ gender, school site, demographics classification of the community, socioeconomic status and student ethnicity) predict student achievement?” There were two factors that were significant, positive predictors of student achievement in both English/language arts and mathematics as measured on statewide-standardized tests. Those factors were teachers’ perception of principal instructional leadership as measured by the PIRMS and socioeconomic status. When running multiple regressions, principal’s gender, school size, demographic classification of the community and student ethnicity did not have a significant impact on student achievement. Much research (Dupere, 2010; Marks, 2007) has been done surrounding the impact of socioeconomic status on standardized test scores. These findings support and add to the wealth of research already available. Socioeconomic status does have a much stronger predictor weight than instructional leadership. The absence of research has occurred in finding a significant relationship between principal’s instructional leadership and student achievement (Hallinger, 2005). Principal behaviors that promote student achievement, as measured by the indicators on the PIRMS, support having a leader who can frame and communicate the school goals, supervise and evaluate instruction, coordinate the curriculum and monitor student progress, protect instructional time and maintain high visibility, reward and reinforce superior teacher and student
performance, and promote professional development. Based on these data, it can be interpreted to mean that principals should be instructional leaders, not just overall leaders, in order to have some positive impact on student achievement.

**Comparing Research Questions 3 and 4**

The difference between Research Questions 3 and 4 has to do with the variables and tests. Statistical analysis of Question 3 determined that no significant differences could be found on standardized test scores in mathematics and English/language arts between the top fourth and bottom fourth of the principals when categorized by their teachers’ perceptions of them on overall leadership abilities as measured by the PLI. Whereas, Research Question 4 looked at all the variables including the principal’s instructional leadership as measured by the PIMRS to see if individually they could predict student achievement on standardized tests in mathematics and English/language arts. The PLI was not included in Question 4 because Question 3 showed no difference between the top and bottom quartiles in student achievement data. Results for Question 4 indicated that teachers’ perceptions of the principals’ instructional leadership abilities will positively predict student achievement scores in mathematics and English/language arts. Thus, there is no difference on standardized test scores in the teachers’ perceptions of more and less effective principals, but teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ abilities to lead instruction do predict standardized test scores. Considering that both the PLI and PIRMS have been proven reliable and valid instruments, one explanation for the findings may be that effective elementary principals cannot merely be good leaders, they must have a firm understanding on all aspects related to instruction. This could be explained considering the amount of content for which elementary teachers are responsible or the integration of subjects that often occurs at the elementary level. The wider and deeper the breadth of knowledge of the principal, may account
for the principal’s ability to offer greater support to the teachers (Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2011; NAESP, 2001; Nelson, 2010). However, the research surrounding this assertion is limited, so additional research is needed.

**Qualitative Summary and Discussion of Findings**

Principals of more effective schools had strong interpersonal skills and used those skills to build relationships with and among stakeholders. These strong relationships allowed the more effective principals to make change and build consensus. Staff members worked hard but genuinely enjoyed coming to work and felt like they made a difference. Similar to schools in the present study, Albertson (2009) found cultivating relationships to be the most critical characteristic of instructional leaders. In another study, Boynton (2005) found that developing relationships played a role in preventing and solving discipline problems. Relationships may mean that the principal is able to have a better handle on teachers’ as well as students’ and parents’ behaviors as a result of the rapport. The emotional relationships also may make stakeholders more open to having difficult conversations that may occur in the change process or when analyzing instructional behaviors or student achievement data. This finding was validated in a study conducted by Fink and Resnick (2001), who found that principals who had the skills to cultivate effective teachers, recognize quality teaching, and address specific areas of weakness with individual teachers were able to create a culture of learning and positively impact student achievement. Less effective principals knew that they needed to build relationships and continued to do “team building” exercises or retreats, but the cohesive family feeling was missing from all their buildings. One explanation may be that although the faculty was team building, less effective principals did not have the instructional knowledge base or interpersonal skills to enable them to create effective learning communities.
In schools with more effective principals, the principals as well as the teachers felt a sense of self-efficacy. They believed they had ability to make the best instructional choices for their students and power as well as resources to implement decisions. Whereas, at schools where the principals were viewed as less effective, the principals were not as influential in the building. Likewise, many of the teachers were passive or negative when discussing the amount of control they felt they had within building. Attitude may affect the ability for some to move forward or actually serve as a hindrance. According to Federici and Skaalvik (2011),

Individuals with positive efficacy beliefs tend to regard difficult tasks as challenges, whereas those who doubt their capabilities tend to consider difficult tasks as threats. . . .

A characteristic of individuals with high self-efficacy may be that they set challenging goals for themselves and strive to achieve these by making and maintaining an effort. Failures are attributed to a lack of effort or knowledge, though the latter can be acquired. (p. 577)

It is difficult to discern the reason some principals have self-efficacy and others do not, but the idea surrounding the principals’ confidence in their instructional knowledge is a plausible cause for less effective principals’ low self-efficacy as one even admitted that she was not confident in her content knowledge. Another reason staff working in schools with more effective principals may feel more self-efficacy could be related to the principals’ ability to enable a distributed leadership style. According to Kennedy, Deuel, Nelson, and Slavit (2011), “principals acknowledge that teachers have both agency and efficacy for guiding the work” (p. 23. Finally, by granting teachers a seat at the table where a clear vision guides the work and time is used productively, the Kennedy et al. (2011) study also found that a “culture of open and
honest dialogue” (pp. 23-24) emerged. Working in a culture that not only encouraged input but used that input to make necessary changes could enhance the teacher’s feeling of self-efficacy.

Closely linked to self-efficacy could be vision. Those leaders who were viewed as more effective were clear as to what needed to happen in their buildings to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Because these leaders did have a focused path, this may have been a factor in increasing their self-efficacy. More effective leaders understood the value of having a strategic or long-term plan and committing to giving new initiatives ample time to collect data and evaluate effectiveness. Principals who had success developed a shared vision and commitment for leading the professional learning of teachers in their buildings (Kennedy et al., 2011). Less effective principals looked to their teacher leaders to guide the building instructionally, but more effective leaders were actively involved in developing the vision. The more effective principals were also less likely to jump on the latest trends instead opting to research and compare current practices to new trends. On the other hand, buildings that had less effective principals mentioned that they jumped from one bandwagon to the next in search of the best way to address their students’ needs. Effective principals had the “big picture” and less effective principals were limited by the narrow perspective of individual teachers. Consequently, the vision appears to jump from one approach to another, lacking coherence and cohesion. Thus, vision could be a factor that leads to increased student achievement.

More effective principals spent time immersed in instruction by maintaining a presence in the classrooms, actively participating in study groups, and reading current research. One conclusion that might be drawn is that these principals had an understanding of curriculum and instruction. That may be why they called themselves and were referred to by participants as manipulative. The word manipulative can be surrounded with negative connotations, but the
way that it was used when describing more effective principals was more of a way to explain the intentional way these leaders developed a common vision and initiated change. Since they had a clear vision and an understanding of curriculum, instruction and the change process, these principals were able to “plant seeds,” as one principal characterized herself, by placing articles in mailboxes, privately talking to a variety of key stakeholders, asking the right questions, and offering professional development opportunities that aligned with the principals’ long-term goals. The principals saw this as manipulating, but many of the participants saw this as keeping the staff well informed.

Because more effective leaders had a vision, were intentional with developing their staff, and understood how to use the power of leadership attached to a principal, more effective leaders used a distributed leadership style. On the other hand, less effective leaders believed they used a distributed leadership style because what they described would have fit part of the definition by Kennedy et al. (2011): “Leaders who practice distributed leadership recognize the need to draw upon and build from the expertise of teachers” (p. 23). Less effective leaders, however, used teacher leaders, but they also turned over complete control to the teacher leaders and committees. This may be why less effective leaders were actually viewed more like managers who supported and took care of building maintenance but were not initiators of change. They utilized more of a directive leadership approach. Kennedy et al. (2011) added, “The ultimate is knowing when to hold on and when to let go of authority” (p. 24). A true distributed leadership model may have been more prevalent in the more effective principals’ buildings because the same research suggests that in order for distributed leadership to succeed expertise, trust, and responsibility must be in place (Kennedy et al., 2011). Schools with more effective principals spent the time developing relationships and procedures within the school as well as immersing themselves in
the literature and professional development opportunities, which may explain why they were able to lead using a distributed leadership model.

Neither the instructional programs nor the professional development offered seemed to impact student achievement as both the schools with more and less effective principals were using best practice and offering a variety of professional development. Again, the principals viewed as more effective were deliberate about their curricular, instructional, and professional development choices. Conversely, at the schools with less effective principals, teachers operated more independently and instructional decisions and classroom configurations varied upon teacher preference. So perhaps student achievement results are not as dependent on the type of instruction but instead the intentionality the principal uses as she implements curriculum and instruction and how she shares that vision with the faculty and staff.

More effective principals had a strong presence in the building and classrooms. They intentionally scheduled uninterrupted periods of time daily for classroom observations. These observations were viewed as a way for the principals to keep a finger on the pulse of the teachers and students as well as pose questions or offer feedback to keep curriculum and instruction moving toward the vision. Less effective principals acknowledged the value of classroom observations but admitted that they were uncomfortable in classrooms or just did not have enough time. More effective principals may have been able to get into rooms more frequently because they spent time setting up building-wide procedures or management systems, thus reducing the student disruptions that needed their attention. Less effective principals did not discuss procedures or management, but acknowledged that they had a difficult time getting out of the office. Another reason that more effective principals valued the informal observations more than the less effective principals could be related to their confidence level with instruction.
The more effective principals had a strong handle on curriculum and instruction by staying current with research, participating in the school learning communities, and through attending professional development. Having an understanding of curriculum and instruction may have contributed to the more effective principals’ self-efficacy, allowing them to feel confident making judgments and offering suggestions to teachers, whereas the lack of content knowledge that was expressed by one of the less effective principals may have contributed to why she felt like a “guest” in the classroom and was only comfortable offering positive feedback.

In schools today, there is a high level of accountability to the public surrounding standardized test scores. In Indiana, the current state accountability system gives schools letter grades, and those scoring for three consecutive years in the lowest category must establish an expert team and develop a plan for restructuring, which can result in the removal of the principal and staff members. Thus, the connotation with the word accountability can mean to be responsible, to be answerable, to be blameworthy, or even to be liable. However, the literal meaning suggest there is an expectation that the person, organization, or entity is accountable, they can be expected or required to render an account of their actions or inactions. (William, 2010, p 109)

Participants in this study all felt personally accountable to themselves for their actions. Faculty members working in buildings with more effective principals additionally felt accountable to their students and principals. All schools were also well aware of the pressure surrounding standardized tests, but those buildings with more effective leaders used and viewed the state standardized test as one of many measures of student success. According to Kennedy et al. (2011), “leaders recognize that mutual accountability for student learning required a shift from external accountability systems to internal assessments and intervention supported by
teachers” (p. 23). Thus, one explanation for the accountability that the staff in more effective buildings feel to self, principal, students, and others may again come from the relationships the principal fosters and internal systems that have been built for reviewing and using a variety of assessment data to determine instruction. On the other hand, the schools with less effective principals reported making instructional decisions based on emotion or being in the beginning stages of collecting data; the level of trust and accountability may not have been developed.

The quantitative portion of this study found two of six factors (principals’ instructional leadership, principals’ gender, school size, demographic classification of the community, socioeconomic status, and student ethnicity) predicted student achievement: the principals’ instructional leadership and the students’ socioeconomic status. Numerous studies have documented the connection between a student’s socioeconomic status and student achievement. However, this is one of the first studies to find any predictive value using teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership, even if small, on student achievement. Perhaps that is why the participants from buildings with more effective principals define student achievement much more broadly than participants from less effective buildings, who solely discussed standardized test scores when asked about student achievement. Just as those legislators who grappled with rewriting the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, the participants from schools with more effective principals found that they must address the students’ social, cultural, and emotional needs to have an impact on student achievement. The participants from the schools with more effective principals found that if the students’ basic needs went unmet, the students’ were unable to concentrate and learn. Imploring schools to address the whole child, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (2012) explained that in the 21st century, students must enter school healthy, feel physically and
emotionally safe, be actively engaged in learning, be supported by qualified staff, and be challenged academically. Perhaps the success of the schools with more effective principals can be somewhat attributed to the fact that schools with more effective principals and better test scores address more than just standardized test scores by celebrating growth in a variety of ways and ensuring the children are healthy and create an environment where children feel physically and emotional safe.

Those buildings with more effective principals initiated change internally, whereas those buildings with less effective principals had an external impetus for change. This may be explained because the schools with more effective principals had established professional learning communities where the staff and principal were always using data to evaluate effectiveness of programs and instruction and seeking new ideas or solutions to address areas of concern. Schools with less effective principals reported using emotions or small amounts of data to make decisions thus they were not capable of fully analyzing student achievement data further contributing to their below expected and below state average test scores.

Both schools with more and less effective principals felt they had a supportive central office. However, they had this belief for differing reasons. Those schools with more effective principals and above-predicted test scores were given more autonomy at the building level to make decisions. On the other hand, those schools with less effective principals and below-expected test scores had outside consultants helping them create change. These consultants were acquired under grants written by the central office or through Title I funding. A logical conclusion may be that, because the schools with more effective principals continued to have students who scored above expected on state standardized tests, a higher level of trust is developed thus more autonomy is granted. Another possible explanation was offered by Kotter
Although all principals were going through changes within their buildings, the principals of the more effective buildings spent time coping with change, but the less effective principals employed more of a managerial style where they, coped with complexities. As a result, less effective principals needed others to come into the building and move beyond the day-to-day management.

Schools with more effective leaders were more likely to try a new research-based initiative. However, they clearly stated that they did not make change just for the sake of change. The schools’ willingness to investigate and try new approaches may be credited to adults in a school that continually engage in dialogue and inquiry to support student learning, a re-culturing takes place. A result of their re-culturing is that teachers take risks and tolerate a level of vulnerability in order to learn and enact productive change. Teams must have norms of collaboration. (Kennedy et al., 2011, p 23)

Schools with more effective leaders used their relationships to develop a culture of trust and collaboration. This culture may be a reason why staff and principals in these schools are more likely to take risks and try new initiatives when data deem appropriate.

A pervasive belief that high expectations should be set for all students was evident in schools with more effective principals. On the contrary, schools with less effective principals were more likely to place blame on the child or home when students did not meet expectations. The demographics of the more and less effective principals’ buildings all showed that not one of them is in a highly affluent area, so although low socioeconomic status was proven in the quantitative portion of this study to be a contributing factor to the staffs’ beliefs, it could not be the sole factor. One possible explanation could relate back to the relationships and vision set forth by the principals viewed as more effective. Another could be that through addressing the
whole child and closely monitoring student achievement data, teachers with the more effective schools felt empowered to address any need that should arise with children.

**Quantitative and Qualitative Data Convergence**

In both the quantitative and qualitative portions of this study, there are multiple significant findings, which can be overwhelming to the reader. Furthermore, as this is a mixed-method study and not two separate studies, the final synthesis of findings should show how the data from both portions of the study converge. To join the findings of the quantitative and qualitative portions, those items from Table 2 where the principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of instructional leadership that correlated at $p < .01$ (Frame the School Goals, Coordinate the Curriculum, Maintain High Visibility, and Provide Incentives for Learning) were cross-referenced with the qualitative conclusions to find similarities and anomalies. Finally, when considering items from the qualitative portion of the study, only those characteristics that were exclusive to the more effective principals were considered. Provided below is a concise discussion of the eight essential characteristics an effective principal needs to improve instruction and increase student achievement in an elementary building. The selective codes were again included should the reader want to reference the characteristics in prior chapters.

**Principal Leadership Characteristics**

**Relationship-based.** More effective principals create a family atmosphere leading to a more cohesive staff. Families are valued and the school is connected to the community.

**High interpersonal skills.** Relationships are nourished by more effective principals as they communicate and interact with all stakeholders. Having high interpersonal skills means more effective principals are viewed by their faculty as approachable, supportive, a motivator of students, visible, positive, and respectful of others.
Choreographer. This category encompasses many characteristics. To be the choreographer, effective principals are big picture thinkers and able to determine when it is appropriate to be the local impetus for change. Effective principals have a high level of self-efficacy and are willing and able to lead.

Instructional Expectations

Common procedures. External disruptions are reduced because effective principals put procedures in place that reinforce positive behavior and prohibit the occurrence of problems. Having the same expectations building-wide also creates consistent expectations for all stakeholders. Decreasing distractions allows teachers to increase the amount of time on instruction.

Consistent instructional beliefs across the building. Buildings with effective principals have a consistent approach to curriculum and they use student achievement data to determine building as well as individual student needs. Faculty understand and can articulate the curriculum and instructional design for the building as well as describe the decision making process used to establish when change is needed.

Procedures for Change

Power remains with principal. When making change, more effective principals understand the importance of and value staff input. But these principals also ultimately realize they are the initial contact and final deciding factor when change does occur. Additionally, these principals acknowledge and use the power associated with the principal position.

Empower teacher leaders. More effective principals identify and create instructional leaders within the building but realize they are ultimately still responsible for the instruction occurring in the building.
Measures of Student Achievement

Recognize the whole child. An effective principal is able to create an environment where the demands of standardized testing and academic achievement are recognized and balanced with the needs of the whole child. These principals believe in “maximizing student potential” academically as well as socially, emotionally, and physically.

Implications

Recommendations for Practice

School leaders in elementary schools must have an emphasis on instructional leadership. Findings from this study and others (Hallinger, 2005) support the impact that a principal’s instructional leadership skills can have on improving instruction and increasing student achievement. Since this study found no significance between principals’ overall leadership and test scores, yet there was between the principals’ instructional leadership and test scores, a principal’s overall leadership abilities should not be used as an indicator as to how students will score on standardized tests.

Several qualities emerged in instructional leaders. Strong relationships and a culture in which collaboration and professional learning communities can thrive were at the crux of the matter in buildings with more effective principals. Instructional leaders must have interpersonal skills and be accessible to all stakeholders. By doing so, an environment will develop where staff members feel safe offering differing opinions when critically analyzing data and instructional practices as well as acquire the skill sets to come to consensus in regards to the best plan of action.

Instructional leaders need to have a solid vision that is shared by all stakeholders in order to set the structures in place for strong curriculum and instruction development. The sharing of
the vision also requires the principals to have a strong understanding of how to motivate people and guide them through the change process. More effective principals choreographed change or were viewed as manipulators in this study, further supporting the fact that principals must know how to motivate their faculty. Another finding this study confirmed is effective principals’ ability to create and share a vision; but as Research Question 2 showed, a principal’s idea of motivation and a teacher’s idea of motivation do not always align. According to Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, and Kühnel (2011), people are more motivated to work if their work is viewed as valued. As much as effective principals may perceive they are recognizing and validating faculty members, more can be done.

In addition to being accessible, principals must be visible and have a strong presence within the building. To develop a true understanding of the instructional practices and teacher–student interactions, the principals must make an effort to schedule time for informal observations in the classrooms. Through these visits, principals gain information on curriculum and instruction practices as well as teachers’ instructional and leadership abilities. These understanding will help principals utilize a distributive leadership model empowering faculty to participate in decisions within the building. Principals who operate under the distributive leadership model recognize how empowered faculty feel when they believe they have some control over matters that affect their daily lives. Staying true to the distributive leadership model, principals must know when to use and when to relinquish the power associated with the role of building principal.

Although incorporating best practices into instruction and using research-based materials is important, this study illustrates that it is not just what programs or practices are employed in the classroom but how the programs are implemented. Effective principals ensured that
instructional practices and curriculum design were consistent and well articulated throughout the classrooms. Consistency and the process through which the changes occur also play a vital role in the school’s success. Thus, without incorporating professional learning communities and deliberate data analysis practices, a raise in student achievement is less likely to occur. Student growth must be monitored and instructional practices analyzed to determine effectiveness before making changes.

Effective leaders reduce the occurrence of unnecessary disruptions by working with the staff to develop procedures or a management system. Setting and consistently enforcing clear expectations for staff, students, families, and community members eliminates confusion and develops common understandings, thus creating an environment in which a mutual respect can be established. If the relationships and respect are established, the feeling of accountability not only to oneself but to others will follow.

Elementary buildings must be a positive and nurturing environment where a prevalent belief is that all children can learn. Effective principals must work with their staffs to set and hold high expectations for all students. A common belief across the building must be that student achievement incorporates the whole child and not just a standardized test score. In order to recognize and celebrate successes, it is essential that multiple tools for assessment be employed.

Principals who are able to put systems in place have high self-efficacy (Horng & Loeb 2013). Furthermore, recent research has linked a principal’s self-efficacy to student achievement (Zimmerman, 2011). In order for principals to feel a sense of self-efficacy, decisions that affect buildings need to be made at the building level. Self-efficacy increases as knowledge increases. Principals need to continue learning about instruction and curricular issues with their staff, but
they also need to be participating in professional learning communities and opportunities with fellow administrators to continue to develop their leadership skills as well.

Although this study shows principals do have some sense of their abilities for instructional leadership, the relationship to the teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership was small. A study completed by Bickman et al. (2012) showed that when principals receive feedback from teachers, their leadership improved. Additionally, if they obtained feedback and coaching their leadership effectiveness increased as much as 60%. Receiving regular feedback from staff could give principals a better picture of their strengths and areas for improvement. All stakeholders must know when change is necessary and be willing to take calculated risks realizing that if the relationships are built and the research is conducted, all risks are low because the procedures and processes are in place to support all stakeholders as they move through the change process.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research needs to be conducted to determine if the study findings between more effective principals and less effective principals are transferable to studies completed in the middle and high school levels. It would also be interesting to develop a longitudinal study on effective principals to see how their leadership style evolved and if they maintained their students’ above predicted and above state average test scores and what specific strategies allowed them to do so.

Given the increasing pressure for satisfactory test scores and the changes in the education landscape, a replicate of this study in elementary settings similar or different from those in Indiana may help add more clarity to the role of an elementary principal. Additionally, the breadth and depth of an elementary principal’s content knowledge in relation to student
achievement and teachers’ perceptions of instructional support the principal can offer would also help better define a principal’s role in the building.

Because socioeconomic status also arose as an indicator of student achievement in this study. Another study that would be noteworthy would be to do a comparative study in low socioeconomic areas on the instructional characteristics of principals in high and low performing schools.

A study on the types of professional development opportunities available to support developing an instructional leader could inform both current practitioners as well as principal preparation programs. This study found principals had some sense of their instructional abilities. Bickman et al. (2012) found in their study that feedback and coaching could increase a principal’s leadership effectiveness. What has not been explored is the impact on student achievement. Conducting a study that examined the principal’s ability to self-assess instructional leadership abilities before and after coaching occurred and the impact on student achievement could influence principal preparation programs as professional development opportunities.

Similarly, conducting research on first year principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the principals’ ability to be effective instructional leaders and the impact on student achievement could guide principal preparation programs as well as hiring practices. Hiring practices schools districts use when choosing principals could also be analyzed for effectiveness of identifying instructional leaders.

Further studies surrounding the relationship between a principal’s self-efficacy and student achievement is an area that should be explored. Additionally, a study that offered professional development to principals to increase self-efficacy and then followed the results on
student achievement could reveal specific strategies that could be used again by practitioners and principal preparation programs.

This study found that principals can be viewed as strong overall leaders but have no impact on test scores. A study that would look closer at the specific differences between overall effective and instructional leaders could determine where the profession should focus principal preparation efforts.

The importance of relationships in schools has been established (Boynton, 2005); however, research surrounding how principals move from building relationships to establishing the family feel present in the more effective buildings in this study should be conducted. At the same time how those relationships are used in varied settings and interactions between stakeholders should be examined.

End Notes

Federally, the principal is recognized as “the key to a successful school,” (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013, p. 63) which is one reason the No Child Left Behind Act encouraged and the Obama administration mandated the replacement of the principal in persistently low-performing schools. As stated by Arne Duncan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, in a 2010 interview with NAESP Executive Director Gail Connelly,

Nothing is more important [than the role principals have in improving student achievement]. There’s no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal. It is impossible. You simply can’t overstate their importance in driving student achievement, in attracting and retaining great talent to the school. (p. 35)

This study bolstered the above findings but additionally found that the key to increasing student achievement is the principal’s ability to become an instructional leader. It is of the
utmost importance that principals stay abreast of current research, attend workshops, and participate in professional learning communities with their staff as well as fellow administrators. In order to ensure more time is spent on instruction, building-wide procedures must be put into place. A rapport among and between all stakeholders is critical to develop and establish respect throughout the building.

Being a principal is a difficult and often thankless job. As Principal D explained, “I put in incredible hours. I’m needed at this school. I’ve tried hard to find a balance this year, but it is so hard.” It is imperative that principals have a clear vision and practice a distributed leadership approach so that they can meet the challenging demands of the principalship. By giving teachers a voice in the decision-making process, it will increase their self-efficacy. Likewise, with the support of central office, principals need opportunities to make decisions at the building level. Principals need a sense of self-efficacy as well.

Staff members must hold high expectations for all students in order to truly have an impact on student achievement. As data is collected, it must be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. Change must occur, but only when results from data necessitate.

There is no greater role in a building than that of the principal. However, for the role to be fulfilling and students to experience success, it is critical that principals are prepared to be instructional leaders.
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doi:10.1177/0013161X82018003004


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APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

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Principal Form 1.3.2
**PART I:** Please provide the following information about yourself:

(A) School name: ____________________________  (B) Your gender: ___ M ___ F

(C) Years of experience as a principal at the end of this school year:
   ____ 1  ____ 5-9  ____ more than 15  
   ____ 2-4  ____ 10-15

(D) Years of experience as principal at this school at the end of this year:
   ____ 1  ____ 2-4  ____ 5-9  ____ 10 or more years

(E) School level:
   ____ Preschool  ____ Middle or Junior High  ____ Alternative School
   ____ Elementary  ____ High School  ____ District Office

(E) Years of experience as a teacher:
   ____ 1  ____ 2-4  ____ 5-9  ____ 10-15  ____ more than 15

(F) Grade level(s) you taught:
   ____ K-6  ____ 7-9  ____ 9-12  ____ Other

(G) School size: _______ students.

(H) School location: _____ urban _____ suburban _____ rural

(I) Number of students on free or reduced lunch: ___________ students.

(J) Approximate number of your student body in each of the following ethnic groups:
   _____ African American  _____ Hispanic  _____ Caucasian
   _____ Asian American  _____ Other

**PART II:** This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal instructional leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your instructional leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that indicates the extent to which you feel you have demonstrated the specific job behavior or practice during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents *Almost Always*;
4 represents *Frequently*;
3 represents *Sometimes*;
2 represents *Seldom*;
1 represents *Almost Never*.

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.
To what extent do you ...?

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS

6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)
   ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
   ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)
    ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
    ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school
    ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
    ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction
    ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
    ALMOST ALWAYS: 5

13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)
    ALMOST NEVER: 1   2   3   4   5
    ALMOST ALWAYS: 5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher’s instructional practices in post observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)  
1 2 3 4 5

15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)  
1 2 3 4 5

IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM

16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal or teacher-leader)  
1 2 3 4 5

17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions  
1 2 3 4 5

18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school’s curricular objectives  
1 2 3 4 5

19. Assess the overlap between the school’s curricular objectives and the school’s achievement tests  
1 2 3 4 5

20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials  
1 2 3 4 5

V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress  
1 2 3 4 5

22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses  
1 2 3 4 5

23. Use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals  
1 2 3 4 5

24. Inform teachers of the school’s performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)  
1 2 3 4 5

25. Inform students of school’s academic progress  
1 2 3 4 5
### VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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### VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### VIII. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school
   ALMOST NEVER  ALMOST ALWAYS
   1  2  3  4  5

IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals
   1  2  3  4  5

42. Actively support the use of skills acquired during inservice training in the classroom
   1  2  3  4  5

43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities
   1  2  3  4  5

44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction
   1  2  3  4  5

45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities
   1  2  3  4  5

X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING

46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter
   1  2  3  4  5

47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship
   1  2  3  4  5

48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing students in the office with their work
   1  2  3  4  5

49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions
   1  2  3  4  5

50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class
   1  2  3  4  5

X.  
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Philip Hallinger, author of the PIMRS, received his doctorate in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. He has worked as a teacher, administrator, professor, and as the director of several leadership development centers. He has consulted to education and health care organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Asia and Australia.

The PIMRS was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (CA) Unified School District, Richard P. Mesa, superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity, and has been used in over 150 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

The scale is also used by school districts for evaluation and professional development purposes. It surpasses legal standards for use as a personnel evaluation instrument, and has been recommended by researchers interested in professional development and district improvement (see for example Edwin Bridges, Managing the Incompetent Teacher, ERIC, 1984). Articles on the development and use of the PIMRS have appeared in The Elementary School Journal, Administrators Notebook, NASSP Bulletin, and Educational Leadership.

The PIMRS is copyrighted and may not be reproduced with the permission of the author. Additional information on the development of the PIMRS and the rights to its use may be obtained from the publisher.
APPENDIX B: PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE –
TEACHER FORM

THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

PART I: Please provide the following information about yourself:
(A) School name: ____________________________
(B) Years working with the current principal at the end of this school year:
   ___ 1 _____ 5-9 ____ more than 15
   ___ 2-4 _____ 10-15
(C) Years experience as a teacher at the end of this school year:
   ___ 1 ' _____ 5-9 ____ more than 15
   ___ 2-4 _____ 10-15

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents Almost Always;
4 represents Frequently;
3 represents Sometimes;
2 represents Seldom;
1 represents Almost Never.

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgement in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.

Teacher Form 1.3.2
To what extent does your principal ...?

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals
   almost never 2 3 4 5

2. Frame the school's goals in terms of
   staff responsibilities for meeting them
   almost never 2 3 4 5

3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal
   methods to secure staff input on goal development
   almost never 2 3 4 5

4. Use data on student performance when
   developing the school's academic goals
   almost never 2 3 4 5

5. Develop goals that are easily understood and
   used by teachers in the school
   almost never 2 3 4 5

II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS

6. Communicate the school's mission effectively
   to members of the school community
   almost never 2 3 4 5

7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers
   at faculty meetings
   almost never 2 3 4 5

8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making
   curricular decisions with teachers
   almost never 2 3 4 5

9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in
   highly visible displays in the school (e.g. posters or
   bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)
   almost never 2 3 4 5

10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums
    with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)
    almost never 2 3 4 5

III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are
    consistent with the goals and direction of the school
    almost never 2 3 4 5

12. Review student work products when evaluating
    classroom instruction
    almost never 2 3 4 5
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)

14. Point out specific strengths in teacher’s instructional practices in post observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)

15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)

IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM

16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal or teacher-leader)

17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions

18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school’s curricular objectives

19. Assess the overlap between the school’s curricular objectives and the school’s achievement tests

20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials

V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress

22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses

23. Use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals

24. Inform teachers of the school’s performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)

25. Inform students of school’s academic progress
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<td>VII.</td>
<td>MAINTAIN HIGH</td>
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<td>Attend/participate</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Cover classes</td>
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<td>for teachers</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Tutor students</td>
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<td>or provide</td>
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<td>VIII.</td>
<td>PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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**IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Ensure that inservice activities attended by the staff are consistent with the school's academic goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Actively support the use of skills acquired during inservice training in the classroom</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction</td>
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<td>45.</td>
<td>Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities</td>
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**X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING**

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<td>46.</td>
<td>Recognize students who do superior academic work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td>Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing students in the office with their work</td>
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<td>49.</td>
<td>Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions</td>
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<td>50.</td>
<td>Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class</td>
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APPENDIX C: HALLINGER’S PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY

March 10, 2001

Libby Turner
Integrating Curriculum & Technology Specialist
Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation
1 S.E. Ninth Street
Evansville, IN 47708

Dear Ms. Turner:

You have my permission for UMI to include the PIMRS scale in your dissertation which they will publish. I understand that they may reproduce single copies and give my assent for that purpose.

Please be sure that you have also sent me a copy of your completed dissertation.

Sincerely,

Philip Hallinger
Professor
PEABODY COLLEGE
APPENDIX D: PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP INVENTORY SURVEY

Principal Leadership Inventory

Directions
Please respond to the following items according to your perceptions of the effectiveness of your principal. Circle the number that corresponds to the degree of effectiveness with which your principal performs each of the items. Use the following scale as you respond. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete the instrument.

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
(NE=Not Effective) (ME=Moderately Effective) (EE=Extremely Effective)

The principal:

1. Develops and administers policies that provide a safe school environment and promote student health and welfare. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. Establishes procedures for handling routine matters. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3. Engages the creative energies of teachers, parents, and students when appropriate. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4. Provides clear academic goals for students, and monitors the progress toward meeting them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5. Understands technical areas of the field, for example, school law, finance, budgeting, accounting, and information management. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6. Creates and maintains a school culture and climate conducive to learning. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7. Uses current technologies to communicate the school’s philosophy, needs, mission, and accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
8. Provides opportunities for meaningful student responsibility and participation. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
9. Establishes, implements, and evaluates procedures and codes for handling and correcting discipline problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10. Develops and maintains effective media relations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
11. Develops, modifies, curriculum and instruction appropriate for varied teaching and learning styles and specific student needs. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
12. Supports teachers in their efforts to establish and maintain appropriate student behavior. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
13. Communicates with diverse groups in the community. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
14. Provides opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
15. Helps staff establish, implement, and assess clear instructional goals and specific achievement objectives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
16. Protects learning time from disruption. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
17. Has a professional appearance. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
18. Sets high expectations for curriculum quality using standards and guidelines. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
19. Establishes and maintains an orderly school environment. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
20. Has high expectations for self. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
21. Utilizes leadership teams or committees in decision-making. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
22. Frequently visits classrooms to observe instruction and promote effective academic learning time. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
23. Implements appropriate decision-making and conflict resolution techniques. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
24. Remains current in the profession, i.e. maintains memberships in professional organizations, attends conferences, reads professional journals. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
25. Creates and maintains a high-performing team. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
26. Establishes clear rules and expectations for the use of time allocated to instruction and monitors the effective use of classroom time. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
27. Prepares and manages the school budget. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
28. Is effective in resolving conflicts. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

(over)
29. Participates in self-evaluation to enhance personal leadership skills.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
30. Ensures that staff is involved in designing, implementing, evaluating, and refining
curricular programs on a regular basis.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
31. Shares responsibility, recognition, and ownership of team goals and results.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
32. Recruits and selects personnel who support the school’s mission, with attention to issues
   of equity and diversity.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
33. Works effectively with diverse elements of the school community including
   business, religious, political, and service agencies.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
34. Models the behavior expected of others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
35. Exercises creativity in finding new resources to support school programs.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
36. Plans, organizes, implements, and evaluates programs to improve staff effectiveness
   and reach desired school goals.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
37. Enhances relationships among colleagues.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
38. Expresses ideas clearly and appropriately orally and in writing.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
39. Positions the school as a community resource.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
40. Portrays learning as the most important reason for being in school.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
41. Bonds the school community through shared beliefs and values.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
42. Recognizes teaching and learning as the main business of a school.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
43. Supervises and evaluates staff, focusing on instructional improvement.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
44. Interacts with parental and community opinion leaders.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
45. Communicates necessary information in a timely manner.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
46. Creates and channels the energy of self and others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
47. Assists staff in setting and reaching professional goals.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
48. Understands and responds effectively to the media.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
49. Is visible and accessible throughout the school.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
50. Identifies and acquires sources of financial and non-financial resources for
    the school.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
51. Is aware of information about family and community concerns, expectations,
    and needs.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
52. Handles pressure and stress.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
53. Knows and applies teaching and learning principles; effective teaching practices are
    modeled for staff as appropriate.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
54. Encourages peer development among staff members.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
55. Serves as a role model.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
56. Secures available community resources to help the school achieve goals.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
57. Works with staff to create a school-wide professional development plan that focuses
    on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
58. Treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
59. Works with the unwritten rules, values, and beliefs that make up the culture of the
    school community.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
60. Understands the importance of group effort.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
61. Engages staff in the study of current best practices, relevant research, and effective
    teaching strategies.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
62. Displays a positive attitude.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
63. Becomes involved in the community.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
64. Rewards innovation and tolerates failure.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
65. Fosters a positive perception of the school to the community.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
66. Builds a network of community support and involvement for the school and its
    students.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
APPENDIX E: DOWNEY PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY

DR. BARBARA L. DOWNEY

14 March, 2001

Elizabeth A. Turner
4811 Epworth Road
Newburgh, TN 47630-8925

Dear Ms. Turner,

Thank you for your interest in using the Principal Leadership Inventory (formerly referred to as The Principal Effectiveness Instrument). The purpose of this letter is to grant you written permission to use this inventory as part of your research process.

As per our telephone conversation, the cost for use of the inventory is $200.00 payable to Dr. Barbara L. Downey. I received your check #0102 in the mail. This gives you permission to print the number of copies necessary to send to schools designated in your study. It is highly recommended that the inventory being used for research purposes should only be conducted with the permission of the building principal and other appropriate school system officials.

The five factors are: 1. Creates a learning-oriented climate, 2. Provides personal and professional leadership to forward the school community; 3. Fosters team building and morale; 4. Provides instructional leadership to promote student achievement; and 5. Utilizes organizational management. Items included in each factor include: 1. 1, 6, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 28, 34, 38, 40, 45, 49, 52, 55, 58, 62; 2. 2, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 29, 33, 39, 41, 44, 48, 51, 56, 59, 63, 65, 66; 3. 3, 14, 21, 25, 31, 37, 46, 54, 56, 64; 4. 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 26, 30, 32, 36, 43, 47, 53, 57, 61; and 5. 5, 27, 35, 50. I will forward additional information as it becomes available.

Finally, a summary of the research finding must be shared with Dr. Barbara L. Downey when the study is completed. I hope this inventory will provide you the necessary information you desire. I look forward to reading about your study when it is finished.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Dr. Barbara L. Downey

Enclosure - reproducible copy of Form E, Principal Leadership Inventory

488 Austin Lane  Greenwood, Indiana 46142  Phone (317) 881-9516
FAX (317) 881-9528  bdowney@quest.net
APPENDIX F: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE – PRINCIPAL

March 23, 2001

Dear Principal,

It is widely recognized that your role as the building principal is critical to fostering excellence in a school. The call to set and ensure all students meet high standards places additional demands and responsibilities on the principal. We are conducting a research study to better understand the principal’s role in improving instruction and increasing student achievement. Your assistance is vital to the completion of this study.

Certified staff in Indiana elementary schools with a K-5 or PK-5 configuration are being asked to complete the Principal Leadership Inventory and the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. Additionally, the principal is being asked to complete a Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. Each instrument should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Data gathered will be used to better understand the instructional leadership behaviors of Indiana elementary principals.

The procedures of this study can be completed with the assistance of your secretary. The secretary will use an alphabetical listing of teachers and starting with the first teacher, give the Principal Leadership Inventory to every other teacher until all ten are dispersed. Then, starting with the second staff member, the secretary will give the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale to every other staff until all ten are distributed. Teachers will complete the instruments and return them to the secretary that will return them to us in the post-paid envelope provided. Envelopes have also been provided for individual participants to ensure confidentiality. All instruments should be returned by Friday, April 13, 2001.

Participation in completing this survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you refuse to participate. Please be assured that individual school, teacher, and principal responses will not be disclosed, and data collected from this study will be treated in the strictest of confidence. If you have any questions, contact the researcher, Libby Turner, at 812-858-9021 or libby_turner@yahoo.com, or the project director, Todd Whitaker, at 812-237-2904 or T-Whitaker@indstate.edu.

Again, the time requirements we are asking of you and your twenty staff members has been kept minimal because your participation is crucial to the success of this study. Thank you for your assistance in this research study. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Libby Turner             Todd Whitaker
Doctoral Candidate/Project Researcher  Doctoral Committee Chair/Project Director
March 2001

Dear Principal,

To better understand the instructional leadership behaviors of Indiana elementary principals, we are asking you to complete the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. It should only take approximately ten minutes to complete the instrument.

As the building administrator, we also ask that you provide consent for your school to participate in this study by signing this paper below and returning it with your survey. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you refuse to participate. Please be assured that individual responses will be kept completely confidential and used in no other manner than to provide data for this study.

To ensure confidentiality, an envelope has been attached. Please return the survey instrument to your building secretary within three days of receipt. If you would prefer, you may mail the survey directly to the researcher, Libby Turner, at: 4811 Epworth Road, Newburgh, IN 47630-8925. Questions about the survey instruments, data collection, and the results may also be obtained by contacting the researcher at the previous address or at 812-858-9021 or libby_turner@yahoo.com, or the project director, Todd Whitaker, at 812-237-2904 or T-Whitaker@indstate.edu.

Thank you for your assistance in this research study. We look forward to your response.

I, ________________________________, give my consent for

**Principal's name**

______________________________ to participate in this study.

______________________________ School’s name

______________________________ Principal’s signature

______________________________ Date
APPENDIX H: LETTER TO SECRETARY

March 23, 2001

Dear Secretary,

The information which your principal has given you is part of a research study we are conducting to better understand the instructional leadership behaviors of Indiana elementary principals. Your help with this study will be greatly appreciated.

Enclosed are 10 copies of the Principal Leadership Inventory and 10 copies of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. Using an alphabetical list of teachers, starting with the first staff member, please give the Principal Leadership Inventory to every other staff member until all ten are dispersed. Then, starting with the second staff member, please give the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale to every other member until all ten are distributed. In this way, each teacher will have only one instrument to complete.

Teachers have been asked to return the instrument to you within three days of receipt. Additionally, the principal is being asked to complete a Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. Envelopes have also been provided for individual participants to ensure confidentiality, and they have been given the option to return the survey by mail to the researcher, Libby Turner, at: 4811 Epworth Road, Newburgh, IN 47630-8925. Also keep in mind that participation is voluntary, so teachers may choose not to complete the survey. However, if you have not received the instruments within three days, please follow up with the teachers to ensure the instruments are completed.

Ten days after distribution, return collected surveys to us in the post-paid envelope provided. If all surveys are returned, the final packet you send back to us should include:
• 10 Principal Leadership Inventories completed by teachers (Again, some teachers may return instruments directly to researcher).
• 10 Principal Instructional Management Rating Scales completed by teachers (Again, some teachers may return instruments directly to researcher).
• 1 Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale completed by the principal.
• 1 half-sheet Consent for Participation in the Study signed by the principal.

Please try to return all instruments back to us by Friday, April 13, 2001. If you have any questions, contact the researcher, Libby Turner, at 812-858-9021 or libby_turner@yahoo.com, or the project director, Todd Whitaker, at 812-237-2904 or T-Whitaker@indstate.edu.
Thank you for your assistance in this research study. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Libby Turner  
Doctoral Candidate/Project Researcher

Todd Whitaker  
Doctoral Committee Chair/Project
APPENDIX I: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE - TEACHERS

March 2001

Dear Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a dissertation research project that will examine instructional leadership and student achievement. Each participant has been asked to complete either the Principal Leadership Inventory or the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale. Data gathered will be used to better understand the instructional leadership behaviors of Indiana elementary principals.

It should only take approximately ten minutes to complete either instrument. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you refuse to participate. Please be assured that individual responses will be kept completely confidential and used in no other manner than to provide data for this study. The return of a completed survey indicates your consent to participate.

To ensure confidentiality, an envelope has been attached. Please return the survey instrument to your building secretary within three days of receipt. If you would prefer, you may mail the survey directly to the researcher, Libby Turner, at: 4811 Epworth Road, Newburgh, IN 47630-8925. Questions about the survey instruments, data collection, and the results may also be obtained by contacting the researcher, Libby Turner, at the previous address or at 812-858-9021 or libby_turner@yahoo.com, or the project director, Todd Whitaker, at 812-237-2904 or T-Whitaker@indstate.edu.

Thank you for your assistance in this research study. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Libby Turner
Doctoral Candidate/Project Researcher

Todd Whitaker
Doctoral Committee Chair/Project Director
APPENDIX J: QUALITATIVE PRINCIPAL/TEACHER SEMI-STRUCTURED PROTOCOL

QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS AND TEACHER FOCUS GROUPS

1. How would you describe instructional practices in your school?
   • Who is involved?
   • What is their level of involvement?
   • What is the role of the principal? The teacher? Is there anyone else who has a significant role?
   • How would you describe instructional practices across grade levels?
   • How would you describe instructional practices in individual classrooms?

2. When instructional change occurs in your building, how does it happen?
   • Who is involved in the decision making process?
   • What is their level of involvement?
   • Who makes the final decision?
   • What is the role of the principal? The teacher? Is there anyone else who has a significant role?
   • When instructional change occurs across grade levels, how does it happen?
   • When instructional change occurs in individual classrooms, how does it happen?

3. What role does student achievement play in determining instructional practices in your building?
   • What is its level of involvement?
   • What is the role of the principal? The teacher? Is there anyone else who has a significant role?
   • What role does student achievement play in determining instructional practices across grade levels?
   • What role does student achievement play in determining instructional practices in individual classrooms?
4. Have changes occurred in relation to increased student achievement?
   • Who is involved in the decision making process?
   • What is their level of involvement?
   • Who makes the final decision?
   • What is the role of the principal? The teacher? Is there anyone else who has a significant role?
   • Have changes occurred in relation to increased student achievement across grade levels?
   • Have changes occurred in relation to increased student achievement in individual classrooms?

5. Is there anything further you would like to tell us about instruction in your building?

6. Is there anything further you would like to tell us about student achievement in your building?

7. Is there anything further you would like to tell us about the principal’s role in improving instruction?

8. Is there anything further you would like to tell us about the principal’s role in increasing student achievement?